

Principal's Column

Brent Gray



Who remembers the New Zealand Tourist and Publicity Department advertisement from the 1980's titled 'Don't leave town 'til you've seen the country'? It show a young lad off on his big overseas adventure running into people who tell him all sorts of things about New Zealand that he doesn't know about. The ad was trying to highlight how much New Zealand has to offer the kiwi traveller and adventurer. I am sure a number our children have been on an overseas trip already without having ventured to the other side of the Cook Strait before doing so, maybe not even the other side of the South Island!

During Term Three at Mt Somers Springburn School, we run a 'winter options' programme and aim to make use of the local environment as best we can. The obvious place to go would be Mt Hutt for skiing, and indeed, 26 of our pupils did just that last Friday, ably assisted by a group of dedicated parents and one of our teachers. This is not unusual, as there are group of 'local' schools who do this and Mt Hutt group them up for lessons, all at a rate that makes the six week programme not out of reach for a number of families. Thumbs up to Nicola, and the Ski School Team, for your organisation of this for 2015, as day one ran very smoothly.

As well as our cooking and our sewing groups, we have a group that will have a gymnastics experience in Ashburton. Another 35 children are part of a group we are calling 'Explore Ashburton', which as our districts main centre, has a lot to offer. We didn't quite get to Ashburton last Friday, as we had the opportunity to take this group ice skating at Staveley. This is an amazing community run facility that works to put the money raised back into their local hall. Surprisingly enough, there was a large number of that 35 we took skating that had never been there before. But, perhaps that is not that much of a surprise, as the whole point of the 'Explore Ashburton' experience is to give a number of our pupils a taste of what is at their back door. The trips will include visits to the Aviation Museum, Art Gallery and Museum, Ashburton Domain, EA Networks Centre and the Public Library. The other positive part of this experience is that they can be done for little or no cost.

This is just part of what our district has to offer and I am looking forward to being with the children as they experience these places because, as we said, for many of them it will be for the first time. I think it often comes down to us taking for granted what we have at our doorstep without having a real appreciation of what it has to offer.