NORTH WEST COLLEGE

Academic Excellence + Creative Arts

2025

YEARBOOK

New Zealand Charter School
Established January 2025



Our First Year at a Glance

2025 has been a milestone year for North West College. We opened as a new charter school in West Auckland with a clear purpose. We want to bring together strong academic learning and rich creative opportunities in a calm, caring environment where every student is known.

Across the year our students have settled into new routines, made friends, and begun to see themselves as successful learners. Mornings have focused on firm foundations in literacy, numeracy and science. Afternoons have opened up space for creative arts, digital design, sport, outdoor learning and wider projects.

Highlights from 2025

- Foundation classes in English, maths and science established across all year levels
- First whole school exhibitions of student art, writing and design
- Regular drama and performance classes, leading to our first entries in local festivals
- Growing confidence in digital tools, from basic skills through to advanced projects
- A programme of sport and outdoor experiences that helped students build fitness, resilience and teamwork
- Community events that brought families into school to see learning in action











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From the Principal

A year of foundations and firsts

Dear North West College parents, caregivers and students

What a year it has been. Opening a new school is always a leap of faith. You trust that the vision on paper will come to life in real classrooms, with real young people and real families. I am grateful to say that in 2025 it has.

From the first day, our focus has been clear. We want calm, purposeful learning environments. We want small classes where each student is noticed. We want high expectations that are matched with the support students need to meet them.

There have been many firsts this year. Our first whole school events. Our first exhibitions of student work. Our first reports, interviews and celebrations of learning. Along the way we have refined our routines, adjusted timetables, and learned more about what helps our students succeed.

I have been particularly proud of the way our students have engaged with both academic and creative work. They have tackled new texts and concepts, built strength in mathematics and science, and taken part in thoughtful class discussions. They have also painted, scripted, performed, composed, coded and designed. Their courage to try new things and share their work with others has stood out.

Thank you to our teaching and support staff for the energy, skill and care they have brought to the year. Thank you to our Board for their governance and steady backing. Most of all, thank you to our families for choosing North West College and for the trust you have placed in us.

We look forward to building on these foundations in 2026, welcoming new students, and continuing to grow a school that combines academic strength, creative opportunity and genuine care.

Michelle Randles
Principal
North West College









From the Founders

Message from Sherida Penman-Walters and Ken Pemberton, Founders



Why North West College, why now

When we first began talking about North West College, we could see a need in this part of Auckland for a school that combined clear structure with rich learning. We wanted a place where students could experience strong academic teaching and serious creative work, in an environment that felt calm and safe.
North West College has been designed as a small school with small classes and clear expectations. The day is structured so that students begin with core learning in English, mathematics and science. The afternoon programme opens into creative arts, digital projects, sport and time outdoors. This balance reflects our belief that young people learn best when they are stretched in different ways.

We are also committed to knowing our students well. The size of the school allows teachers and leaders to track each learner's progress, to respond quickly when extra support is needed, and to celebrate growth. We want our students to feel that they belong here and that their efforts matter.

This first year has confirmed that there is real appetite for this kind of schooling. Families have travelled from across West Auckland to enrol. Students have shown that they can rise to clear expectations when the environment is orderly and the teaching is thoughtful.

There is still plenty to refine and build. We will keep listening to students, families and staff as we develop our programmes, and we will keep working to make North West College a place where young people can learn deeply and create freely.

Thank you for being part of the first chapter of this story.









Learning in the Classroom

Building strong foundations

This year began with getting the basics right. Students joined us from many different schools, so the first job was to get to know each learner, set clear expectations and build simple routines that worked in every classroom.

In English, students read short stories, articles and longer texts, then used these as models for their own writing. They practised close reading, built vocabulary and learned how to plan, draft and edit so their ideas were clearer on the page.

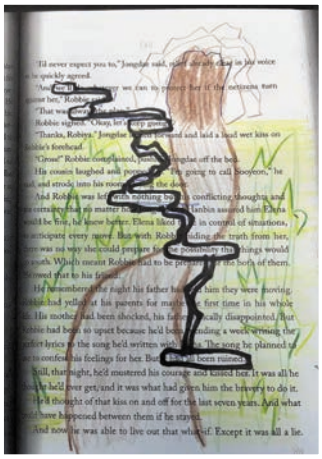
In maths, teaching focused on number sense and problem solving. Early assessments helped teachers spot gaps and strengths. Lessons mixed short explanations with practice and discussion, so students learned to explain how they reached an answer.

Science introduced students to careful observation and questioning. Classes planned and carried out simple investigations, recorded results and linked what they saw to real life.

As the year went on, classes moved into longer projects, geometry and statistics, and more hands on science. Students worked more independently and in groups, and teachers used assessment to adjust programmes and share progress with families. By the end of Term 4 students were not only achieving more, but also seeing themselves as capable learners, ready to build on this in 2026.















Creative Arts and Design

Visual arts

Creative arts have been a defining feature of our first year. Afternoon programmes have given students regular time to make, perform and respond to different forms of art.

In visual art, students experimented with drawing, painting, collage and simple printmaking. They learned how to use line, colour and texture to communicate ideas, and how to develop an initial sketch into a finished piece. Classrooms and corridors have steadily filled with their work.

Students have practised how to sketch lightly, build layers, take feedback and try again until a piece feels finished.

One big focus was on identity and place. Students created portraits with layered backgrounds that included maps, patterns and symbols that matter to them. These works say a lot about who our students are and where they feel they belong.

Another highlight was the clay coral reef project. Students rolled, pinched and carved clay into coral forms, then glazed and fired them to create small reef bowls. Along the way they talked about ocean life and how fragile these ecosystems are.





















Drama, music and storytelling

Drama classes introduced movement, voice and character. Students worked with short scripts, devised scenes, and took part in small group performances. For some this meant learning to project their voice and hold a role in front of others. For others it meant learning to listen, take turns and support their peers on stage.

Music sessions used voice, body percussion and simple instruments. Students explored rhythm and pattern, tried out basic composition tasks, and reflected on how music can convey mood and story.

Writing has linked closely with the arts. Many students wrote poems, scripts and short stories that were later performed or illustrated. Exhibitions and sharing evenings gave families a chance to see and hear this work.

The standard of creative output by the end of the year showed what can happen when students are given time, materials and encouragement to explore their ideas.



















Digital Creativity and Media

Learning to design, communicate and think critically online

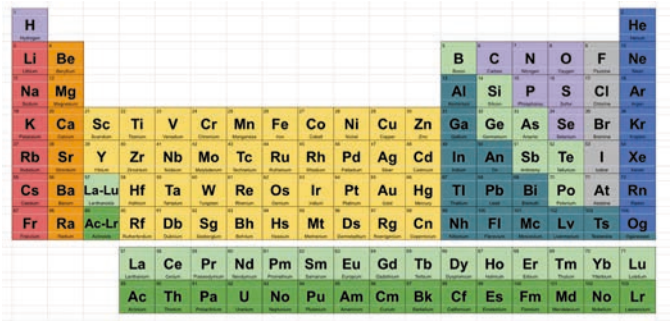
Digital learning this year has gone beyond basic skills. Students have been learning how to use digital tools to think, design and communicate thoughtfully.

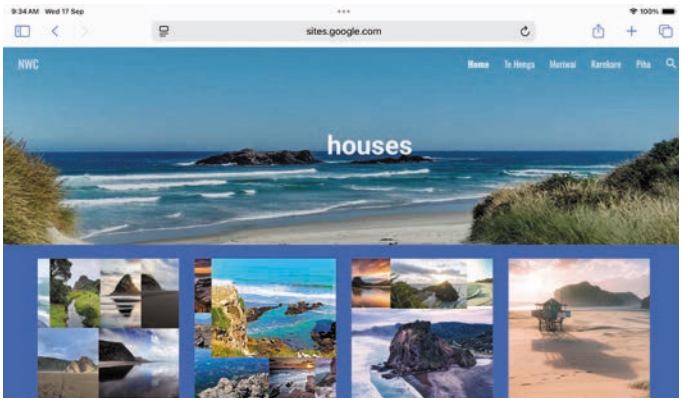
Early in the year we made sure everyone could manage core skills such as file saving, safe logins and simple document work. Once these were in place, classes moved into more creative projects.

Students used design software to create posters, logos and simple layouts. They tried out animation tools to bring stories and characters to life. Some groups planned and filmed short videos, learning about framing, sound and simple editing. Others used digital tools to build slideshows and infographics that helped explain their learning in other subjects.

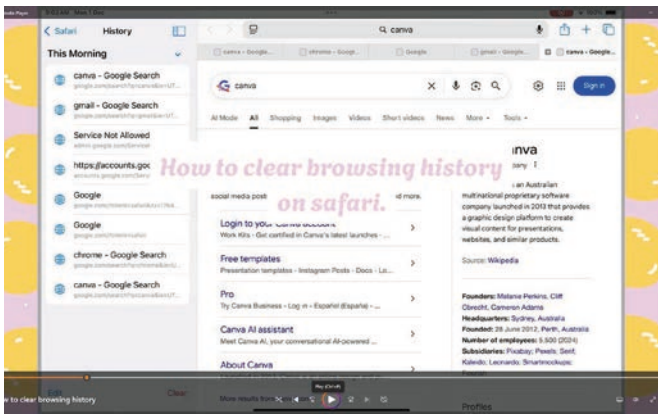
Alongside these projects, we talked often about what it means to be a responsible digital citizen. Students learned to think critically about what they see online, to protect their privacy, and to be kind and accurate when they communicate.

Digital skills will continue to be a key part of our programme. The aim is not just that students can use devices, but that they can create thoughtful, well designed work that stands up in the real world.

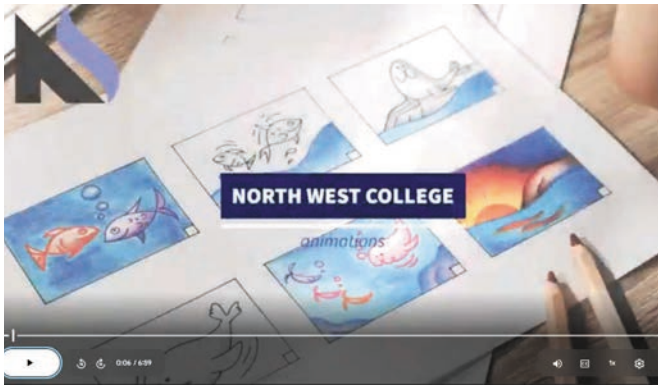


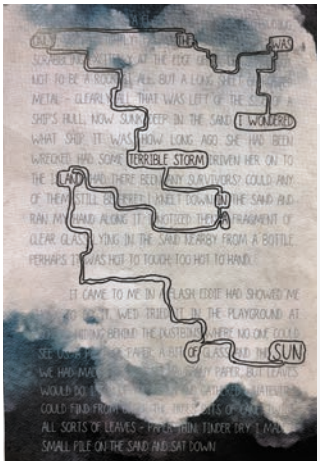














Sport, Adventure and the Outdoors



Confidence, movement and teamwork

Sport has had its own afternoon each week. Students have played basketball and badminton, tried trampolining, rock climbing, ten pin bowling and golf, and used local gyms and recreation centres. Sessions have built core skills such as serving, footwork, passing and shooting, then given time for short games so everyone could put those skills into action.

Teams have been mixed often so students learn to work with a range of classmates. The focus has been on game sense, fair play and everyone getting a turn, rather than on formal competition. For some students it has been a chance to find a code they really enjoy. For others it has helped rebuild confidence in physical activity.

These active afternoons have balanced the academic focus of the mornings and given students a positive way to finish the day together.

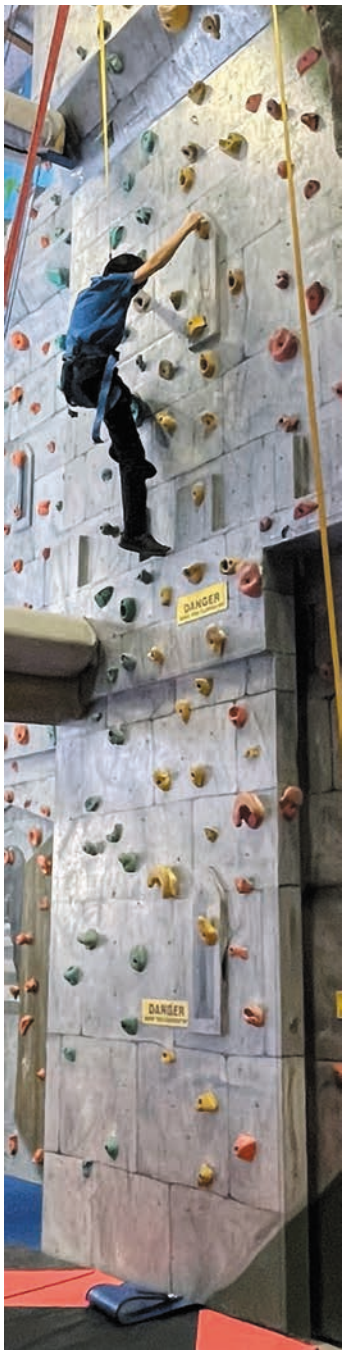












Learning Beyond the Classroom

Education outside the classroom (EOTC)

Some of the most memorable learning in 2025 has taken place beyond our school. Our Waitākere Ranges day gave students the opportunity to explore local bush tracks, observe native plants and animals, and reflect on kaitiakitanga and our responsibility to care for the local environment. Being out in nature together helped strengthen friendships and gave many students a sense of pride in their wider community.

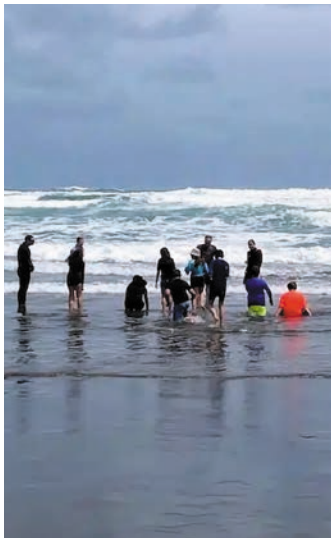
At Muriwai, students learned vital beach safety skills. Through practical activities and guided sessions with lifeguards, they gained a deeper understanding of rips, surf conditions and how to keep themselves and others safe near the water. For a number of students, this was their first structured learning experience at a West Coast beach.

Local history walks and visits helped students connect classroom learning in Social Sciences with the stories and places around them. They were able to see how people, land and culture intersect in West Auckland, and to think about their own place in that story. For many students, these were the moments that will stay with them long after the year's tests and assignments are forgotten.



















Community, Events and Celebration

Showcasing learning and building connections

Across the year we have been deliberate about inviting families into school to see learning in action. Information evenings, student showcases and exhibitions have helped to build a sense of shared purpose.

Term 1 and 2 included our first parent information events and early reporting to families. Later in the year students hosted classroom exhibitions of art, writing and project work. International Morning brought families together to share food, stories and traditions, and gave students a chance to present aspects of their own backgrounds with pride.

As we move into the end of the year, our showcase and prize-giving evening brings many of these strands together. Students share performances, displays and reflections, and we take time to acknowledge effort, progress and service.

Awards and acknowledgements

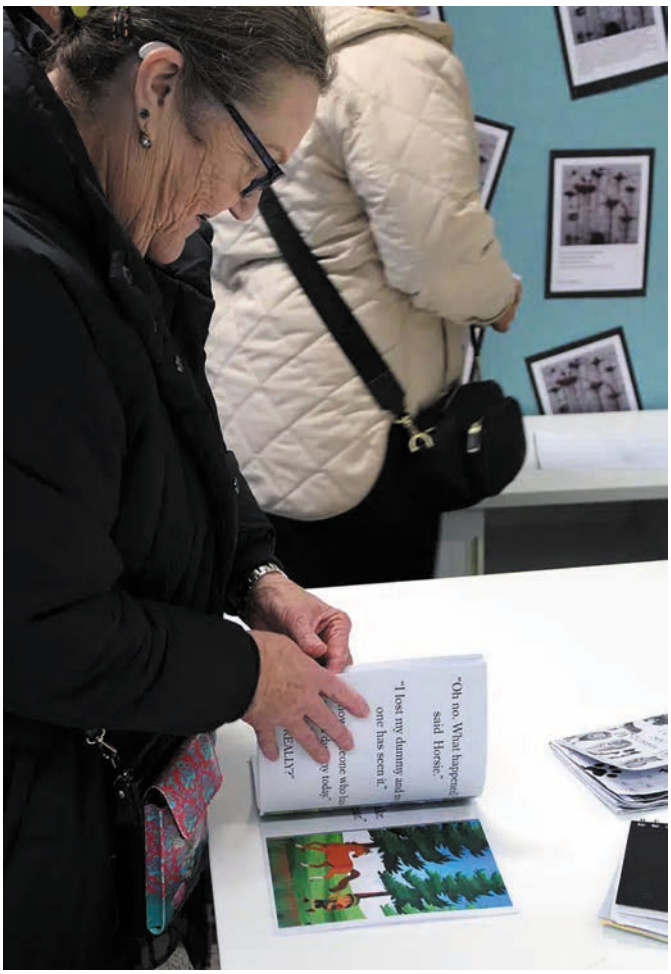
At prizegiving we recognise students in a range of areas, including academic progress, creative achievement, leadership, contribution to school culture and commitment to our values. We also acknowledge those who have overcome particular challenges or have supported their peers in quiet but important ways.

Detailed award lists are provided at prizegiving and on our website. Here we simply record our appreciation for every student who has worked hard, supported others and contributed positively to the life of the school.

Thank you

Thank you to all students, families, staff and Board members who have shaped this first year. Thank you to those who have volunteered time, provided transport, attended events, and encouraged both their own children and others.

North West College exists because of your trust and your willingness to partner with us. We look forward to continuing this work together.

















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