



EMPOWERED LEARNING TRUST



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

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Chairperson's Statement

It is my privilege to write the 2015-2016 annual report for The Empowered Learning Trust. I am surrounded by an inspiring group of women, who possess a diverse and complimentary range of skills, along with the passion and drive to create change, and this is resulting in a quality organisation that continues to build a positive and credible reputation. Since our inception in 2012 we have raised over \$250 000 which has since been spent removing barriers to learning for more than 300 children. We began screening and providing corrective lenses for Irlen syndrome, and now include screening and corrective therapy for Auditory Processing Disorder and also screening Specific Learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

Our true reward comes not in statistics but in the wonderful comments we frequently receive from students themselves or their families or teachers. This is an example from a teacher dated November 2015. "This student has gone up 12 reading levels since May 2015 when he got his glasses, and has gone from bottom of the class in maths to middle of the class"

While we currently work mainly in our own cluster area, long term we want to make a difference on a much greater scale by raising awareness nationally about the prevalence of and solutions to learning difficulties. Last year we met with politicians who reiterated that we need more formal research to demonstrate the need, and we are currently in the early stages of collaborating towards a meaningful research project or projects. When we have this data, we will be in a much stronger position to lobby the government to fund this work in schools throughout New Zealand so that every child has the opportunities that those in our area do.

The challenges we meet along the way serve as opportunities to learn and improve the way we deliver our services. The success of our programmes relies not only on funding, but on successful partnerships with the community. If people know what we are doing and why, then we are much more likely to gain the co-operation that ensures quality results for the children. Collaboration and communication have always been a high priority and it takes a good deal of time and commitment, but it is a two way relationship and sometimes for various reasons, the priorities of a school community may not be the same as ours, or the timing is not right, and this has been shown to affect our results in one of the areas we worked in last year (2014). We have learned from this, and will revisit when the timing is better.

In the coming year we have been invited to work in a much larger school just outside our usual area and have been successful in gaining funding for this. There is a great deal of local support and enthusiasm for the work we are doing, and we are looking forward to being able to analyse the results of this in the months to follow.

Over the last 5 years we have outgrown our tiny office space which we have been sharing with another educator, and we now have the opportunity to lease a building much better suited to our needs. It will mean that our trust manager and community screeners no longer have to work from home, and can share this space which will be of benefit to them all and I know they are looking forward to the change.

We are sincerely grateful for the support and partnerships with the School communities, families, Visique optometrist Rotorua, Irlen New Zealand, Auditory Processing Network Taupo, Reporoa Lions Club, along with other local clubs and businesses. And without the generous financial support of the various National Charitable Funding organisations whom entrust us with their grant allocations, we simply could not be doing what we do.

Our personnel remain our most precious resource of all. Our two community screeners Kim and Sarah most ably deliver our services and are highly regarded by schools and families alike. Our volunteer trustees, Annabell and Sara offer valuable advice and expertise from the perspective of educators, and our vigilant Treasurer Yvonne keeps our finances in order. In addition to some screening for Specific Learning difficulties, Karen is our Trust Manager and we all acknowledge that we have a true gem in our midst. She spends a large portion of her time sourcing funding, and once it is in she ensures all funds are spent according to their various criteria, and that all reporting is completed as required. Her professionalism and communication skills ensure excellent working relationships with our partners, while at the same time she is always looking ahead to ensure future opportunities. My sincere thanks to you all.

It is often said that when you are on the right path in life you know it, and this is how it has been with the Empowered Learning Trust. Since day one, things have just 'flowed' in the right direction. The right doors open, the opportunities arise, the support presents itself and the right people cross paths. This continues to occur and I expect that it always will.



Kathy Cane

(Chairperson, Empowered Learning Trust)



Background – why are our programmes needed?

Statistics and the experience of those in the field of education show that there is a group of children called “third wave learners” who are struggling with learning or processing issues. (Source: RTLB Reporoa Valley Cluster). Some of these children may receive help from their school and home environments. However, many of these children with learning difficulties will fall through the gaps and may not receive the extra support they need to achieve their full potential. These children often also present with issues such as anxiety, social difficulties, not wanting to go to school, truancy and other behavioural problems.

These facts and the following research examples forms the basis of why we carry out our screening programmes:



Dyslexia – can cause difficulty in the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills and is estimated to affect 10% of primary and secondary students in New Zealand. (Source: <http://www.dyslexiafoundation.org.nz/info.html>)



Youth Offending - Young people who become disengaged with school are more likely to become truant, or leave school early, join anti-social peer groups and eventually this may lead to offending. (Source: Andrew Becroft, Chief Youth Court Judge, www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/ninetonoon/audio/20171544/dyslexia-and-youth-offending)



There have been many studies done overseas that quote between 43 to 57% of young people in custody have a learning difficulty, and in New Zealand as many as 71% of prisoners have difficulty reading and writing. (Source:

http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/newsletters_and_brochures/education,_job_skills,_and_working_prisons.html)



Auditory Processing problems - There have been studies to show that at least 16% of children may be struggling with Auditory Processing Disorder problems. (Source: An Overview of (Central) Auditory Processing Disorders, Jennifer B. Shin, PhD, CCC-A, FAAA, 2012) <http://www.audiologyonline.com/articles/overview-central-auditory-processing-disorders-782>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24224993>



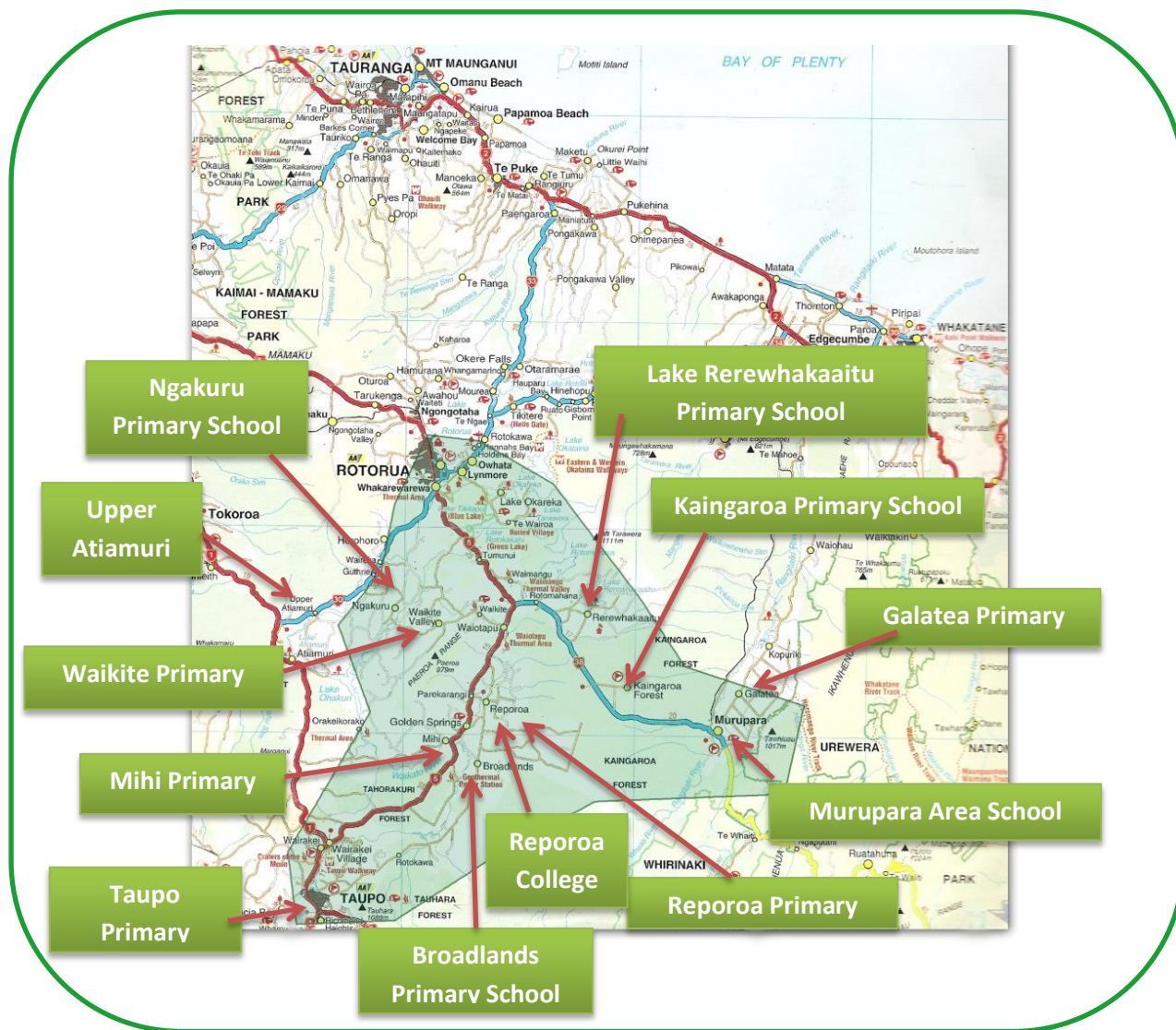
Irlen Syndrome – Studies show that Visual perceptual difficulties or Irlen Syndrome can make reading difficult and stressful, but that the fitting of coloured filters eases symptoms and can improve fluency. Sources: <http://irlen.com/brain-research/>

Empowered Learning Trust aims to identify some of these areas of challenge and support these young people so that they can engage more effectively with their education and reach their true potential.

We aim to work collaboratively with other community groups to improve the lives of the 1 in 5 school aged children in our community with learning and attention issues. We provide specialist screening services to schools, learners, families and whanau in the Central Plateau region. In providing support and services for learners with special education needs, the cornerstones to our work are:

- Intervene early
- Provide quality services in a timely and professional manner
- Build and sustain productive partnerships and treat people fairly
- Build a strong evidence base
- Critically evaluate what we do and use what works.

Our school partners



School	Roll	School decile	NZ European	NZ Maori	Other ethnicity
Reporoa Primary	96	4	47 (48%)	46 (47%)	3 (3%)
Waikite Primary	57	10	40 (40%)	17 (30%)	0
Broadlands Primary	102	8	63 (62%)	35 (34%)	4 (4%)
Lake Rerewhakaaitu Primary	94	6	42 (44%)	49 (52%)	3 (4%)
Mihi Primary	51	5	20 (39%)	31 (61%)	0
Upper Atiamuri Primary	27	4	22 (81%)	4 (15%)	1 (4%)
Kaingaroa Primary	19	1	0	18 (99%)	1 (1%)
Galatea Primary	90	5	45 (50%)	41 (45%)	4 (5%)
Reporoa College Year 7-13	305	6	154 (50%)	138 (95%)	13 (5%)
Murupara Area School	330	1	15 (4%)	314 (95%)	1 (1%)
Total	1171		448 (38%)	693 (59%)	30 (3%)

What is our purpose?

To provide specialised screening programmes that identify children early, that are having difficulties at school. These programmes work alongside services and programmes already offered by schools. This will add value to what schools already offer, and provide additional valuable information about these children that can be used to tailor support and resources within the school and community.

These programmes include:



Screening all year 4 children for Vision and visual perception issues, referring on to appropriate diagnosis, then fitting corrective lenses for no cost to the whanau.



Screening for Auditory Processing Disorder or hearing issues with verified software and referring children on for further testing and referral as necessary.



Screening children for specific learning difficulties then referring on for further diagnosis and support at school. Support and knowledge sharing for family also.

What results do we want to see?

Children:

- have improved reading fluency and reading age and/or comprehension
- are more settled in class
- stay at school and achieve an NCEA qualification
- have better self-esteem and engage with their education

Families:

- Well-informed about their child's learning and know where to seek resources
- Feel supported and empowered about their child's learning

Community:

- There is less truancy from school
- Better educated young people making good choices (less crime)
- happier families
- schools feel supported and knowledgeable about learning differences

How will we measure these results?

1. Achievement data - Children are reading at their age, or steadily moving towards this goal as seen in achievement data from schools
2. Children's learning stories - telling us how they feel about their Irlen lenses, along with family and teacher comments
3. Evaluation forms filled out by teachers or families about the programmes.
4. Evaluation forms filled out by students about the impact of their lenses on their life and schooling.

Who are our partners?

- Reporoa Valley Schools Cluster
- School principals, teachers and SENCOs
- Cluster RTLB
- Health Reporoa
- Irlen New Zealand
- McClelland Visique, Rotorua.
- The Auditory Processing Network, Taupo
- Ngati Tahu-Ngati Whaoa Runanga Trust
- Reporoa Lions Club
- local businesses
- National and local charitable funding bodies
- families and caregivers
- The Learning Staircase



1. Vision and visual processing screening (Irlen Screening)

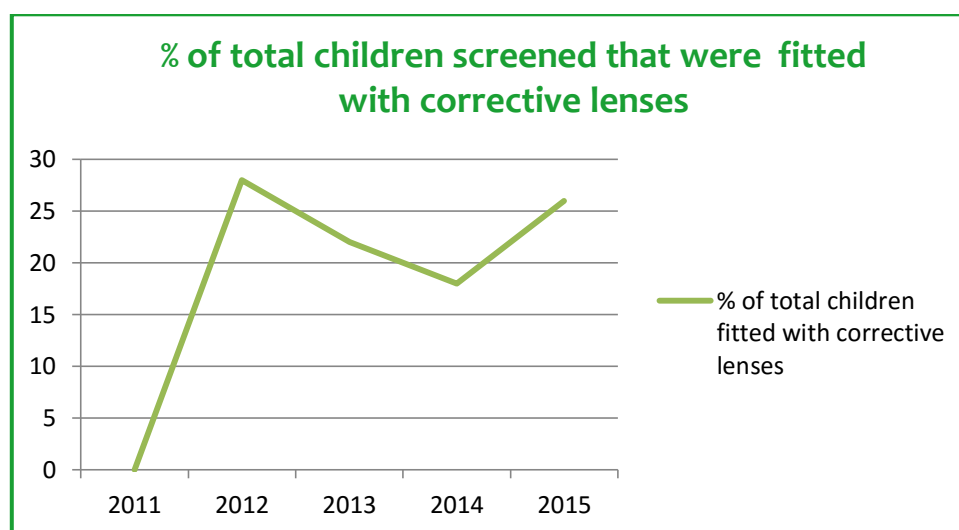
Why Is This Important?

Good vision is essential to learning as we use visual cues when learning language and social skills. During a pilot project run by the Rotorua Principal's Association in Rotorua between 2010 and 2012, it was discovered that around 20% of the year 4 children that were screened had a vision issue of some kind that hadn't previously been identified.

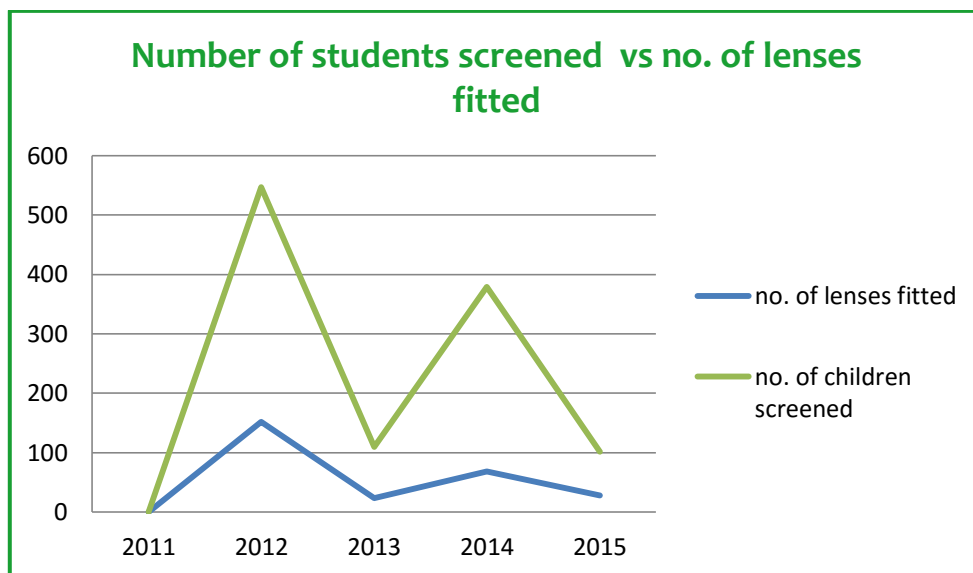
Once children are identified with a vision issue it can be remediated easily with coloured lenses and/or an optometric prescription and the child can then read more comfortably and for longer. This often translates to an increase in reading age, and certainly to better fluency. Children often choose to read when they previously avoided it. If children's visual processing (Irlen) issues are identified early, before puberty and remediated with coloured lenses, the pathways in the brain responsible for processing visual information can be changed and eventually they may not need to wear coloured filters.

How Are We Doing?

1. Numbers of children fitted with corrective lenses



Previous to 2012 when we began Irlen and Vision screening in our schools, there was no formal Vision screening of school-aged children. The Ministry of Health B4 school check screened 4-5 year olds for distance vision and amlyobdia, but not for other visual issues. Since we began screening in 2012 we have found that at least 20% of the population screened in our schools required some kind of corrective lenses. We also found that there was very limited knowledge about Irlen Syndrome amongst the school and wider community.



The number of students screened has varied each year. In 2012, which was the first year of screening we screened all students from year 4 to 13 so that no student missed out. In 2013, we screened all in-coming year 4 students. Then in 2014 we added two new schools – Murupara Area School and Galatea Primary (including up to year 13 at the Area School). In 2015 we are back to screening only year 4 students.



Children from Reporoa and Kaingaroa Primary Schools wearing their corrective lenses.

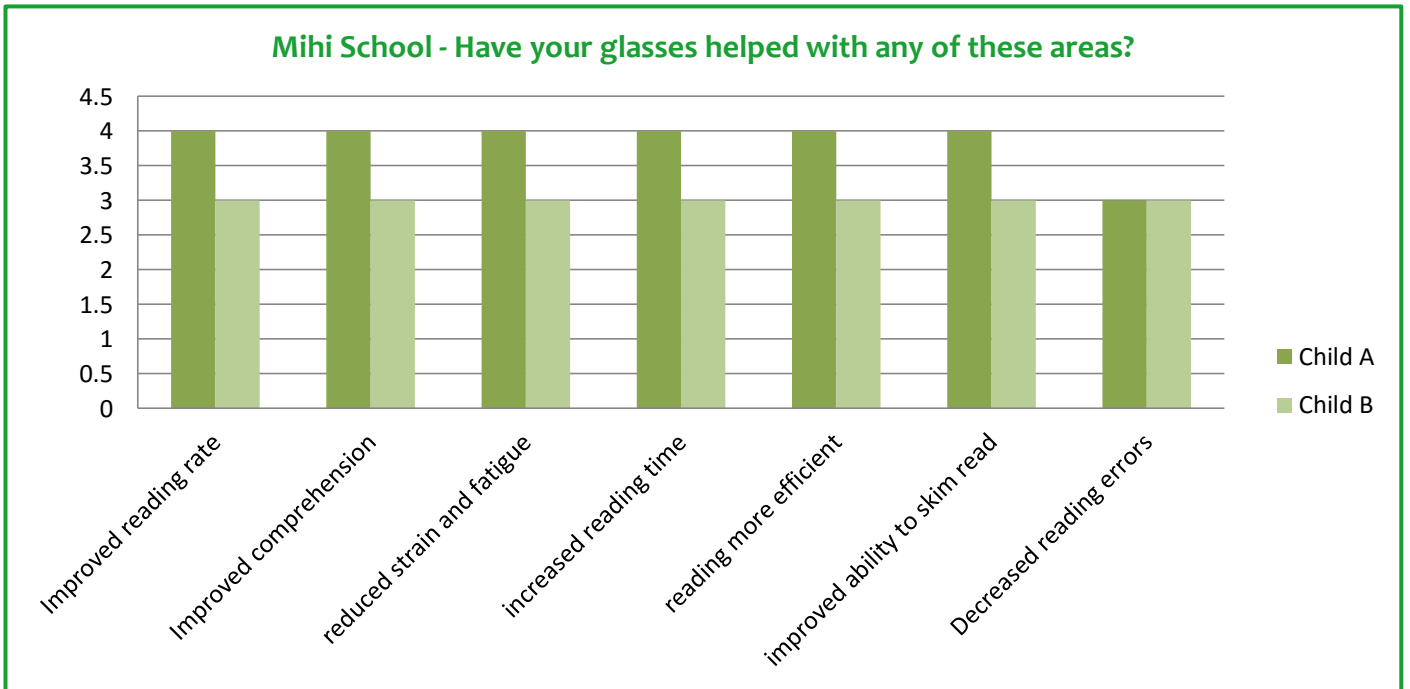
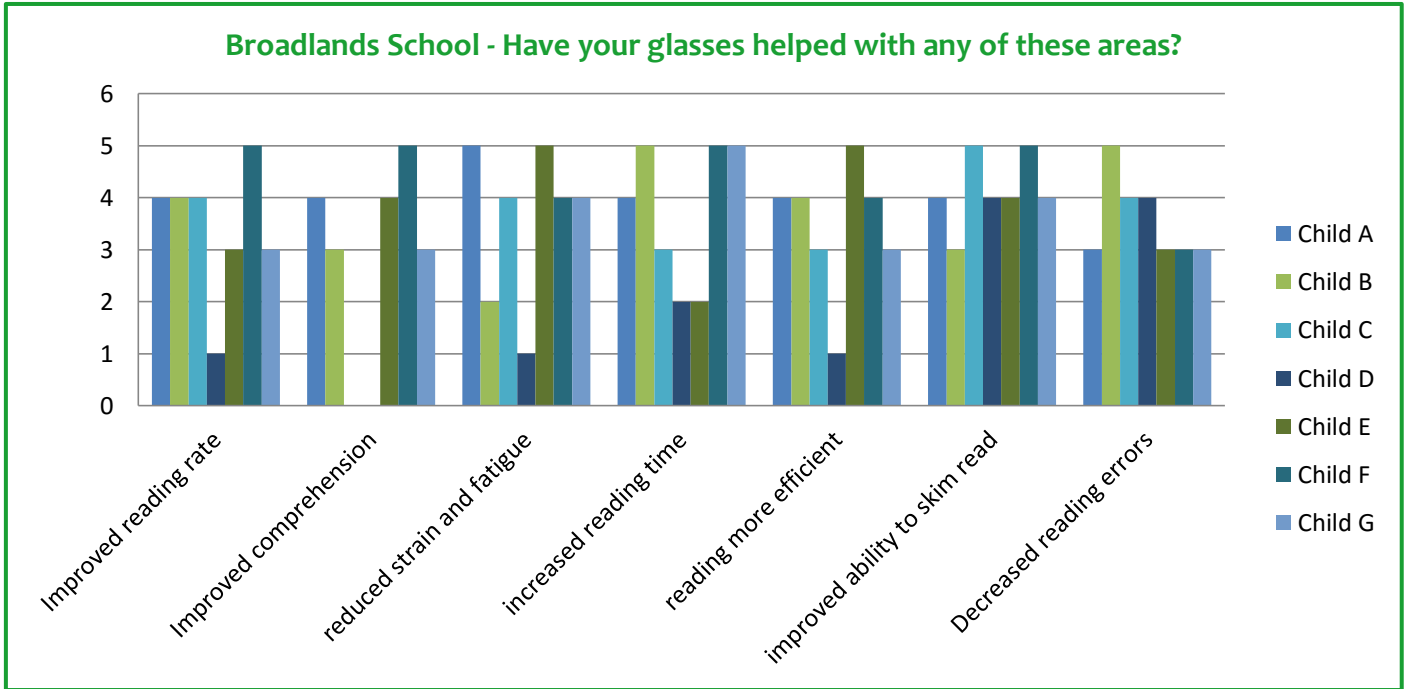
Irlen and Vision Screening Project results 2012-2015

Year	2012		2013		2014		2015	
Number of children screened total (1161)	547		110		379		102	
Referrals to optometrist & Irlen (421)	180		40		146		55	
Number of children fitted with corrective lenses:	Number	(% of referrals)	Number	(% of referrals)	Number	(% of referrals)	Number	(% referrals)
Irlen (127)	61	(34%)	10	(25%)	39	(44%)	17	(47%)
Optometric (45)	24	(13%)	10	(25%)	10	(11%)	1	(3%)
Both (75)	45	(25%)	4	(10%)	19	(21%)	7	(21%)
None (62)	22	(12%)	8	(20%)	21	(24%)	11	(29%)
Refits (19)	0		17		2		0	
Total lenses fitted (289)	152		(41total) 24 new		(71total) 68 new		28	
% of total population fitted with new lenses	28%		22%		18%		27%	
Number of children who didn't go on to appointments	28 (16% of referrals)		8 (20% of referrals)		57 *(46% of referrals) *Large number did not go on		13 (24% of referrals)	
Expenses:	Actual		Actual		Actual		As at Sept 2015	
Corrective lens costs:								
➤ Irlen tinting	29,844.00		12,077.00		17,557.00		3,763.00	
➤ Optometric costs (frames & initial examinations)	21,488.00		9,487.00		14,447.00		5,652.00	
Total (\$)	51,332.00		21,564.00		32,004.00		9,415.00	
Lens Cost per child average (\$)	364.00		422.00		457.00		392.30 to date	
Salary Costs Screeners, Manager (\$)	9,106.00		16,431.00		24,233.00		12,237.98 to date	
Total costs (\$)	65,894.00		48,382.00		52,372.00		21,652.98	

2. Improved outcomes at school

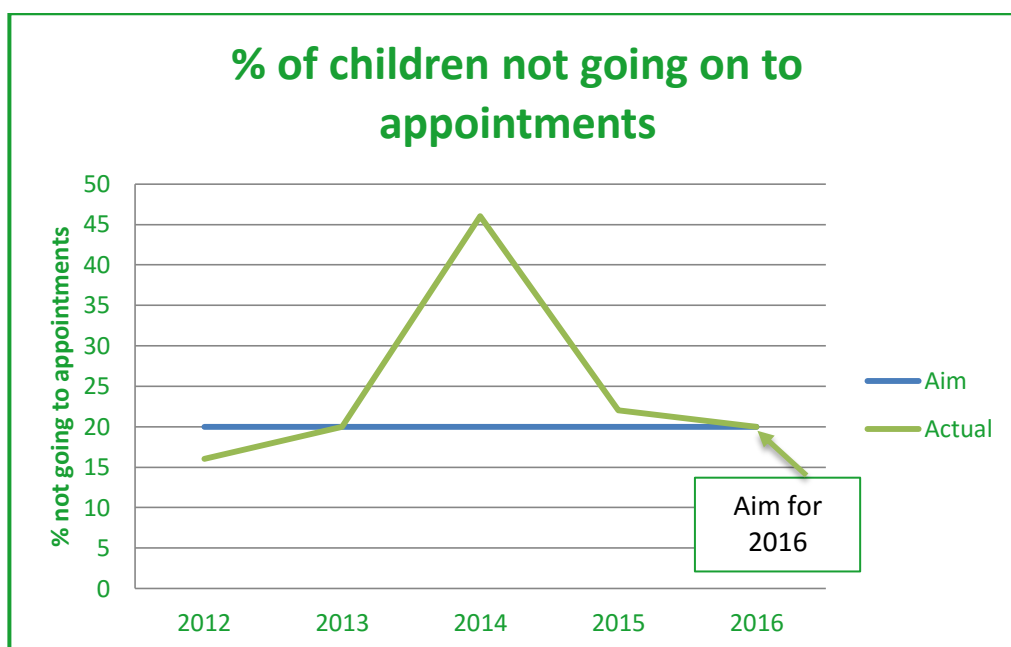
Once these lenses are fitted the school, family and the children themselves see improvements in several learning criteria. The graph below shows how the children at Broadlands School rated the difference their glasses made in an evaluation form they filled out, using the rating scale below:

None **slight** **moderate** **considerable**
0 **1** **2** **3** **4** **5**



It can be a challenge to get information back from the schools due to their busy schedules, and this is an area that we may need to look at doing more of ourselves as a Trust.

3. Numbers of students not going on to referral appointments



As you can see from the graph above there are sometimes a high number of children who do not go onto appointments with the optometrist and Irlen Diagnostician. This can be because the families don't want to know about a problem with their child, or they think their child may be bullied if they wear glasses. It may be because they have trouble with transport, the distance from town, or getting time off work. The trust makes every effort to remind those that haven't gone on, and will offer transport options for those that need them. In 2014 the % was high as we screened a new school, Murupara Area School and many students were high school age and not so keen to be wearing glasses. This year the number of students who didn't go on was down to 25%. Our aim next year would be to have the % not going on to appointments down to 20%.

4. Service delivery evaluation

Stakeholders were surveyed to gather feedback as to the effectiveness of the project and if they wanted any changes. All schools supported the project in its current form and wanted it to continue in 2016.

Partners to continue to Engage to Do Better

Our main challenge is to ensure that children go on to their appointments, and the best way to do this is to enlist the help of the schools who can remind and encourage parents to do so. In areas such as Murupara where there is a large Maori population, we need to ensure that we have the support and engagement of key local groups in the area. If families and communities understand the benefit of wearing corrective lenses for their education, they will be more likely to engage fully with the process.

Action Plan to Do Better

1. Engage with local iwi and community more effectively, particularly in Murupara and Kaingaroa so that children are supported to get to appointments.
2. Gather more relevant achievement data from schools about the children wearing corrective lenses
3. Continue to raise awareness about Irlen Syndrome in the community
4. Continue to train school staff to identify Irlen Syndrome.
5. Fine tune the evaluation forms used to gather information about the impact of lenses.

2. Auditory Processing Screening

Why is it important?

Once the ears have detected a sound is present, what the nerves and the brain do with that information is what we call auditory processing. Every listening skill we have uses auditory processing. This includes determining where a sound is coming from, following a teacher in a noisy classroom, recognizing your favourite song, picking up on sarcasm; all of these use auditory processing. There are significant correlations to reading and spelling abilities, language understanding and following verbal instructions in the classroom. There are many areas of auditory processing and therefore there will be different impacts depending on which area is affected. Some children have problems with:

- Understanding spoken language unless brief, clear and simple
- Hearing difficulty against background sound
- Slowness in processing spoken information
- Problems with comprehension, reading, spelling, and written language
- Extreme tiredness after school
- Sensitivity in noisy situations



This can result in feelings of frustration, anxiety, withdrawal and low self-esteem. It

is our aim to screen for this disorder and to intervene early before too much disruption to learning occurs.

How are we doing?

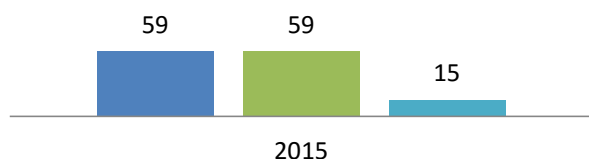
- In 2015 we have employed 2 screeners and screened 84 students in primary schools across our area with the Acoustic Pioneer app. The app was designed by audiologist Matt Barker and his results of testing the app are documented in the International Journal of Audiology.
- This has identified some who needed further testing. We used in-depth screening software with 43 of these students to determine what further action needs to be taken.
- The results were analysed by an audiologist in Taupo at The Auditory Processing Network.
- Some children will need a full audiology assessment (approx. 25 students)
Others will require auditory processing strengthening exercises delivered via software (approx. 20 students)

Results of Year 4 students:

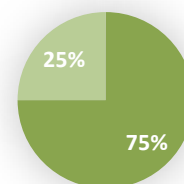
Of the total of 84 students screened, 59 children were in year 4. The remaining students were from other year groups and were identified by teachers as having difficulties with learning. The following data is based on the results from the year 4 cohort of students.

Results of 2015 APD Screening in Reporoa Cluster Schools

- No. of children in year 4
- No. of children screened
- No of children identified with APD issues

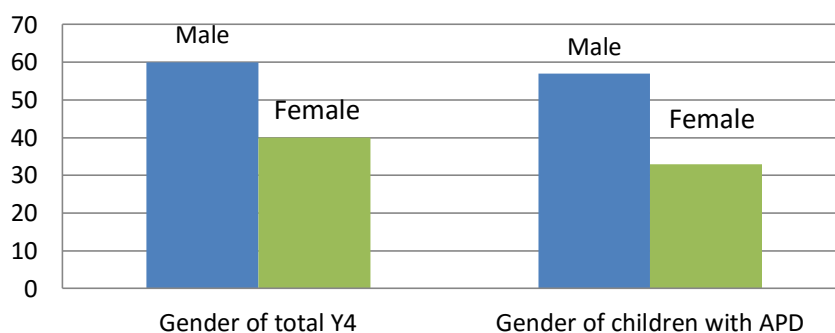


% of Year 4 children with APD issues requiring further diagnosis and therapy

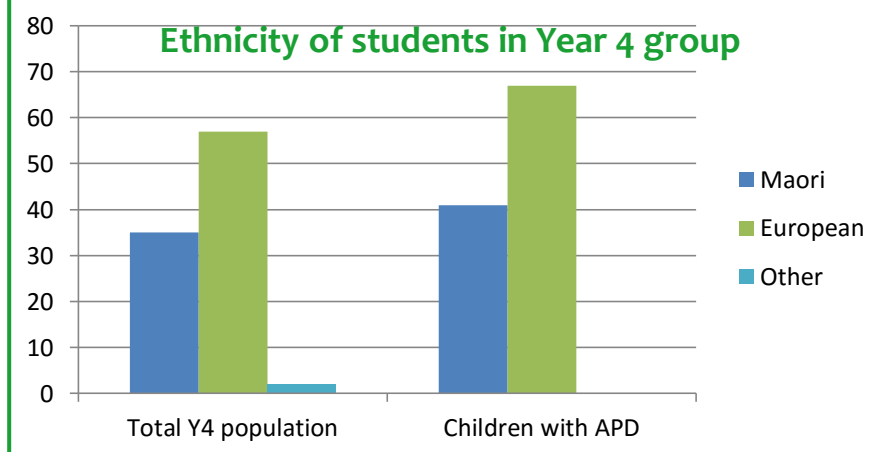


- Children with no hearing issues
- Children with potential APD issues

Gender of students in APD screening 2015



Ethnicity of students in Year 4 group



Partners to continue to engage to do better

- Reporoa Lions Club is passionate about young people doing well and they have supported this project financially, and we would like to continue to collaborate together on this project.
- The Auditory Processing Network have provided screening software and expertise. We hope to foster this relationship.
- Health Reporoa provided nursing staff to check all children's ears before screening began, and wish to be involved again next year.

Action Plan to do better

1. Use staff time more effectively while doing the initial screening app
2. Provide more support and information to teachers and families. Organise professional development sessions for teachers with audiologist Angela Alexander
3. Gather feedback from affected students and families before and after therapy.

3. Specific Learning Difficulty screening

Why is it important?

Although New Zealand has a good reputation for the literacy achievement of its students there is a group of students who experience persistent and on-going difficulties in literacy. This group of students have particular needs or Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD) such as Dyslexia that need to be identified so they can be better supported at school and at home. Literacy is the foundation of all learning so identifying dyslexia early is critical. That way, children can be supported to participate in the full range of social, academic and other learning opportunities at school.

The schools in the Reporoa Valley Cluster acknowledge that there are a significant percentage of students in the cluster who have specific learning difficulties. If our region follows the national statistics there could be between 10 to 15% of the school population affected by some sort of SLD. The cluster principals would like to identify those that are affected by SLD and dyslexia so that they can target support to these students in a more focused manner. There are limited resources available to our schools to carry out this type of screening themselves.

How are we doing?

2014

- Screened 6 primary school students identified by schools for learning difficulties
- screened 40 college students for learning difficulties and referred on 15 for full educational assessments. All students were identified as being at or above their chronological age for intelligence. All have a learning challenge such as Dyslexia or Dyspraxia. These comprehensive reports were then able to provide evidence for SAC (Special Assessment Conditions) for NCEA. They were also summarised and recommendations fed back to the teachers of these students so they could make the necessary allowances to the class programme to make learning more accessible. Adaptations such as handouts, less coping, using devices, recording assessment videos instead of expecting written assessment have all made a significant difference to results for these young people.

Many more of the 40 tested are now on CAPS, which is a Collaborative Action Plan, written by the school SENCO, in conjunction with Teachers and whanau. This is a goal setting plan making sure we are identifying weaknesses and building on strengths for that student. Again, feedback from students and their whanau, is that this is keeping them motivated and willing.

2015

- have screened 2 identified students this year and the schools have put in place support.

2016

- aim is to screen all year 7 students at Reporoa College (approx. 50 students) and provide support and referrals if necessary
- offer screening to Primary schools either blanket across year groups, or identified students.

Partners to engage to do better

- Learning Staircase specialist staff to help with interpretation of data
- Cluster RTLB for specialist knowledge and support for identified students
- School SENCOs

Action Plan to do better

1. Engage the primary schools to screen as many children as possible so that children don't get missed.
2. Investigate support for those identified e.g. employ a SPELD tutor for regular support either at school or after school.
3. Look at providing support software for students with learning difficulties as schools may have difficulty funding this.

Financial Report

INCOME	2016	2015
<i>Fundraising receipts</i>		
Roast Lunch fundraiser	-	9,540
BNZ Golf Day	-	2,857
The Vet Club Golf Day	-	4,416
Reporoa Lions Club	7,000	-
King of the Ring	10,519	-
Give a Little	-	990
General donations	1,600	2,531
<i>Grants and Donations</i>		
COGS	2,987	2,000
First Sovereign Trust	5,028	-
Infinity Foundation	2,000	-
Lottery Grants Board	10,000	24,450
Rotorua Energy Charitable Trust	-	28,935
Rotorua Lakes Community Grants	1,800	-
Southern Trust	3,000	-
Trillian Trust	1,680	-
Westpac		5,000
<i>Total</i>	<u>45,614</u>	<u>80,719</u>
<i>Receipt items</i>		
Interest, dividends, other	969	1,438
<i>Total Income</i>	<u>46,583</u>	<u>82,719</u>
EXPENSES		
<i>Public fundraising costs</i>		
Fundraiser lunch		1,481
King of the Ring	512	
<i>Volunteer and employee related costs</i>		
Salaries and wages	23,564	27,569
Staff training	984	4,944
ACC	276	382
<i>Provision of goods and services</i>		
Administration and overheads	4,032	2,124
Accounting and compliance	482	190
Database costs	1,141	-
Irlen NZ tinting costs	7,828	18,686
Visique Optometrist lenses and frames	7,775	16,282
Hearing & APD costs	2,250	328
<i>Other operating costs</i>		
Audit fees	920	863
RWT	327	475
<i>Capital payments</i>		
Software purchase of licenses	2,172	1,304
<i>Total Expenses</i>	<u>52,263</u>	<u>74,810</u>
<i>Cash Surplus/(deficit)</i>	<u>-5,680</u>	<u>7,909</u>

Evaluation of our service – programme fundamentals and delivery

Programme Fundamentals	Quality Programme delivery	Valued Outcomes
Evidence based - Our programme content, design and structure draws from well evidenced theories and practices.	High levels of engagement are usually seen from families of the children. Schools get regular information regarding student progress through the referral process.	Our programmes are adding value to the work that schools already do.
Funding is sought by Empowered Learning Trust to pay for the resources and support necessary for identified children.	All families can participate if they wish, and will not be financially disadvantaged. The programmes were developed and delivered in response to need expressed by local school principals after observing the results of the Rotorua Principals Association trial in 2010-2012.	Full engagement by community with no one left behind.
There is clear rationale for the target group. Those participating in the programmes are from the target group, and all necessary steps have been taken to ensure their participation is voluntary and ethically safeguarded.	Young people and families are fully engaged in the programme and confidentiality is maintained.	Families learn how more about their child and how to support them in their education
Our programmes are run by appropriately skilled and trained facilitators who have the requisite experience, cultural competency and qualifications necessary to work with the target young people.	There are well structured and consistent delivery processes and systems in place. The two staff delivering the programmes are experienced and professionally trained. They are both well respected in the community. They are professional and responsive to the differences of young people's needs.	Our programmes are professionally delivered, and allow children to reach their true potential.
Evaluation is regular on on-going in all parts of our organisation	We gather regular feedback from stakeholders which is built into any future programmes. Regular reviews are held within the board.	Our programmes reflect the needs of our community.



Kate's Story

Kate was screened for Irlen and visual difficulties by Empowered Learning Trust in 2012 when she was in year 4. Kate was a young lady who excelled in sports and maths but struggled a lot with her reading. After fitting with coloured filters her Mum said, "Now we have a young girl who no longer refers to herself as dumb and is happy to read and write in front of her peers."

Kate never described to anyone what she saw on the page when reading, and to her she thought it was normal to see orange flashes of light and the words dancing all over the page. In her words, she describes her new glasses as "fixing everything". Within an hour of getting her new glasses she was missing in the book section of the Warehouse – not the toy section as usual, and when found she said with a beaming smile, "no more rivers in the words Mum."

Kate's Mum found this moment "a little emotional, as we have spent hours trying to encourage her to read after school, but either her eye hurt or she repeatedly lost her place." Kate had attended after school tutoring for some time, and a week or two after getting her glasses her after school teacher said, "I just can't get over the improvement in Kate's reading – it's unbelievable."

Kate is now at College and after having her tint adjusted a couple of times in the following years, she no longer needs to wear an Irlen tint, and she no longer has Irlen symptoms.



Bailey's Story

Bailey was screened for visual issues in 2014 and his Mum said that he had always been a child to shun any book work. Bailey has a "tremendous memory" which helped him when he first started school. But the longer the books became the harder reading became.

Bailey went to the Irlen Diagnostician and his Mum said, "he struggled all the way through the test with sore eyes and blurry words. He finally settles on a lens colour that worked and he went for a walk with them on." He said things like, "Oh, I can see the bottom of the stairs they aren't blurry anymore" and "the letters don't hurt my eyes."

Bailey gets his lenses and sits down to read the first evening – he read and reads. It's getting late and his Mum asks if he wants to stop there. Normally it's yep and the book is thrown away. Last night though he said, "no I want to finish." His Mum's words to us were: "The financial support is amazing but the biggest support is that you believe in Irlen, you believe in dyslexia and you believe in bringing about an easier life for the ones with these gifts and ultimately you believe in my son and want to make a difference in his life." Bailey's Mum supplied us with his report after a term of wearing his glasses to show us the difference they had made to his learning. His teacher also commented on the amount of progress and his eagerness to learn now that he has his confidence back.

Young people
experience
better self-
esteem

Young people
understand their
learning
challenges

Families feel
supported and
empowered to
help their child

Teachers notice an
improvement in
academic achievement
and behaviour



T's story

T's Mum is a teacher, and she was surprised to learn he had Irlen symptoms when the Empowered Learning Trust screened him in 2013. He was in year 4 and reading below his age when he was fitted with coloured lenses. He now reads at his age, and is finding that he doesn't have to wear his glasses as much anymore.

This young man said, "The words used to move around, but they stay still now with my glasses."



S's Story

This young lady was fitted with Irlen lenses in 2014. She has been wearing them for nearly two years and is due to have her tint re-checked. She was reading below her age, but is now reading at her age and she says, "I couldn't see the words and they were all wobbly. Now the words stay straight."



TA's story

TA's Mum Faye said, "TA didn't like going to school before he got his Irlen glasses, now he looks forward to coming to school. He wears his glasses all the time. He reads much more now and his maths has improved as well. He doesn't complain about school work now."

TA told us that the "letters used to swap' before he got his lenses fitted.

TAs teacher told us in November 2015 that "TA has gone up 12 reading levels since May 2015 when he got his glasses, and he has gone from bottom of the class in maths to the middle of the class."

A principal's story

These are some comments from the principal of Reporoa Primary School:

"The Empowered Learning Trust has very close ties with our local Principal's groups. They regularly consult with us on proposed projects such as Irlen testing... The Empowered Learning Trust has set a precedent for student support and their work is being recognised by other schools. This has resulted in them working in other localities.... We view the trust as a worthy addition to our local resources as we are smaller schools and find it difficult to provide or attract a range of services and programmes to meet the diverse needs of our learners."

Partners for success - Funding Partners

