

# CASE STUDY: St. Joseph's School (Orakei)

December 2021

Understanding how StepsWeb improves the development of students' literacy skills across New Zealand schools.



**6**  
decile



**81**  
students



**52**  
StepsWeb  
logins



## CASE STUDY: St. Joseph's School (Orakei)

St. Joseph's is a Catholic Primary School Y0–Y6, situated in Orakei, Auckland. There are currently 81 students across Y0–Y6.



**52**  
StepsWeb  
logins



**5–11**  
Age range of  
students



**81**  
students



**6**  
decile

St. Joseph's ethnicities consist of:  
African/African Origins, NZ European, NZ  
Māori, Australian, Chinese, Samoan, Latin  
American/Hispanic, Tongan, Other South East  
Asian, British/Irish

## Why StepsWeb?

St. Joseph's School (Orakei) wanted to improve its students' literacy ability through interactive and fun digital exercises.

St. Joseph's recognised a need to provide structured literacy intervention for students who they had identified required further support in spelling, phonological awareness as well as providing additional help to their ESOL students. Following the recommendation from a teacher who had previously used StepsWeb, they implemented the programme at the start of 2021.

Starting with small groups of learners from Year 2 to Year 6, StepsWeb was introduced as a supplement to their learning. Not only did they see a marked improvement in their spelling, reading and writing, but they also noticed a change in their students' enthusiasm and confidence. Due to the programme's success, the use of StepsWeb expanded throughout the school and became a useful tool for whole-class and remote learning.

**"We have seen improved confidence and improvement in student learning and participation over the year."**

–Pam Robertson, teacher at St. Joseph's

The school chose StepsWeb as they felt it would greatly benefit their students from Y1–6 who needed further support with:

- Reading and Spelling
- Learning difficulties
- English as an additional language
- Phonological awareness
- Comprehension and Vocabulary



“We saw some children **achieve up to four levels** in the year and a **huge boost to their confidence**.

Our parents were also very happy to see their children making progress and enjoying the programme.”

**Pam Robertson - class teacher**



## How StepsWeb was implemented

StepsWeb was introduced to St. Joseph's by a teacher, Pam Robertson, in 2021 after setting the programme up in two previous schools she's taught at. Pam had been using StepsWeb since 2013 after receiving training to use the programme.

After using StepsWeb 30 minutes everyday, either individually or within groups, Pam had seen **“excellent success for all students on the programme”** with students from Year 3 through to Year 6, especially for those students 'at risk' in both reading and writing. During that time, Pam saw student engagement and confidence grow as they maintained continued progress using StepsWeb.

“Setting up and implementing StepsWeb in the school was **quick and easy**.”



Standardised spelling test



Printables



Wordlists



Online Programme



Teacher reporting



Games & additional resources



Teacher training webinars



Workbooks

# The St. Joseph's School Journey

St. Joseph's signed up to StepsWeb

March 2021

After seeing improvement, more students were introduced to the programme.

May-July 2021

New Zealand went into lockdown. More students joined the programme with free logins.

August 2021

Teachers improved their training with StepsWeb Lockdown Webinar series.

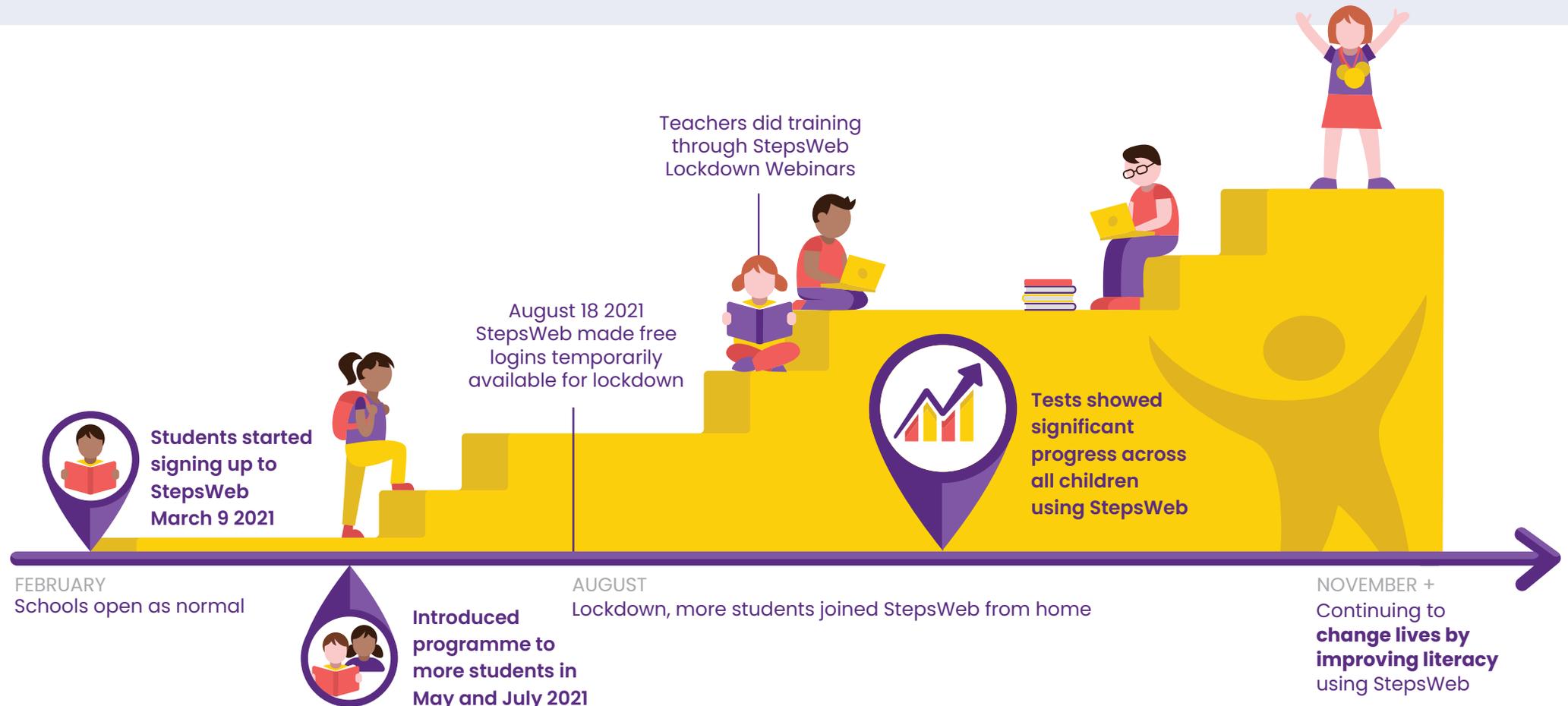
September 2021

Spelling tests showed significant improvement across **all** students.

October 2021

Due to proven success, St. Joseph's plan to continue using StepsWeb within their school for 2022 and onwards.

2022



# Key Findings

## Teacher's observations

- All children in the programme showed progress. (See data on next page)
- **Parents are happy** and satisfied their children are being helped in a meaningful way.
- An improved **confidence boost** to writing, reading and spelling.
- **Quick and easy** to set up.
- **Training and help** are readily available. The online webinar series is extremely beneficial.
- Works well in the **classroom or remotely**. Is compatible with chromebooks, Mac, Windows and Android.
- Students are engaged with the programme and are incentivized to do well to receive gold medals. **Learners are rarely bored.**
- The whole programme has worked well and is comprehensive – **computer work, books and games.**
- Programme is **affordable.**
- The programme suits a **variety of learning styles** – visual, hearing and kinaesthetic learners. Students are tested and put into their level immediately. The work is tailored to the needs of the child.

“My reluctant boy writers have no problem with going onto the computer work or playing the games.”

**Pam Robertson – class teacher**

## What the students say

- 
- C.** “I like how it’s fun spelling.”
  - L.** “Makes me want to learn spelling.”
  - T.** “Helpful. Has helped me in my spelling and is entertaining.”
  - J.** “I think StepsWeb is great because it helps kids in fun ways. I like StepsWeb because it helps me in such different ways.”

# Steps to Success

Room 6 findings

In Term 3 the students from Room 6 spent 61 hours on StepsWeb activities and nearly all students saw an accelerated progress in literacy.

## Teacher Feedback

"Initially three students entered the programme on 9/03/21.

Seven more students were registered in May and two in July.

These children went to Room 4 for 30 minutes each day to do the StepsWeb programme under the supervision of Mrs McCrystal."

**Carol Trotter - class teacher**

**100% of students from Room 6 showed progress with an average of 1 ½ years after just 6 months of using StepsWeb.**

**66% of students increased by over 1 year spelling age after 6 months.**



		Date student entered the programme	First Spelling Test results	Spelling Test results in Term 3	Increase in spelling age after using StepsWeb
March	1	9/03/21	8y 0m	9y 6m	+18m
	2	9/03/21	6y 9m	9y 2m	+27m
	3	9/03/21	6y 4m	7y 3m	+11m
May	4	11/05/21	7y 4m	8y 3m	+11m
	5	11/05/21	5y 2m	8y 5m	+39m
	6	11/05/21	6y 7m	7y 2m	+5m
	7	11/05/21	6y 7m	9y 7m	+36m
	8	11/05/21	7y 8m	10y 0m	+28m
	9	20/05/21	7y 1m	8y 9m	+20m
	10	21/05/21	8y 9m	10y 0m	+15m

# Steps to Success

## Room 7 findings

Four students entered the programme from Room 7 with four more joining in May.

Initially, these children went to the library for 30 minutes each day to do the StepsWeb programme under the supervision of Mrs McCrystal, a teacher aide. They then moved into the classroom as the students using StepsWeb increased.

		Date student entered the programme	First Spelling Test results	Spelling Test results in Term 3	Increase in spelling age after using StepsWeb
March	1	8/03/21	9y 2m	10y 2m	+12m
	2	8/03/21	8y 5m	9y 3m	+10m
	3	8/03/21	8y 6m	9y 4m	+10m
	4	8/03/21	5y 0m	5y 8m	+8m
May	5	6/05/21	9y 7m	10y 8m	+13m
	6	6/05/21	9y 2m	11y 1m	+23m
	7	6/05/21	8y 5m	9y 0m	+7m
	8	12/05/21	9y 7m	10y 4m	+9m

Student 5, an ESOL student, increased by over 1 year in spelling age after just 6 months of StepsWeb.

Student 4, a dyslexic student who really struggled with spelling, increased by 8 months.



## Teacher Feedback

During lockdown, more students signed up with the free logins StepsWeb provided over this time. The programme has been very useful and enjoyed during the home-based learning.

**"I have fully endorsed this programme due to its effectiveness and ease of use. This programme addresses individual needs and supports learning."**

- Pam Robertson, class teacher.

"My students enjoy doing their StepsWeb work. Very rarely do I have to remind them to do their StepsWeb work after play. They particularly love the games and play these with other children in the class."

Pam Robertson - class teacher

# Teacher Feedback



"The pupil I helped that day was a girl from Year 5. She absolutely was like a duck to water with StepsWeb. It was so great to see as previously I have seen her struggle in this area. She seemed to really enjoy the simplicity, and the bright easy graphics helped. I thought I would have to give her more assistance, but she actually flourished just being left alone to work through the exercises. I noticed her smiling to herself as she attained correct marks.

Several students in Room 1 - Y1 - where I work predominantly are on the StepsWeb programme daily. These students obviously love it as there is never any problem getting them to go off to the library with Shirley-Ann. In fact they run off when called! These two students would certainly not do anything they didn't want to."



Debbie Pace - teacher aide

"The programme StepsWeb sets the students up for learning and achievement in a simple but positive way. The format suits all.

StepsWeb is very helpful for my ESOL students who struggle with the English language and the idioms in the language, i.e. Island children who take what they hear literally and have trouble processing a statement which has a double meaning. Example: 'he was over the moon with his marks.' Because they take the statement literally, they question how he could be over the moon? These children had problems to start with when in this area but once they understood it was a sentence to create a picture in their mind then they began to enjoy it.

They also enjoyed the balloon letters to be fitted into the correct words. Those who did badly to start with did not mind doing the exercise again till they scored a required level. Some students did not achieve well in the original assessment and decided the programme was too easy and boring, but a reassessment to get their true level got their interest back. They achieved further goals well and quickly.

The student I have who has dyslexia achieved really good scores with word recognition and building sentences, a task he has always struggled with. The programme gives him confidence and encourages his hand-eye coordination.

During lockdown they have been able to go online and achieve goals the same as they were able to do in class at school."



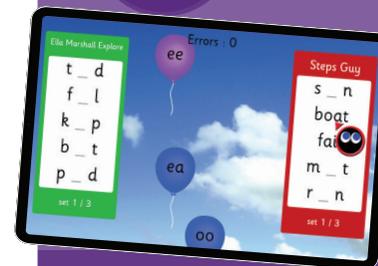
Shirley-Anne McCrystal - teacher aide/retired teacher

"I have found the StepsWeb programme to be a highly engaging and effective literacy tool for all my students, especially my priority learners. As a teacher in a composite classroom, the programme is fantastic for differentiating learning and ensuring students receive a structured programme that is tailored to their individual needs.

Spending most of last term in lockdown, the programme has been an invaluable home-learning tool. I have received a large amount of positive feedback from parents who have highly praised both the content of the programme and their child's engagement in their learning"



Olivia Walker - scale A teacher



"The programme StepsWeb sets the students up for learning and achievement in a simple but positive way. **The format suits all.**"

Shirley-Anne McCrystal - teacher aide



“StepsWeb has brought a new air of excitement for learning and achievement to our school, in the area of spelling and reading especially.

Students have been highly engaged and show commitment to the programme. This has been able to continue during level 3 and 4 lockdown times away from school. The students are motivated by the programme itself, but also through the knowledge they are given of their progress.

It is easy to manage, and children can work independently in class, or be supported in a breakout room with a Teacher Aide.

**In one year it has already made a noticeable difference to our learners,** particularly those who have struggled throughout Primary School in the area of literacy.

We will certainly be continuing with this programme next year.”



Sue Bennett – Principal

## Summary

St. Joseph’s was looking for a literacy programme that could keep their students engaged and meet the literacy needs of their struggling learners. After seeing the success of StepsWeb in their student’s test results, improved confidence and enthusiasm, St. Joseph’s extended the programme to include more students within their school.

### St. Joseph’s have seen improvement in the following areas:

- Spelling
- Reading
- Writing
- Phonological awareness
- Engagement and confidence towards students’ own learning

StepsWeb met their needs and exceeded their expectations once they saw excellent progress with not only their struggling learners, but for all students on the programme.

St. Joseph’s plans to continue **changing lives by improving literacy** by using StepsWeb within their school next year.



Happy Parents



Happy Teachers



Happy Learners

# Advice from StepsWeb

*Changing lives by improving literacy*

- **Structured Course** – A logical literacy progression for every learner in your class. No more reinventing the wheel – or setting and marking spelling tests! Easily teach and monitor learners working at their own individual levels – one of the most important ways to stop struggling learners from falling through the gaps.
- **Use existing wordlists or customise your own** – Reinforce any phonic pattern, rule or a specific topic you are covering in class – in any alphabetic language! StepsWeb will create a range of online and printable reinforcement – even for lists you create yourself!
- **Core literacy skills** – Already built into the Course and supporting activities for younger or struggling learners: phonological awareness, phonic knowledge and skills, reading fluency, days and months, and memory skills. Ideal for dyslexic learners.
- **Extension learners** – As well as the higher Course levels, your more advanced learners can work through word study materials. Homophones, prefixes and suffixes, word roots, vocabulary – and much more!

## Supporting Teachers

**StepsWeb makes it easy to manage your budget** – Cost-effective and flexible. As well as giving you extensive diagnostic information about your learners, your educator login enables you to add student licences at any point (charged pro-rata for remaining time on your licence). You can also deactivate or delete students and re-allocate their licence to a different student.

**Support and training** – Online PD, webinars and Support Site articles will help you get familiar with StepsWeb, but Zoom training can easily be arranged. Full technical support is available, of course, but you can also consult our leading education experts for specific advice if necessary.

**Subscribe to our newsletters** – Keep in the loop on new information and updates. We think you'll be amazed at some of the developments still to come!

**Suitable for:**



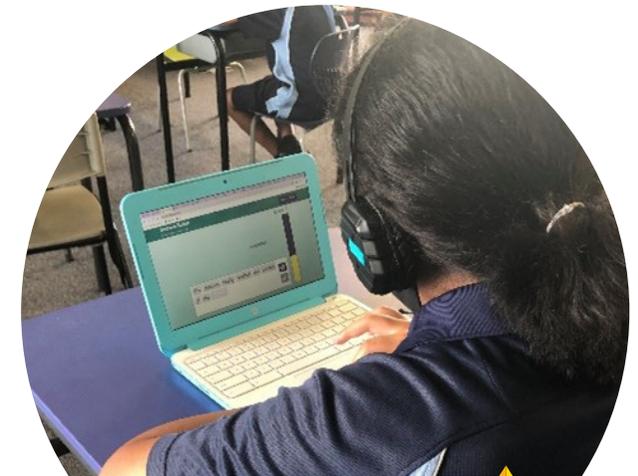
Chromebooks



Windows &  
Mac



Tablets  
Android & iOS



Comprehension

5

Vocabulary

4

Reading Fluency

3

Phonic Knowledge

2

Phonological Awareness

1

Every activity on StepsWeb is based on research into how literacy develops – even the games!

StepsWeb provides a structured, cumulative approach to literacy, which encompasses and develops the five key elements often referred to as the Five Big Ideas in Beginning Reading (USA National Reading Panel, 2000).

To learn more about these methods, visit our website:

[www.stepsweb.com](http://www.stepsweb.com)  
[info@stepsweb.com](mailto:info@stepsweb.com)

