

Meet Justine Gibson, a Resource Teacher of the Deaf (RTD)

Based in Auckland, Justine joined the Ministry of Education in 2020



Justine's story

Justine has been a Resource Teacher of the Deaf (RTD) Ko Taku Reo since 2020, and has been teaching since 1994.

Before working as an RTD, Justine had teaching experience at a Special School, Primary School, and a Secondary School. She also held several Management positions in those schools. Justine became interested in the RTD role when as a teenager, she became fascinated by sign language after watching a play about a teacher and Deaf student. This led her to a career in Deaf education, in a variety of settings.

Justine's day-to-day

Referrals are made to RTD services by Audiologists, AoDC, and SENCo/LSCs. Regional coordinators receive the requests and then they get distributed to RTD based on the geographical area.

Justine works across Primary, Intermediate, and Secondary schools. She visits students face-to-face once a week and works in the classroom once a week. She often uses games for Auditory Skills Training. All children are supported by an Individualised Education Plan (IEP) developed collaboratively with whanau, teachers, support staff, SENCo/LSC and the Specialist Teacher (RTD).

Reflecting cultural values in her work

Learners are often from a different culture than Justine's, and she recognises the importance of acknowledging, understanding and valuing each of their backgrounds and the importance the role of whanau has at every step. She also recognises the importance of valuing Deaf culture, modelling and promoting skills to join social situations, encouraging children to attend KIT (Keep In Touch Days) with other DHH children and incorporating NZSL as part of her teaching programme.

Rewards and challenges of the role

"The highlight of my job arriving at a school and the child is excited to work with me, student attendance/engagement at school is also very rewarding, especially when our mainstream teachers have a very inclusive approach to their classroom practice."

"The challenges mainly sit in the technical side of the knowledge regarding the audiology. You also need to have your own sense of belonging, as transitioning to become an RTD is challenging. I had worked as an Outreach Teacher, so I had previous knowledge of holding a caseload and to travelling between schools."

Future aspirations

With Ko Taku Reo, career pathways could lead to being a Team Lead, Regional Coordinator role, or become part of the Executive team. There are also pathways to go to the Curriculum Development team as well.

Resource Teacher of the Deaf – Role information

Resource Teachers of the Deaf are employed Ko Taku Reo Deaf Education (previously Kelston Deaf Education and Van Asch)

Role responsibility:

- work collaboratively with parents, caregivers, teachers and other specialists to support the language, learning and social needs of children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- develop language, communication and cultural skills and knowledge in the context of the New Zealand Curriculum
- use a variety of specialist and general assessment tools and strategies, to identify specific needs and set achievable goals
- prepare education programmes and check and maintain hearing technology
- collaborate with a range of professionals from education, health and community organisations, and agencies.

Qualifications and experience needed:

- a Bachelor's teaching qualification

- to have attained, be working towards, or willing to work towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching
- A minimum of 3-5 years mainstream experience.

A Resource Teacher of the Deaf must have knowledge of or skills in:

- New Zealand Sign Language
- Deaf Culture
- Te Whāriki, the New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum and/or the NZ Curriculum/ Te Marautanga o Aotearoa
- Inclusive Teaching Practice
- Managing Hearing needs in a variety of settings
- Language and literacy development
- Effective communication, teaching, research and planning skills.

Career development

Becoming an RTD will give you the rewards and challenges of the job itself, as well as opportunities to develop your career. With further training, other roles an RTD can move into within the deaf education centres include:

- Classroom teacher for deaf students
- Advice and guidance roles
- Early intervention teacher
- Specialist resource teacher in literacy, language, Deaf culture or visual communication
- Leadership.

You will:

- be supported and supervised by experienced professional colleagues
- be kept up to date with the latest evidence
- take part in ongoing professional learning and development
- have opportunities to share and extend your knowledge and skills.

Further Information

Learning support careers and professional development

For more information about the role of a special education adviser and working in learning support, visit our [learning support careers page](#)

Learning support scholarships and study awards

If you're interested in a career in learning support, you may be eligible for a scholarship or study award. Find out [more here](#)