

13 March 2004

Rob Clarke

To Whom It May Concern

I first met Rob Clarke at the end of 1995 when I interviewed him for one of the establishment positions at Tahatai Coast School, where I was Principal until August 2001. Rob was one of over 300 teachers from throughout the country who was considered for the twelve positions at the school, which opened in January 1996. As a year one teacher in Auckland, Rob had already developed an enviable reputation as a teacher and was actually approached to consider the position. He immediately impressed me as a young teacher with enormous potential.

Rob taught at Tahatai Coast School until July 1997, at which time he left to take up a position working for MagnumMac in Christchurch. From there he was involved as an ICT project leader and facilitator for a cluster of schools in the city. Rob has recently been living and working in the UK.

Rob would have to be without doubt one of the most remarkable and talented young teachers I have ever had the privilege of working with. He exhibited excellent curriculum knowledge and actively participated in a comprehensive out of hours, weekend and holiday professional development programme that focused on curriculum and ICT integration, learning to learn, the Inquiry process and learner centred educational strategies.

His relationships within the school were always superb. He developed exceptional relationships with his students who respected and admired him for his firm and fair approach. Parents were especially appreciative of the quality of the educational programme that Rob delivered. He had a particular gift of establishing rapport with “at risk” and Māori students. He was open and approachable, and I only ever had positive comments from parents over Rob’s work with students.

Rob has been involved in professional writing and presenting. He wrote several articles for educational publications, and presented at many conferences, including Innovations 2000 in Rotorua.

The work Rob did in the school easily demonstrated his ability to be innovative and flexible. He led a number of creative projects within his class and within the school. Even as a relatively young teacher he played a key role in several of the school’s curriculum areas.

His planning, teaching and assessment abilities were good. Rob was often called upon to speak with visiting teachers, many of who had been teaching for a number of years. He did this with poise and authority. His documentation was always complete, but more importantly, he was able to demonstrate the links between outcomes, planning and classroom practice.

Rob was always willing to contribute to the corporate life of the school. He was a colleague to whom others would seek out for advice and guidance. He has a fantastic sense of humour yet retained the ability not to put other staff offside with him. The staff, parents and students fondly remembered him long after he had left.

Rob fully participated in and ran weekend and after hour professional development sessions, attended school social and fund raising activities, took evening parent sessions as well as weekend sport and cultural activities. He is adaptable and will work well with any group, team or whole staff.

I would rate Rob as an excellent teacher. His classroom management skills and curriculum expertise were outstanding. He is a gifted teacher who incorporates learning styles, multiple intelligences and a wonderful ability to develop the potential in every child. His classroom was always innovative and buzzing, with children involved in a wide range of learning activities.

Rob is one of those rare teachers who will always go the extra distance, be it taking a sports teams, running out of hours classes or participating at school and social functions. He has an active personal life, which helps make him such a well-rounded teacher. I have kept in close contact with Rob since he left the school and have had the opportunity to catch up with him in the UK in 2001, as well as several times when he has returned to NZ for holidays.

I would have no hesitation recommending Rob to any teaching position he should apply for, be it back in New Zealand or overseas. I know that any employer would find him to be a most valuable colleague to work alongside.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should further information be required.

Yours faithfully

Mark Beach
Director of Teaching

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