



# Newsletter

Term 1, Week 8, 2026

19 March 2026

Dear Parents and Friends of Manukau Christian School,

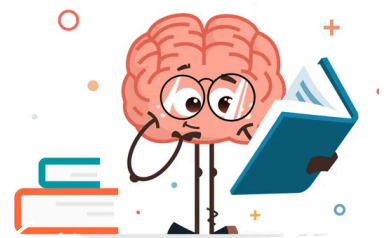
As we move toward the end of Term 1, once again I find it remarkable how quickly the weeks have passed. The cooler mornings and darker evenings remind us that autumn has arrived, and with it the sense that the year is already well underway. It has been a busy and productive term at school. Students have been completing unit tests and assignments, applying themselves to their studies, while also enjoying some memorable events such as the Water Fun afternoon, our modules programme, and the Year 9 Waitawheta tramp. These experiences, both inside and outside the classroom, are an important part of school life. With only a short time left in the term, many students and families will no doubt also be looking forward to the upcoming school holidays.

## Value Added

One of the things every parent wants to know—especially parents who care deeply about their child's education—is whether the school they have chosen is truly making a difference in their child's life. As parents, we want to know that the decisions we have made, the fees we pay, and even the time spent each day in traffic getting our children to school are worthwhile. In other words, we want confidence that the investment we are making in our children's education is bearing fruit.

There are a number of key reasons why parents choose Manukau Christian School. For many families, the most important reason is their Christian faith. They desire to see the seed of faith planted in their children's hearts nurtured so that it grows and bears fruit. They want their children to learn to understand the world through the lens of Scripture and to recognise that Jesus Christ is Lord over every area of life.

Another important factor for many parents is our strong academic focus and the Cambridge curriculum that we offer. We rightly understand that if our children are to live effective and fruitful lives, they must develop their minds and learn to think carefully about the world that God has made. As Christians, we recognise that loving God involves more than our emotions or actions; Jesus taught that we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37). A child's mind does not simply grow into an effective tool on its own. It must be carefully instructed, trained, guided, and shaped so that students learn to think clearly, reason well, and pursue truth with diligence.



At Manukau Christian School, we are very conscious of the investment you as parents are making in order to send your children to our school. Many of us are parents ourselves and understand this investment deeply—the time, the sacrifice, and the commitment involved. As a school, we therefore want to ensure that we are providing real value for that sacrifice. We care about our results, and we want to be confident that what we are doing is genuinely helping you shape your child’s faith, their worldview, and their mind.

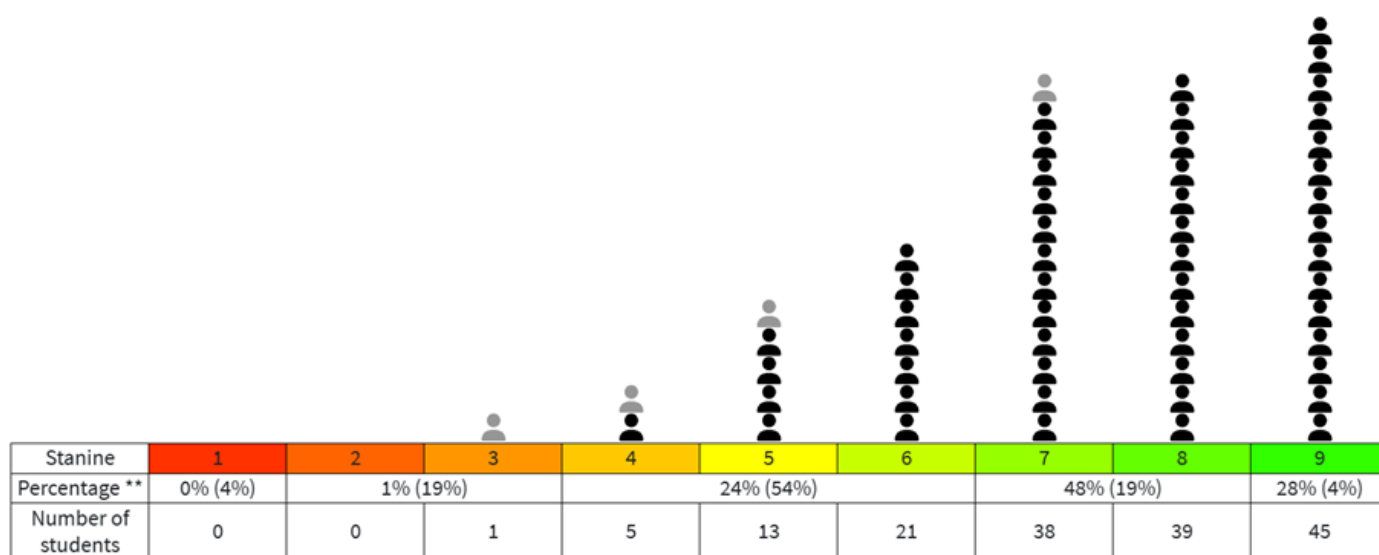
For this reason, we continually monitor our progress and set high goals for ourselves in many areas. Let me share with you one way we track academic progress. Each year in Term 1, students from Year 3 to Year 8 sit Progressive Achievement Tests (PATs). These are nationally standardised assessments developed by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) that measure student achievement relative to national norms. They are widely used across New Zealand schools and provide reliable information about both student achievement and progress over time.

PAT results are reported using a stanine scale from 1–9, where 5 represents the national average and higher stanines indicate above-average achievement. Because the tests are norm-referenced, they allow schools to compare their students’ performance with the national population.

Let me share with you our results across all students in Mathematics.

PAT: Mathematics

Number of Students (Completed)	Mean Stanine
162 / 162	7.4 (5)*



Stanine Distribution ( ● = 3 student )

\* Numbers in brackets provide statistics for all students in the national reference group.

What is interesting about these results is the comparison between the percentages shown. The bracketed percentages indicate the national proportion of students in each stanine, while the percentages before them represent the results at MCS. Nationally, only 4% of students fall

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into stanine 9—the highest category—for Mathematics. At MCS, however, 28% of our students are in this top stanine. In other words, we have seven times the national average of students in the highest category. Instead of the typical bell curve, where most students sit around stanines 3–5, the majority of our students are clustered in the higher stanines of 7–9.

Now the cynical mind would argue that this is because we have students whose parents are invested in their education. Public schools don't have that advantage. And of course there is merit to this argument. Parents who are invested in their child's education enough to select a private school are obviously going to do what they can to ensure that their child succeeds. So the question is, "Does MCS actually make a meaningful difference to a child's academic progress, or are our students simply starting ahead of others?"



One of the advantages of annual PAT testing is that it allows us to measure progress over time. When we track the improvement of students moving from Year 6 to Year 7, the national average improvement in scale scores is 3.3. At Manukau Christian School, the average improvement is 10.0. In fact, 74% of students in our 2025 Year 6 cohort made greater than typical progress. The data strongly suggests that the academic programme and teaching at MCS are not merely maintaining achievement levels but are accelerating learning beyond national expectations.

While no test can measure everything that matters in education, these results give us confidence that the academic programme at Manukau Christian School is genuinely adding value and helping students grow in their knowledge, understanding, and ability to think well about God's world.

## Virtues Update

This term has marked the first stage of a more intentional effort to embed the virtues of wisdom, strength, and humility into the daily life of our school. Our focus for Term 1 has been humility, particularly the idea of being teachable. Throughout the term we have explored what it means to listen to correction, learn from others, receive feedback without defensiveness, remain open to new ideas, and submit cheerfully to rightful authority. These ideas have been highlighted through Scripture passages and biblical narratives, helping students see that humility is a key part of Christian character. Alongside this teaching, virtue certificates have been awarded at assemblies, and teachers have been intentionally using virtue language in their classrooms. Conversations with students about both successes and mistakes are increasingly framed in terms of whether we are demonstrating wisdom, strength, or humility. It has been encouraging to see this shared language beginning to take root, with teachers reminding students that at MCS we aim to be the kind of people who pursue wisdom, show strength in the face of difficulty, and walk in humility before God and others.



*Scott Kennedy*

**Principal**

# Parent Teacher Discussions

Our teachers have spent nearly a term getting to know your child, and they are now well-equipped to provide good feedback. This is a wonderful opportunity to gain insight into your child's progress and set goals for the rest of the year. If you need more than 10 minutes, make an appointment for another day to speak with the teacher.

Discussions are scheduled for **Thursday 26 March 2026**. A notice has been circulated and emailed with the booking link. Please ring the office if you need assistance with booking. **School will finish at 12:30pm on this day.** Please be prompt to collect your children.



## Dates to Remember

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>16</b> Primary Assembly 8:40am	<b>17</b> Eye on Nature (Y6)	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>23</b> High School Assembly 8:30am	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Parent-Teacher Interviews 1:00pm School Closes 12:30pm	<b>27</b>
<b>30</b> St John First Aid (Y5&6)	<b>31</b>	<b>1 Apr 2026</b>  Letterland Day (Y1)	<b>2</b> High School Assembly 8:30am Primary Assembly 8:50am School Closes 12:30pm	<b>3</b>  <b>HOLIDAYS</b> Good Friday
<b>6</b> <b>HOLIDAYS</b>	<b>7</b> <b>HOLIDAYS</b>	<b>8</b> <b>HOLIDAYS</b>	<b>9</b> <b>HOLIDAYS</b>	<b>10</b> <b>HOLIDAYS</b>
<b>13</b> <b>HOLIDAYS</b>	<b>14</b> <b>HOLIDAYS</b>	<b>15</b> <b>HOLIDAYS</b>	<b>16</b> <b>HOLIDAYS</b>	<b>17</b> <b>HOLIDAYS</b>
<b>20 Apr - Term 2</b> High School Assembly 8:30am Primary Assembly 8:50am	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Photolife	<b>24</b>
<b>27</b> <b>ANZAC DAY</b> School closed	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1 May 2026</b>  Swimming Y3-6

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# Devices and Homework

This year, in the high school, we are moving toward a model where 95-100% of homework does not require digital technology. Our goal is to promote focused, distraction-free learning that helps students grow in diligence, self-control and responsibility.

In practice, this means:

- Students should be able to complete assigned homework using pen and paper, textbooks, printed material and study notes.
- If homework does require a device, teachers will clearly communicate this on Thinkwave.
- When technology **is** needed, you will see a short notice that includes:
  - the week and due date
  - what technology is required
  - the maximum amount of device time needed
  - the specific purpose for the device use



This should give parents confidence about when screen use is legitimate. If no message appears on Thinkwave stating that a device is required, you can assume the homework should be completed without one.

## High School Enrolment

Many parents with children in Years 7 and 8 will already be thinking about the transition into high school and what the pathway into Year 9 looks like at Manukau Christian School.

In the past, entry into Year 9 was not automatic. Both internal and external students were required to apply for a place in the high school. With our recent restructuring, however, and the inclusion of Years 7 and 8 within our Junior High School, this process has now changed. Students currently enrolled at MCS will have automatic entry into Year 9.

However, entry into the Senior High School (Years 10–13) will now be by application during Year 9. The purpose of this checkpoint is to ensure that the program we offer continues to be a good fit for each student. The Cambridge pathway we offer is academically demanding, and we want to make sure that students entering the senior years are well positioned to flourish and benefit from the opportunities it provides.

For clarity, students who are **currently** in Year 9 have already applied for entry into high school for 2026, and therefore will have automatic entry into Year 10 next year.

## Trustboard

The School Trust Board meets quarterly to provide governance and strategic oversight for the school. Current members are Byron Smith (Chairman), Jono Willis (Vice Chairman), Rob Darby, Janet Simons, Catherine Faletanoai, and Elmer Reitsma. We are grateful for their faithful service, wisdom, and strong vision as they help guide the ongoing development and future direction of the school.

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# Water Fun Afternoon

Our recent Water Fun Afternoon was a wonderful way to enjoy the warm, sunny weather together. Students moved around a variety of stations filled with water-based activities, bringing plenty of laughter and excitement.

There were sponges to squeeze and toss, water balloons to launch and use for the 'egg and spoon' races, water pistols for friendly soaking, a paddling pool to fish for ping pong balls - which some students used to cool off - and even a slippery slide that proved to be a favourite for many. The sound of happy squeals of laughter filled the grounds as students made the most of the sunshine. To finish the afternoon, everyone enjoyed a refreshing ice pop, which was the perfect treat after all the energetic fun.

A big thank you to our parents for their support, which helped make the afternoon such an enjoyable and memorable event for our students.



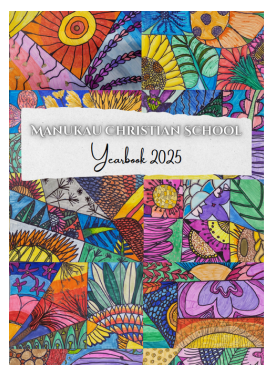
# Year 5 - Clay Pinch Pots

Students recently enjoyed a hands-on art lesson creating their own clay pinch pots. This simple but effective technique involves shaping a small ball of clay and gently pinching it between the fingers and thumb to form a small bowl or pot.

The activity required patience and care as students worked to shape the clay evenly while keeping the walls of their pots strong and balanced. It was wonderful to see the focus and creativity as each student produced a unique piece.

Once completed, the pinch pots were left to dry and will later be ready for decorating. The lesson provided a great opportunity for students to develop fine motor skills, creativity, and an appreciation for working with natural materials.

Well done to our young artists for their thoughtful and carefully crafted creations.



## Yearbook 2025

We hope you've enjoyed looking through the Yearbook and reminiscing about the many wonderful moments from 2025. It is a special record of the life of our school — capturing the learning, achievements, and memorable events that make our community unique. We are very grateful for the generous donations from families that help make the production of the Yearbook possible each year.

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# Junior Science Workshop

As part of the Modules Programme, our high school students recently hosted a Junior Science Workshop for the younger classes. It was wonderful to see the older students stepping into leadership roles as they guided the juniors through a variety of fun and engaging science experiments. The juniors were full of curiosity and excitement as they observed reactions, asked questions, and participated in hands-on activities. It was a great opportunity for learning, collaboration, and building connections across the school.

The Year 2 students had a wonderful afternoon working with high school students to make their own bubble-blowing mixture. They then tested how long their bubbles lasted on different surfaces, including plain paper, tin foil, cardboard, cling wrap and bubble wrap. It was an afternoon filled with learning and lots of fun!

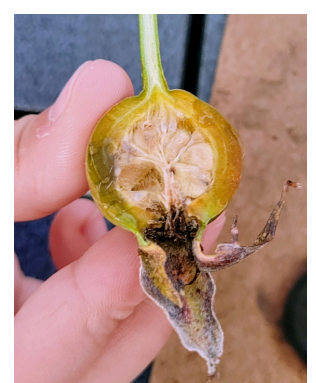


## Year 5 Dissections



Our science lesson recently took a closer look at flowers — much closer! Like surgeons with tweezers, magnifying glasses, and a healthy dose of curiosity, students carefully dissected flowers to discover what is really going on inside these beautiful blooms.

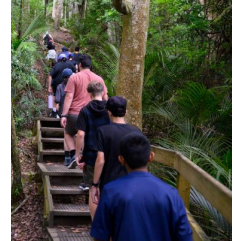
Petals were gently removed, stamens inspected, and pollen investigated as students uncovered the different parts that help a flower grow and reproduce. There were a few surprised faces along the way as students realised that flowers are much more complex than they first appear! By the end of the lesson, petals were scattered, curiosity was satisfied, and students had gained a new appreciation for the fascinating science hidden inside the garden. Safe to say, our flowers will never quite be looked at the same way again!



# Clevedon Hill Hike



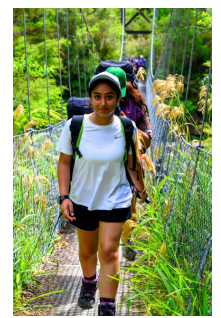
*Practising for the Waitawheta tramp with a hike to the top of Clevedon Hill.*



# Waitawheta Tramp

The annual Year 9 overnight tramp to Waitawheta Hut was once again a great success and enjoyed by all who attended. This year marked the 12th and final time the tramp will run in its current Year 9 format. However, students need not worry—the tramp will be moving to Year 10 in the future. This means there will be no Waitawheta overnight tramp next year, but our current Year 8 students will have the opportunity to experience it in two years' time.

We were blessed with excellent weather, with warm temperatures and very dry tracks, making the journey especially pleasant. Highlights included swimming in a very cold stream, exploring up and down the waterway, and enjoying the glowworms after dark. Our time away also featured a number of lively games, including Scum, Mafia, and Empires. Getting to sleep, however, proved slightly more challenging—between the snoring echoing from certain corners of the boys' cabin and a number of midnight excursions from young men whose bladders appeared to belong to much older gentlemen, the night was not entirely peaceful! A particular highlight was Mr. Aloiai's devotional on the story of Boniface and the great Oak of Thor, which challenged students to think about what we are seeking to achieve at school and encouraged them to live as counter-cultural agents for the gospel, praying that God might bring reformation in New Zealand.



# Parables - High School



Recently, high school students studied the Parables during their Bible lessons. Bringing them to life through acting them out helped make their meaning especially clear and relevant.

## Assemblies



*Above: Josiah Willis, Tarore House Leader, delivering his parting message*

Our fortnightly assemblies for both primary and high school students provide a valuable opportunity for the school community to come together. It is a special time for students to connect, as well as to join in praise and worship. Assemblies also provide a platform for students to share with their peers, grow in character, and for the school to recognise those who have demonstrated our school virtues and positive character through the week.



Mrs du Plessis demonstrated two different attitudes with a simple illustration about planting seeds. Harold believed he knew best and did not follow the instructions, while Sam carefully read and followed them to be sure she was doing the right thing. Students learnt how pride prevents growth, while humility allows us to learn and flourish. Just as seeds need good soil and water, we need to place God at the centre of our lives and grow in humility with the help of the Holy Spirit.



*Above: Week 8, Year 1-6 student awards*

# PE Shed Design

We are very grateful to Mr Ray Oosterbeek for designing and building a functional storage system for all the PE equipment in our PE shed. The new system allows easy access for our junior students and has been purpose-built to store the equipment we currently have, with space available for future additions.

This has made a huge improvement to the organisation of the shed and has helped classes access equipment much more quickly. It is also much easier for teachers to see what is available, which helps inspire them to use a wider variety of equipment in their PE lessons.



# Counties Tennis Tournament



Congratulations to Liam Nai (Year 13) for winning the Senior Boys Singles Tennis Title at the recent 2026 Counties Manukau High Schools Tennis Tournament. The tournament attracted a record number of entries this year, with over 100 matches played throughout the day. Liam demonstrated impressive skill, discipline, and perseverance throughout the tournament, ultimately securing the title. Well done Liam.

# Sports Equipment



Thank you to the families who have been collecting the Yummy Fruit stickers. From the points redeemed, we gained a new set of Kiwi Tag bands, a Kī-O-Rahi ball, and a variety balls for junior classes. These are a fantastic addition to our PE equipment and will be enjoyed by many students. Please keep collecting! Your support makes a big difference in helping us maintain, improve and acquire more PE equipment for next year. Thanks again for your continued support.

# Aircraft Engineering



Year 11-13 students who enjoy practical work, engines and aviation may apply to take part in Air New Zealand's School Holiday Hangar Famil on Thursday 16 April 2026. This three hour tour of the Auckland Maintenance Base, offers a taste of aircraft maintenance and associated careers, including Aircraft Maintenance/Aeronautical Certificate. For more details, scan the QR code to the left, or email [EngandMaintworkexp@airnz.co.nz](mailto:EngandMaintworkexp@airnz.co.nz).

# Matters for Prayer

## *Give thanks for*

- a smooth ERO visit
- a wonderful Year 9 overnight tramp, for good relationships built as well as fun and safety
- our fantastic PAT results



## *Please pray for*

- former students Ming Chen and Jessica Goodwin and their upcoming wedding!
- Mrs Harris to make a full recovery from her concussion
- our school community – staff parents and students to develop in humility more and more so we can grow in our learning about God and His world

## Scripture

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”



*Matthew 22:37-40*



## Term Dates 2026

<b>Term 1</b>	29 Jan to 2 Apr 2026
<b>Term 2</b>	20 Apr to 3 Jul 2026
<b>Term 3</b>	20 Jul to 25 Sep 2026
<b>Term 4</b>	12 Oct to 9 Dec 2026 (Y1-6) 7 Oct to 8 Dec (Y7-10) 7 Oct to 20 Nov (Y11-13)

School finishes at 12:30pm on the last day of each term.

