

# **Resilience and Staff Leadership in Times of Change – Maintaining Self Worth**



Denise Horley and Beverley Booth  
April 2026

# Dr Beverley Booth



Began teaching career in the UK in 1980



Developed a strong interest in assessment,

AfL and student agency in late 1990s -



Influenced by Dylan Wiliam and Paul Black

Immigrated to NZ in 2008 and completed

Doctorate in 2020 (Developing in Teacher  
Assessment Capability)



Experienced school leader across the UK and

NZ, leading through significant change



Principal of Devonport Primary School,

Auckland, for the past 8 years



## Denise Horley

---



- Trained in North Yorkshire at a specialist Teacher Training College
- Began teaching career in the Midlands, UK in 1993;
- Developed a strong interest in assessment, after attending a seminar with Paul Black.
- Worked on formative assessments in schools based on Shirley Clarke's work.
- Took on many leadership roles in UK before moving to NZ in 2008.
- Principal at Sandspit Road from 2024



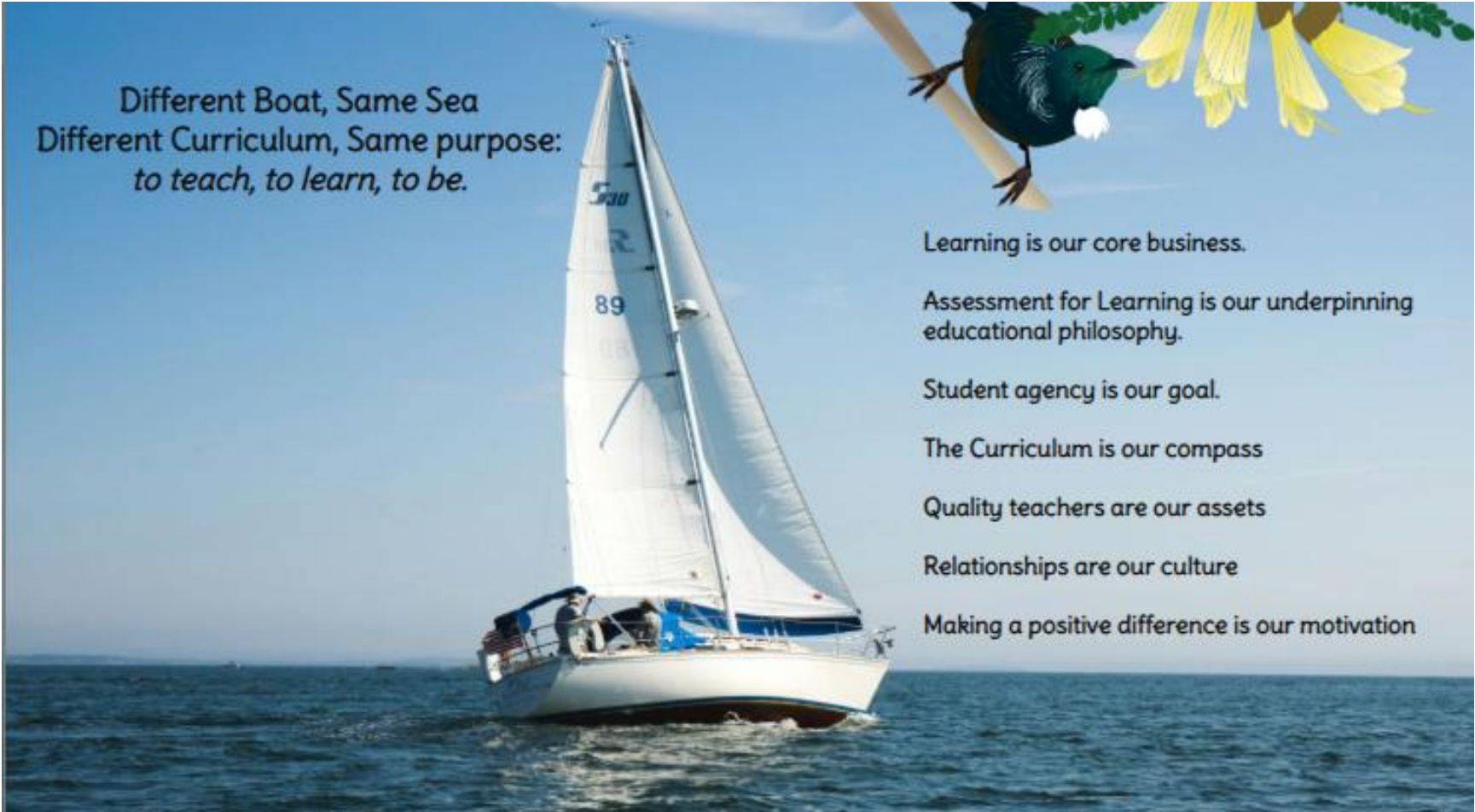
# If Our Logos Could Talk... What Would They Say?



**DEVONPORT**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL



# Navigating a Sea of Change With Learning at the Heart



Different Boat, Same Sea  
Different Curriculum, Same purpose:  
*to teach, to learn, to be.*

Learning is our core business.

Assessment for Learning is our underpinning educational philosophy.

Student agency is our goal.

The Curriculum is our compass

Quality teachers are our assets

Relationships are our culture

Making a positive difference is our motivation



# Navigating a Sea of Change With Learning at the Heart

**Ko Tatou - this is us  
The things that weave  
together to make us who we  
are**

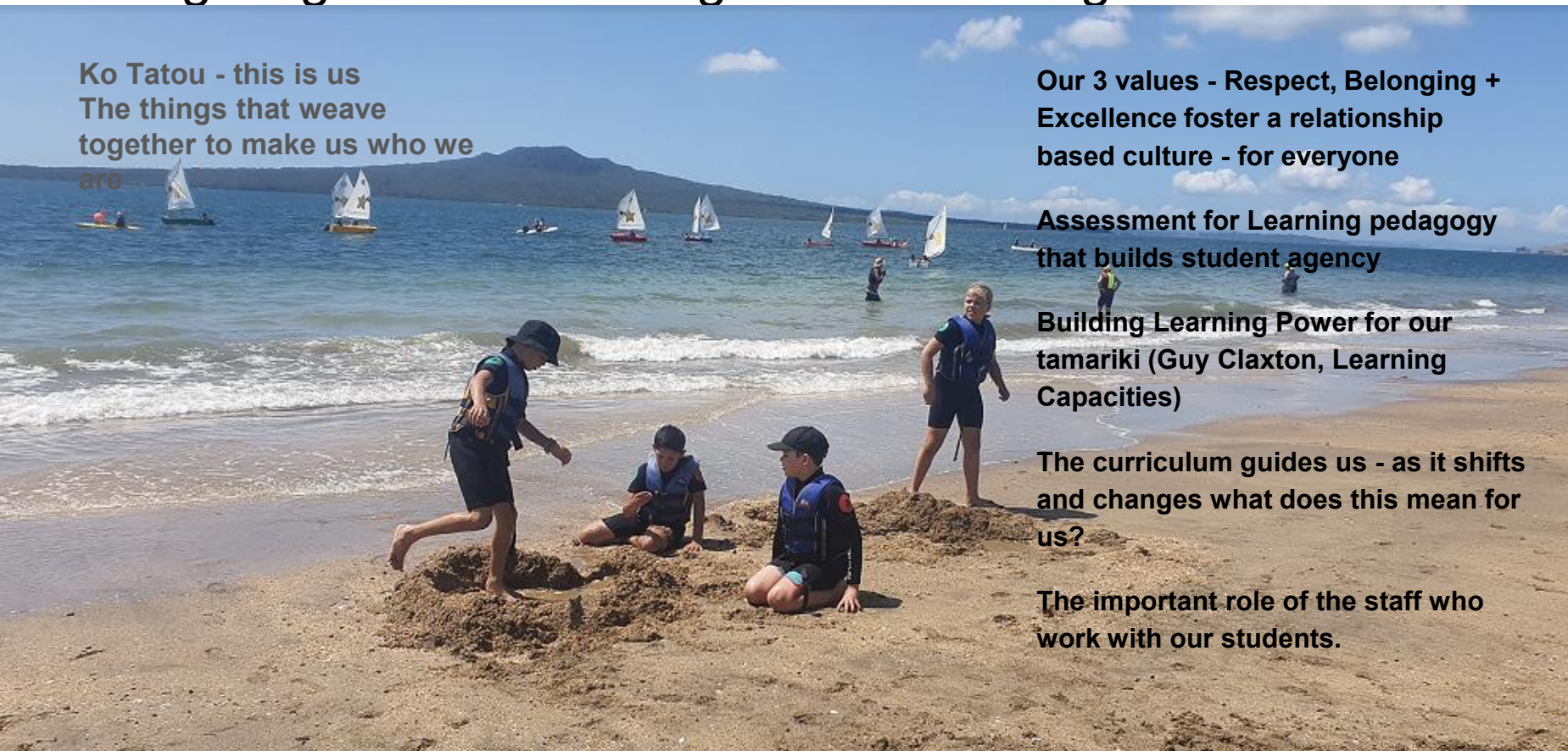
**Our 3 values - Respect, Belonging +  
Excellence foster a relationship  
based culture - for everyone**

**Assessment for Learning pedagogy  
that builds student agency**

**Building Learning Power for our  
tamariki (Guy Claxton, Learning  
Capacities)**

**The curriculum guides us - as it shifts  
and changes what does this mean for  
us?**

**The important role of the staff who  
work with our students.**



# Riding the Waves: Our First Steps

 Quiet the noise

 Remember what we focus on flourishes

 Make strategic decisions

 We know what good looks like

 We know how to make impact

 Be calm and teach well

 Keep it simple - clear the clutter -

 Know what is important for us

 Good teaching practices

 Start with what we know

 Teachers focus on teaching

 Start the year with relationships



# Assessment is at the Heart- Our Tool for Stability

## Assessment as a Foundation

-  Assessment is at the heart
-  A bridge between the teaching and the learning
-  Assessment = logbook
-  Lighthouse Beacons- Feedback and feedforward
-  Self belief and mental toughness
-  Keep sailing towards the new horizon.

## Assessment for Learning & Adaptation

-  Assessment is at the heart - tells us, and the students, how we are going and where to next in relation to the curriculum
-  Assessment, in all its forms, informs our teaching.
-  What happens when your assessment pathway no longer gives information related to the curriculum?
-  Being brave and resilient enough to change tack - time to stop, pause, think and plan



# Leadership Strategies to Keep the Boat Sailing



Keep calm, prioritise and be kind to yourself

Have a clear, shared vision so that everyone is heading in the same direction

Enable collaboration and support

Draw upon experiences and knowledge from previous times of change - you have this.

- Relationships are our culture
- Work collectively - no one sails alone
- Use the collective wisdom-
- Encouraging mentorship, peer observations
- Provide feedback and feedforward
- Know when to take a rest - you can't do it all
- Celebrate the journey/ reach port

Constantly look for impact.

# Conclusions



Acknowledge that it is what it is — stay positive and keep perspective



Take it one step at a time — stay the course and keep moving forward



See this as a time of learning — managing yourself and others is part of the work



Keep children at the heart — anchor decisions in your values and what you know works



Turn the “learning discomfort” into growth and, ultimately, mastery



Believe that you can navigate the change — you have done hard things before



Find your people — those who will support you, challenge you, and steady you on difficult days



Remember: you are not alone



## Your turn



How are you managing the pace of change and bringing your team along with you on the journey?



What leadership steps are you taking to ensure staff resilience?



What advice would you give to your staff about change?



Q & A