Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

# The New Zealand Curriculum

## Te Mātaiaho

*Mātai aho tāhūnui,*
*Mātai aho tāhūroa,*
*Hei takapau wānanga*
*E hora nei.*

*Lay the kaupapa down*
*And sustain it,*
*The learning here*
*Laid out before us.*

Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

# Foreword

Tēnā koutou katoa

It is my honour to introduce the full draft updated New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho, including the final English and Mathematics and Statistics learning areas. This has been the work of many and, once fully finalised following your feedback, will provide a foundation for learning that supports equity and excellence for all our school aged students.

It has been almost 20 years since our New Zealand Curriculum was last fully updated. In that time much has changed in our country and in our world. Our curriculum needs to reflect these changes and help prepare our children and young people for the world they will shape.

In 2018, a Ministerial Advisory Group was established to investigate how the curriculum could be strengthened to help lift progress and achievement. This led to the Minister of Education agreeing, in 2021, to refresh the New Zealand Curriculum to reflect New Zealand and be more explicit about what learners need to understand, know, and do.

In 2024, a second Ministerial Advisory Group was established to investigate how work on refreshing the curriculum could be further strengthened by being knowledge-rich and using the science of learning. As a result the Minister of Education agreed to adjust the approach to the refresh to make sure the curriculum is based on the acquisition of important knowledge, as well as skills, and is structured in a year-by-year well-sequenced way to support learning.

Throughout this process, the focus on providing a New Zealand Curriculum that is clear about the learning that cannot be left to chance has not changed. We are also committed to creating systematic data and feedback loops that support us to be "an education system that learns" so that attention and resources can be directed to need. Both of these are important conditions for delivering on the promise of equity and excellence in education outcomes.

Our draft updated New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho provides a clear framework for teaching and learning for teachers and kaiako to bring to life with their students in responsive ways. It is unique to New Zealand, embracing our bicultural heritage, multicultural society, and our place in the Pacific and the world.

Teachers, principals, support staff, parents, whānau, and communities all have a vital role to play in enacting this for and with our children and young people. By working and learning together, we can support every student to be equipped with the knowledge, practices and capabilities they need to flourish — now and into the future.

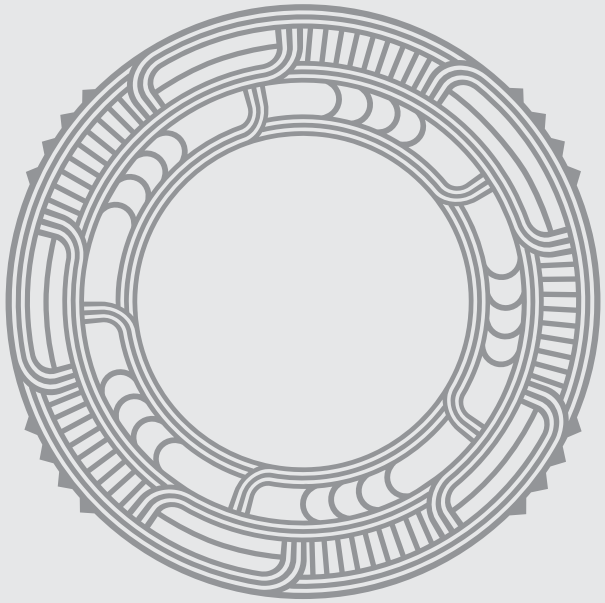
My thanks to all who have been involved so far in the development of the New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho – and thank you for your ongoing contributions and feedback as we continue to finalise and bring to life our new New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho. This curriculum will be stronger for the diversity of perspectives and expertise that contribute to it and for the unwavering commitment you show to every child and young person getting a world-leading education.

**Ellen MacGregor-Reid**

Secretary for Education

# Te Mātaiaho: Contents and Whakapapa





The main objective of schooling in New Zealand is to support every student to attain their highest possible educational achievement and grow a love of lifelong learning in a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment.

**The whakapapa underpins the system and emphasises the important role schools and communities have in delivering the national curriculum in ways that are responsive to their students' needs.**

'mātai', meaning to observe, examine, and deliberately consider.


is
Mum
C1
Reading Books
What Do Writers Write?
stories
reminders
letters
poems
notes
a e i o u
a e i o u
e-mails

# The guiding kaupapa | Mātairangi

***Mātai ki te rangi, homai te kauhau wānanga ki uta, ka whiti he ora. | Look beyond the horizon, and draw near the bodies of knowledge that will take us into the future.***

WHY

## Purpose

The main purpose of schooling is to support all students to gain the knowledge and skills they need to be lifelong learners, experience success, and to fully participate in jobs and careers, society, and their communities.

To support equity and excellence, reflecting the Treaty of Waitangi | Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho provides clarity about what all students should know, understand, and be able to do as they progress through their schooling. This clarity will reduce variability in what is taught, bridging the knowledge gap by ensuring access to the same rich knowledge for every student. The curriculum also reflects the key characteristics of how people learn, based on what we know works best from the science of learning and insights from education professionals.

The curriculum focuses on disciplinary content – sequenced, coherent, conceptual knowledge and practices that reflect how each learning area helps students to understand, interpret, and contribute in the world. As students acquire broad and deep disciplinary knowledge across the learning areas, they apply it in increasingly complex contexts, demonstrating capabilities such as problem solving, creativity, and self-regulation.

The knowledge in the learning areas is carefully selected for the New Zealand context. It includes national and global content, including knowledge that reflects te ao Māori, our place in the Pacific, and our multicultural society. It supports schools to provide opportunities for students to learn tikanga Māori and te reo Māori. Schools and kura, working with hapū and iwi, may choose to include local mātauranga in their teaching and learning programmes.

The curriculum is laid out in deliberate, year-by-year teaching sequences within and across learning areas. These sequences should be used to design and plan programmes and units of learning. Each step builds on what has come before, allowing students to revisit key ideas and deepen their understanding over time. A well-sequenced and coherent curriculum helps teachers identify and respond to learning needs before knowledge gaps compound, supporting equitable outcomes and higher levels of achievement over time.

This is illustrated in the following ‘Learning area structure’ diagram.

Providing a clear framework for instruction across all learning areas frees teachers and kaiako to focus on building exciting teaching and learning programmes that contextualise learning; bring the curriculum to life for their students in responsive learning environments; and support and extend learners to deepen and enrich their learning.

# Learning area structure

A **knowledge-rich curriculum** builds students' understanding by carefully sequencing disciplinary knowledge and practices in each learning area.

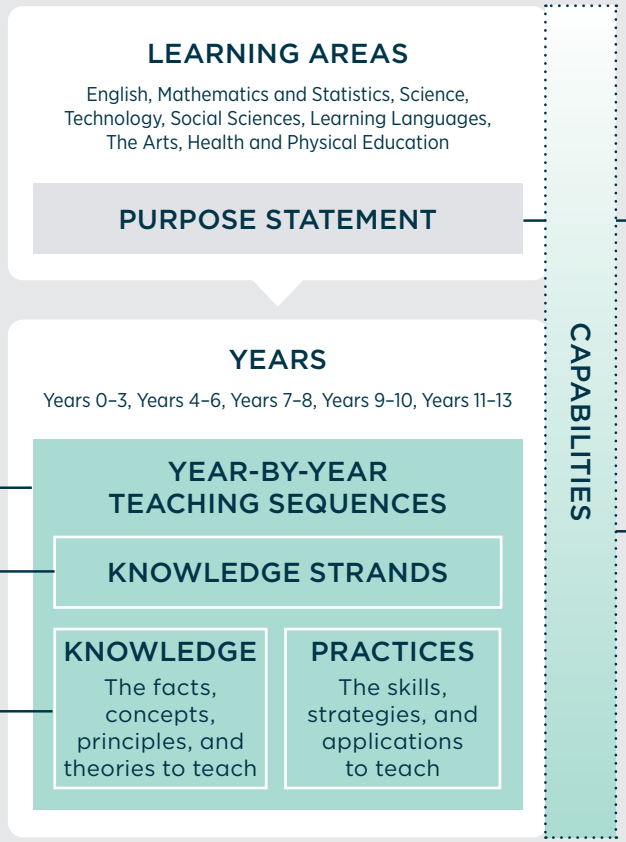
1

**A knowledge-rich curriculum**

underpinned by the science of learning

2

The **science of learning** helps us understand the key characteristics of how people learn, to inform teaching practice.




The **teaching sequences** make clear what teachers are expected to teach and what students are expected to learn each year.

4

3

For each learning area, a **purpose statement** describes why the learning area is important and identifies its important conceptual understandings.

**Knowledge Strands** are the major organisational components within a learning area. They group related knowledge and practices into distinct areas of disciplinary focus.

5

7

Through engaging with the disciplinary knowledge and practices of the learning areas, students develop **capabilities** essential for life long learning.

Together, **knowledge** and **practice** statements support students to build deep understanding and fluency in each learning area.

6

# Growing a love of lifelong learning | Mātaitipu

***Mātaitipu hei papa whenuakura.* | *Grow and nourish a thriving community.***

WHY

Our vision is to put ambition and achievement at the very heart of the education system, so that it is aspirational, equitable, and deeply inspiring — where lifelong learning is a journey, and every student is empowered to fulfil their unique potential. Our schools and kura will educate the innovators, carers, and leaders of tomorrow, fostering knowledge, responsibility, creativity, compassion, and curiosity. Education will be a source of enjoyment and purpose, embracing diversity and ensuring that every student — regardless of background — is supported to thrive. Together, we will build a future where learning is not just preparation for life but a vital part of living well.

# Strong foundations for all students | Mātainuku

***Mātai ki te whenua, ka tiritiria, ka poupoua. | Ground and nurture the learning.***


To realise our vision, we must make sure all students are developing capabilities that enable them to adapt and apply their learning in diverse and changing contexts. Literacy and maths are a critical part of this and require a sustained and deliberate focus particularly in Years 0–8.

## Capabilities

Capabilities are broad, holistic attributes that enable students to adapt, apply and transfer their learning in diverse and changing contexts. They encompass knowledge, skills, dispositions, values, and attitudes and are embedded within and across the knowledge and practices of each learning area.

Developing capabilities is essential for lifelong learning and for participating effectively in society. They underpin both deep curriculum learning and future readiness.

These capabilities are explored within the learning areas of this knowledge-rich curriculum, emerging authentically from the content rather than being added as a separate layer in the curriculum. Teachers need to notice where capabilities are emerging within the content and recognise and respond when students need explicit support to develop them. Just as capabilities are embedded in each learning area, assessment of capabilities should be embedded in the learning of knowledge and practices.

The following capabilities are common across all learning areas. Rich learning experiences within and across learning areas support students to progressively develop these capabilities.[1]

- **Communication** which includes actively listening and participating, adapting self-expression to the audience and context, and confidently and safely using digital tools to access information and communicate with others.
- **Relating to others** which includes, working productively together, acting with personal integrity and responsibility, respecting the views and opinions of others, and demonstrating ethical and cultural understanding and responsiveness.
- **Self-management and self-regulation** which includes setting personal goals and reviewing them, managing behaviour in a range of situations, organising and planning how to go about a task, and adapting strategies for success.
- **Problem solving** which includes identifying problems, justifying ideas, linking causes with consequences, critical thinking, and testing and evaluating solutions.
- **Creativity** which includes experimenting to shape and explain thinking, demonstrating intellectual curiosity, and the ability to look at things from multiple perspectives, co-creating and refining ideas and encouraging imagination.

1. Refer to supplementary materials on Tāhūrangi.

# Literacy and maths

Developing students' literacy and maths[2] knowledge and skills provides them with capabilities that are critical for communication, creativity, participating in society, and being lifelong learners.

The English learning area provides a clear teaching sequence for the explicit teaching of reading and writing knowledge and skills, which are foundational to being literate. Reading, writing, and vocabulary development are also embedded authentically across all learning areas to support students to develop the disciplinary literacy practices that enable them to acquire and to apply that knowledge to enrich their reading and writing. While the terms reading and writing are used, these expectations are inclusive of alternative methods of communication, including augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and Braille.

Similarly, the Mathematics and Statistics learning area provides a clear teaching sequence for the explicit teaching of maths. There are authentic opportunities to develop both maths and literacy disciplinary practices in creative and engaging ways within the delivery of other learning areas, such as the Arts and Social Sciences.

## Explicit teaching of reading, writing, and maths is a priority in Years 0–8, and there are specific time requirements

The teaching and learning of reading, writing, and maths is a priority for all schools using The New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho. To ensure all students are getting sufficient teaching and learning time for mastering reading, writing, and maths, each school board with students in Years 0 to 8 must, through its principal and staff, structure their teaching and learning programmes and/or timetables to provide:

- 10 hours per week of teaching and learning focused on supporting students' progress and achievement in reading and writing and recognising the important contribution oral language development makes, particularly in the early phases of learning
- 5 hours per week of teaching and learning focused on supporting students' progress and achievement in maths.

Where reading, writing, and/or maths teaching and learning time is occurring within the context of learning areas other than Mathematics and Statistics or English, progress in students' reading, writing, and/or maths knowledge and skills at the appropriate level must be explicitly and intentionally planned for and attended to.

Daily teaching time requirements are also inclusive of expectations to monitor student progress and achievement through high quality assessment information, so student participation in formal assessment activities will form part of teaching time in some weeks.

2. For simplicity, 'maths' is used as an all-encompassing term to refer to the grouping of subject matter, skills, capabilities, and understandings that encompass all aspects of numeracy, mathematics, and statistics.

## Deliberately design teaching and learning programmes to provide for daily teaching

Principals and teachers will need to consider the balance of time provided as dedicated reading, writing, or maths blocks/lessons with time spent developing students' reading, writing, and maths dispositions, knowledge, and skills within the context of all learning areas. This balance will vary by age and phase of learning, the specific needs of each student, and by each school's approach to curriculum design. Similarly, dedicated blocks/lessons may consist of a full hour or be broken up into smaller blocks or lessons at the class level or for specific students if they would benefit from smaller and more manageable chunks of learning over their day.

Progression of students' reading, writing, and/or maths knowledge and skills at the appropriate level must be explicitly and intentionally planned for and attended to where reading, writing, and/or maths teaching and learning time is occurring within the context of learning areas other than Mathematics and Statistics or English.

## Accommodate the specific needs of individual students where needed

Education in all schools must be responsive to the specific needs of individual students, providing appropriate accommodations and supports that enable all students to access, engage, and succeed in reading, writing, and maths. For a small number of students with additional learning needs, it may be in their best interests for their hours of reading, writing, and/or maths learning to be varied from these requirements for a period of time. This should only be done in partnership with them and/or their family as part of a student's individual education plan where appropriate and agreed to by themselves and their family.

## Progress markers for reading, writing, and maths

Progress markers support alignment between curriculum, assessment, and reporting. They are an expression of the learning students are expected to achieve in Years 0–10 in the English and Mathematics and Statistics learning areas.

Progress markers describe the level of proficiency expected at the end of each year of learning in reading, writing, and maths. Proficiency at the end of each year signals readiness to engage in the next year of learning.

- They describe what students know and are able to do at the end of each year in the reading and writing knowledge strands of the English learning area.
- They describe what students know and are able to do at the end of each year in the six knowledge strands of Mathematics and Statistics: number, algebra, measurement, geometry, statistics, and probability.

Progress markers are used to monitor the progress students have made in their learning, providing a clearer picture of what students know and are able to do and whether they have achieved proficiency at the end of each year. They can be found on Tāhūrangi.

They are also designed to help teachers:

- select appropriate progress descriptors for reporting to parents
- align reporting with the curriculum expectations.

# Learning areas and subjects | Mātaiaho

***Mātai rangaranga te aho tū, te aho pae. | Weave the learning strands together.***

WHAT

## Learning pathways

The image below depicts the learning pathways offered across New Zealand education settings. As children and students' journey from early learning through primary and secondary school, they will find that each stage of the journey prepares them for and connects with the next.

### TE WHĀRIKI

Early learning

- Wellbeing *Mana atua*
- Belonging *Mana whenua*
- Contribution *Mana tangata*
- Communication *Mana reo*
- Exploration *Mana aotūroa*

Children grow and develop as competent and confident learners and communicators, well placed to succeed in their learning at school.

### THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM AND TE MARAUTANGA O AOTEAROA

CAPABILITIES

Year 0–10

- English *Te Reo Rangatira + Te Reo Pākehā*
- Health and Physical Education *Waiora*
- Mathematics and Statistics *Pāngarau*
- Science *Pūtaiao*
- Social Sciences *Te Ao Māori*
- Technology *Hangarau*
- The Arts *Toi Ihiihi*
- Learning Languages *Ngā Reo*

Students build a strong foundation of knowledge and skills across the learning areas and wāhanga ako, including the reading, writing, and maths (pānui, tuhituhi, and pāngarau) they need for success in life and ongoing learning.

Year 11–13

Students are offered increased choice and disciplinary specialisation at higher year levels

**Students leave with nationally and internationally recognised qualifications and a Record of Achievement against the NZ Qualifications Framework**

# Required learning areas

Each board, through the principal and staff, must ensure the content of their teaching and learning programmes are based on the full eight learning areas across Years 0–10.

| | |
|---|---|
| English — must be covered in full through to Year 10 | Link |
| Health and Physical Education — must be covered in full through to Year 10, although parents may ask for their child to be released from tuition in sexuality education | Link |
| Mathematics and Statistics — must be covered in full through to Year 10 | Link |
| Science — must be covered in full through to Year 10 | Link |
| Social Sciences — must be covered in full through to Year 10 | Link |
| Technology — must be covered in full through to Year 8, and to the minimum requirements set out below in Years 9–10 | Link |
| The Arts — must be covered in full through to Year 8 and to the minimum requirements set out below in Years 9–10 | Link |

## Encouraged learning areas

| | |
|---|---|
| Learning Languages — schools are encouraged, but not required, to offer language learning opportunities in Years 7–10. | Link |

Learning languages includes a teaching sequence for te reo Māori to support schools to provide opportunities for students to learn te reo Māori. It also includes teaching sequences for New Zealand Sign Language, which is also an official language of New Zealand, and several Pacific, Asian and European languages. Schools may use these teaching sequences with any Year levels as they are based on a language-proficiency progression (rather than being tied to specific Year levels).

# Flexibility and choice in school programmes

A comprehensive teaching and learning programme provides all students with access to the knowledge and practices set out in the New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho.

It is expected that all students are taught the required learning areas in full, but there are some specific areas of flexibility and choice.

- **Health curriculum**: A parent of a student enrolled at a state school may ask in writing that the principal or person responsible for teaching and learning ensure that the student is released from tuition in specified parts of the health curriculum related to sexuality education.[3] From Year 8, a specific focus on sex education is introduced in the learning area to make it easier to identify content that parents are likely to consider to be sexuality education.
- **The Arts in Years 9 and 10**: Students must be taught at least **one** of the four knowledge strands (Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual arts) in each of these years.
- **Technology in Years 9 and 10**: Students must be taught at least **two** of the five knowledge strands in each of these years (Materials & Processing Technology, Spatial & Product Design, Digital Technologies, Electronics & Mechatronics, Computer Science).

3. See section 51 of the Education and Training Act (2020).

# Approximate time allocations across learning areas

This advice supports schools to make time allocation decisions and plan deliberately for teaching time across all learning areas.

The table below provides advice on time allocation in Years 0–8 and 9–10 to support school leaders make decisions about annual planning and teachers to make decisions about classroom planning. It reflects the relative quantity of each learning area's content and takes into consideration the requirements for one hour each of reading, writing, and maths[4] a week. The time allocation provides flexibility by only assigning up to 20 hours a week to teaching and learning, recognising that schools are likely to spend approximately 5 hours a week on supporting tasks,[5] and also allocates time for a variety of other learning activities. The allocation of additional time provides flexibility for schools to include activities that are reflective of their context. For example, schools could use this time to include a programme for school sports, creative arts, or cultural activities.

The learning areas in this knowledge-rich curriculum include more detailed content. When making decisions about time allocation, schools may also choose to look for opportunities to connect and integrate teaching across learning areas, taking into consideration student strengths, needs, and cognitive load.

**Advice on <u>approximate</u> time allocation across learning areas to support curriculum implementation in Years 0–8 and Years 9–10**

| | Time allocation period | Teaching and learning time | English (reading, writing)<br>Mathematics and Statistics | Science<br>Social Sciences | Technology<br>Health and Physical Education<br>The Arts | Optional Learning Languages and/or additional activities |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Years 0–8** | **Week** | 20 hours | 15 hours[8] | 2 hours | 3 hours | 0.5 hours |
| | **Term** (approx. 10 weeks)[7] | 200 hours | 150 hours | 20 hours | 30 hours | 5 hours |
| | **Year** (200 hours × 4 terms) | 800 hours | 600 hours | 80 hours | 120 hours | 20 hours |
| **Years[6] 9–10** | **Week** | 20 hours | 8 hours | 6 hours | 4.5 hours | 1.5 hours |
| | **Term** (approx. 10 weeks)[7] | 200 hours | 80 hours | 60 hours | 45 hours | 15 hours |
| | **Year** (200 hours × 4 terms) | 800 hours | 320 hours | 240 hours | 180 hours | 60 hours |

4. Note there will be opportunities for this teaching to occur across other learning areas
5. The hours have been modelled to reflect TALIS research (data forYears 7–10 only) showing that on average, NZ teachers spend 81% of time on teaching & learning and 19% of their time on other supporting tasks https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/curriculum-and-instruction-time.html. These are on balance over a week, term, and year.
6. This has been modelled from a review of school timetables which shows that this is a common practice approach across Secondary Schools.
7. Modelled off a five hour day over a 10-week term
8. An hour a day each of reading, writing, and maths for Years 0–8

# School teaching and learning programmes | Mātaioho

HOW

***Mātai oho, mātai ara, whītiki, whakatika. | Awaken, arise, and prepare for action.***

Mātaioho signals the important role of teachers and leaders in bringing the curriculum to life in schools and classrooms using evidence-informed pedagogies and practices that enable all students to access the full scope of the curriculum and progress in their learning.

Leaders make strategic decisions about how to implement the national curriculum in ways that best meet the needs of students and the community. Student learning is prioritised and addressed through a well-designed, comprehensive teaching and learning programme that provides for coherent and effective learning.

Teachers have the flexibility to use their professional judgement as they teach with clarity and purpose. They create responsive learning environments that respond to the needs of their students and deliver the learning areas in relevant and engaging contexts using evidence-informed pedagogies and practices.

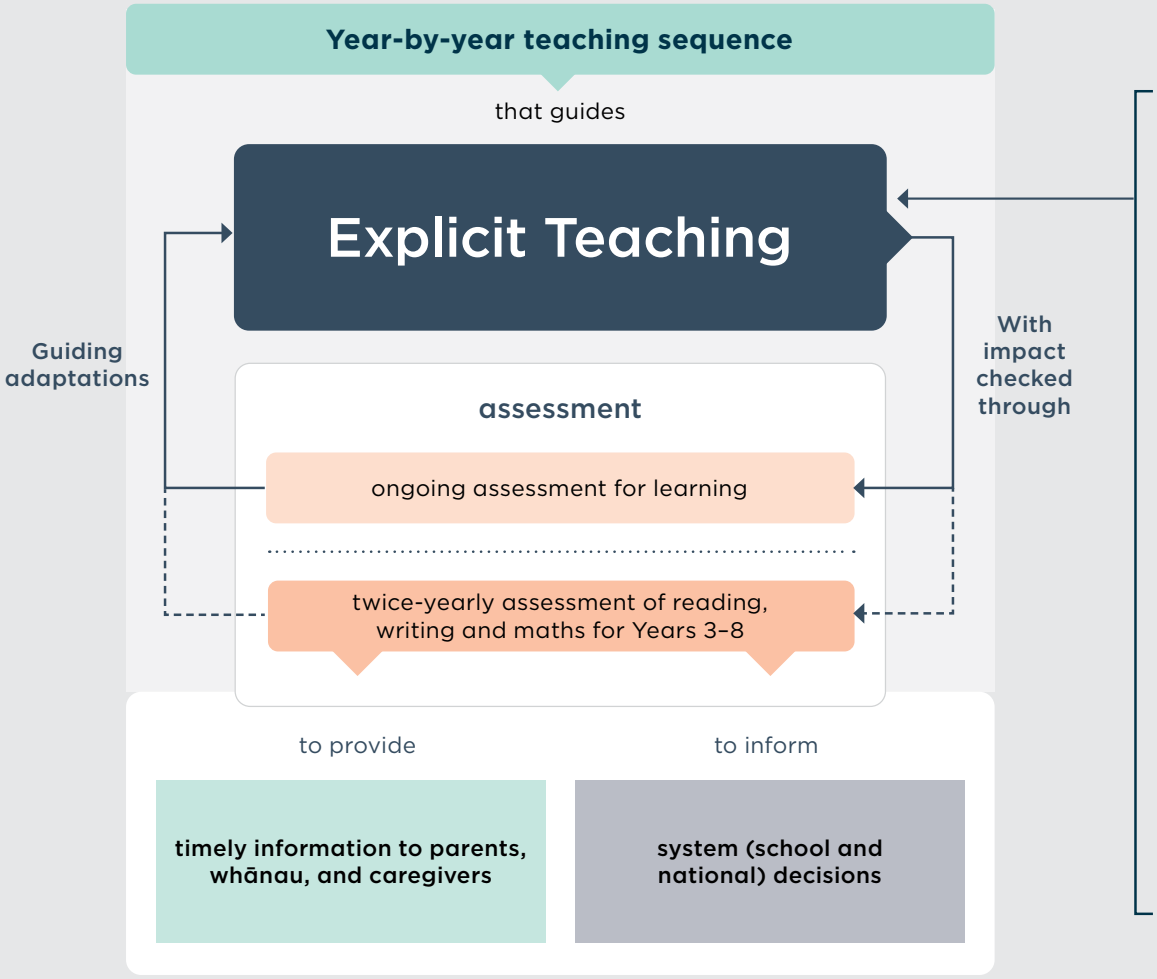
## Planning for coherent and effective learning

Effective planning ensures that all students are taught the curriculum and supported to progress.

Effective planning includes:

- using the teaching sequence statements to ensure that all students experience the full scope of curriculum content
- designing units and plans that build logically across the year and connect to students' prior learning
- teaching statements from the teaching sequence together; these may be from the same strand, across several strands, and/or across learning areas to make authentic connections
- allocating sufficient time to key concepts and content, with opportunities to revisit and extend learning
- structuring learning experiences to deepen understanding through repetition, variation, and application
- planning for equitable access by identifying and removing barriers and intentionally building universal supports into the learning environment
- designing multiple pathways for students to engage meaningfully in learning experiences and demonstrate their progress
- using assessment to inform instructional decisions and support progress for all students
- an explicit focus on the teaching of reading, writing, and maths.

The image on the following page shows the dynamic relationship between curriculum, teaching underpinned by the science of learning, and assessment.




Key characteristics of how people learn, based on the **science of learning**, have informed the development of the curriculum and are central to effective practice:

- A new idea or concept is always interpreted through, and learned in association with, existing knowledge.
- Establishing knowledge in a well-organised way in long-term memory reduces students' cognitive load when building on that knowledge. It also enables them to apply and transfer the knowledge by drawing on increasingly complex schemas.
- Motivation is critical for wellbeing and engagement in learning.
- Our social and emotional wellbeing directly impacts our ability to learn new knowledge.
- We learn best when we experience a sense of belonging in the learning environment and feel valued and supported.

All five characteristics are interconnected. The dynamic and individual nature of learning explains why we see individual learners develop along different paths and at different rates.

# Teaching with clarity and purpose

Effective teaching is purposeful, responsive, and grounded in a clear understanding of how students learn. It involves making deliberate choices about how to introduce, reinforce, and extend learning, using evidence-informed pedagogies that support all students to build deep and lasting understanding.

**Explicit teaching** plays a central role in this process. It is a structured, carefully sequenced approach that supports cumulative learning. Content is broken down into manageable steps, each clearly explained and modelled by the teacher. Students are guided through practice and, when ready, supported to work independently.

Explicit teaching is most effective when it is interactive and responsive. It includes rich discussions between teachers and students, and amongst students, to check understanding and deepen thinking. Teachers adjust the pace of instruction based on student progress and engage students in creative and challenging tasks to foster motivation and engagement.

Within a comprehensive programme, explicit teaching is complemented by other approaches that promote exploration, collaboration, and application. Teachers use a range of strategies to ensure students revisit prior learning, connect ideas, and apply knowledge in new contexts.

Key features of effective explicit teaching include:

- connecting current learning to prior knowledge
- providing concise, step-by-step explanations with opportunities for student input
- modelling and demonstrating new concepts and processes
- regularly checking for understanding and providing timely feedback
- supporting collaborative and independent practice.

With sufficient practice, new learning is transferred to long-term memory, reducing cognitive load and enabling students to extend and enrich their learning.

**Flexible grouping** within lessons supports inclusive teaching and learning by aligning grouping and students needs with the purpose of the activity. This might include whole-class demonstrations, small group discussions, or paired tasks to explain thinking. Providing opportunities for both individual and collaborative work enables students to make choices about when they need to work with others and when they need time and space to work independently.

# Creating responsive learning environments

Students learn best when they feel a sense of belonging, are valued, and are supported to succeed. Responsive learning environments promote engagement, wellbeing, and equitable access to learning across all learning areas. Teachers play a key role in creating these environments by recognising and responding to students' interests, needs, and ways of learning in everyday teaching. They also make sure that teaching and learning is non-sexist, non-racist, and non-discriminatory.

The knowledge and practices for each learning area set out what students need to know and be able to do and are clearly laid out in year-by-year teaching sequences. This clarity supports teachers to design responsive learning environments that ensure every student can access rich, challenging content. Teachers plan teaching, learning, and assessment to respond to the different ways students engage with learning and to support all students to progress and achieve personal excellence.

- Teachers contexualise learning in ways that have meaning for students, connects with their wider lives and engages the support of their families, whānau, and communities. Learning experiences reflect New Zealand's diversity, value the history and traditions of all its people, and encourage students to look to the future by exploring significant issues such as sustainability, citizenship, enterprise, and globalisation.

- Teachers design learning experiences that allow for varied participation and expression. This includes recognising and responding to diverse modes of communication such as augmentative and alternative communication, Braille, gestures, and visual supports. These approaches ensure that all students can access and contribute to learning, and that their ways of expressing knowledge are acknowledged and valued.
- Language development and expression are supported across all learning areas. Teachers create meaningful opportunities for students to connect with and use their languages, including te reo Māori, New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL), and other first or heritage languages. Students express their languages in varied ways, including through visual, gestural, and alternative forms of communication. Acknowledging these expressions fosters inclusive and effective learning environments that support the diverse needs and strengths of all students.
- The use and development of students' first and heritage languages strengthens language and literacy learning and contributes to improved educational and wellbeing outcomes for multilingual learners. To support new learners of English, teachers can use the English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP) and ELLP Pathway to plan targeted language support. These tools help develop both social communication skills and academic language proficiency, which becomes increasingly important as the academic demands of learning areas grow across successive phases.

# A focus on progress | Mātairea

***Mātai ka rea, ka pihi hei māhuri. | Build and support progress.***

HOW

A focus on progress requires high-quality assessment information to be used to inform the development and implementation of teaching and learning programmes, communicate student progress and achievement to parents, and monitor and evaluate how well the school is supporting every student to progress and achieve across the curriculum.

## Using assessment to understand student progress and achievement

Assessment is an essential component of quality teaching and learning. Timely, high-quality, assessment information enables informed decision-making by teachers, whānau, and school leaders to improve student outcomes and progress. Its ultimate purpose is to empower students to reach their full potential by making learning visible, measurable, and actionable.

Using robust assessment data allows teachers to tailor their teaching to what works best for their students, including identifying areas where additional support is required. It also enables schools to provide parents, whānau, and caregivers with clear, meaningful information about their child's progress.

School leaders are responsible for ensuring systems and strategies are in place to closely monitor student progress and achievement and to prioritise actions that support classroom teaching. This includes the use of specified assessment tools as outlined below.

Teachers actively assess student progress in relation to the year-by-year teaching sequences of all learning areas in the curriculum, using effective assessment practices. Progress markers are available to support teachers to make judgments about progress. They describe the level of proficiency expected at the end of each year of learning in reading, writing, and maths. Proficiency at the end of each year signals readiness to engage in the next year of learning.

Effective assessment practices involve consistently monitoring, responding to, and reporting on student progress and achievement. This includes synthesising information from observations, conversations with students, periodic tasks and data from assessment tools (including those specified below) to build a well-rounded understanding of each student's knowledge and capabilities.

## Using formative assessment to inform explicit teaching

Formative assessment is essential to explicit teaching because it helps teachers check what students understand at each step of the learning process. It allows them to adjust their instruction in real time by clarifying, modelling, or reteaching, so that every student can confidently move forward with new learning.

Assessment enables teachers to notice and recognise students' development, consolidation, and proficient use of learning area knowledge within daily lessons and to provide timely, targeted feedback. Teachers respond to assessment insights by adapting their practice — for example, by adjusting the level of scaffolding or support provided.

In addition to ongoing observations, teachers use purposefully designed formative assessment tasks at key points throughout a unit or topic. These tasks highlight the concepts and reasoning students understand and apply, helping teachers to identify learning barriers and ensuring every student can demonstrate what they know and can do.

When planning next steps in teaching and learning, teachers consider students' strengths and responses along with opportunities for consolidation. These next steps may include:

- designing scaffolds to support and enrich students learning
- providing opportunities for students to apply new learning
- planning lessons that revisit, reteach, or consolidate learning.

Timely feedback and immediate attention to misconceptions help students grasp new ideas efficiently and accurately, while also promoting deeper learning. Teachers use this feedback to prompt recall of prior knowledge, encourage connections between concepts and ideas, and expand students' understanding.

## Specific assessment requirements and assessment tools

Specific requirements continue to apply for the English and Mathematics and Statistics learning areas as set out in the published documents.

# Overall assessments of how students are progressing against curriculum expectations

Monitoring each student's progress and achievement across all learning areas is essential. This requires the use of high-quality information informed by effective assessment practices, including the use of robust and reliable assessment tools. It is critical that teachers have confidence in the evidence they use to support their instructional decisions.

To ensure consistency in how teachers make and communicate informed decisions about students' progress in the different learning areas, school boards and principals must ensure that staff use the common progress descriptors **Emerging**, **Developing**, **Consolidating**, **Proficient**, and **Exceeding** for each student, as outlined below.

PROGRESS DESCRIPTORS

| | |
|---|---|
| **Emerging** | Students require support to meet curriculum expectations for their year level and/or goals as described in their personalised learning plan. |
| **Developing** | Students are making some progress towards curriculum expectations for their year level. |
| **Consolidating** | Students are meeting many curriculum expectations for their year level and are steadily strengthening their understanding across learning areas. |
| **Proficient** | Students are meeting curriculum expectations for their year level. |
| **Exceeding** | Students are exceeding curriculum expectations for their year level. |

When making an informed decision, teachers need to consider progress and achievement across the knowledge strands of each learning area and select the progress descriptor that best describes how the student's progress is tracking towards the end-of-year expectation for each strand. Teachers should then use these informed decisions to make an overall assessment of progress across the learning area. To do this, teachers should refer to the learning area teaching sequence for each year level and progress markers where relevant.

If assessments conducted **during the school year** show that a student is at the *Consolidating*, *Proficient*, or *Exceeding* level, then their progress is considered to be **on track**. For students identified at *Proficient* and *Exceeding*, teachers should provide extended learning opportunities and enrichment activities that reflect the breadth and depth of the curriculum.

If a student is at the *Emerging* or *Developing* level during the year, their progress is considered to be **not on track** to meet curriculum expectations for their year level. For these students, teachers will need to provide adaptive teaching, develop individualised responses, or trigger additional learning support. When appropriate, teachers should report against the goals outlined in the student's support plan.

If **end-of-year** assessments indicate that a student is at the *Proficient* or *Exceeding* level, their progress is considered to have **met** curriculum expectations. Students assessed at the *Emerging*, *Developing*, or *Consolidating* levels are considered to have **not yet met** curriculum expectations for their year level.

For students with additional learning needs who have individualised progress goals and assessments outlined in their support plans, the common descriptors should generally still be used. However, in these cases, the descriptors reflect the student's overall progress in relation to their individual goals rather than the year-level curriculum expectations. School leaders must ensure that monitoring systems clearly indicate when descriptors are being applied to individualised goals, while also maintaining visibility of progress toward year-level curriculum expectations.

Reporting guidance and exemplar templates are available to support schools' reporting to parents.

# Relationships for learning | Mātaiahikā

***Mātai kōrero ahiahi. | Keep the hearth occupied, maintain the stories by firelight.***

HOW

The relevance of the curriculum for students is enhanced when it draws on mutually beneficial local relationships and contexts to support learning. For students, these relationships foster their sense of place, develop their understanding of the learning areas, and enable opportunities to explore values derived from an understanding of, and respect for, the place and environment in which the school is located.

> *Parents, families, and whānau want their children to feel they belong at school and experience success. They want to be involved in their child's learning – to understand what is expected and to know how they can contribute. This involvement contributes to each child's learning and success and is vital for children at risk of not achieving.*[9]

Knowing learners, where they come from, and their cultural capital is essential for teachers and leaders working with parents, families, and whānau to create rich and relevant learning experiences. The science of learning tells us that students learn best when they experience a sense of belonging, when learning is well sequenced and organised, and when students are motivated through care for their social and emotional wellbeing. Hence, building educationally powerful connections and relationships between parents, whānau, and schools is vital for each student's ongoing learning and success. Schools and kura, working with hapū and iwi, may choose to include local mātauranga in their teaching and learning programmes.

Lifting school attendance is a shared responsibility. Parents, families, and whānau working with teachers is key to helping young people stay engaged and motivated at school, which is important to help young people achieve their goals. The more often students attend school, the better they do at school, the happier they are, and the better they are set up for life.[10]

The parent portal helps parents, families, and whānau to understand what their child is learning at school, how they are progressing against the curriculum, how to help them stay engaged at school, and what they can do to support them at home.

9. Education Review Office. (2015). Educationally powerful connections with parents and whānau. https://ero.govt.nz/our-research/educationally-powerful-connections-with-parents-and-whanau (Pg. 5)
10. Education Review Office (2023) Attendance - Getting back to school: A guide for parents and whānau

# Regulatory context and implementation requirements

The National Curriculum for schooling consists of two pathways that together provide the statement of official policy relating to teaching, learning, and assessment in state and state-integrated schools in New Zealand:

- Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, which is for designed for delivery in te reo Māori immersion and bilingual settings
- the New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho, which is designed for delivery in all other state and state-integrated settings.

This document is the October 2025 draft of the updated New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho. Feedback on it will be sought in term 1 2026. A final version will be formally issued in mid-2026 by notice in the New Zealand Gazette by the Minister of Education, under section 90 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

The draft of the New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho consists of draft foundation curriculum policy statements and national curriculum policy statements (curriculum statements) which the Minister of Education plans to make under section 90 of the Education and Training Act 2020 alongside equivalent statements for Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.

The purpose of the National Curriculum is to:

- underpin and give direction to the way curriculum and assessment responsibilities are to be managed in schools, through statements of policy concerning teaching, learning, and assessment
- provide for what is to be taught during the years of schooling, setting out the areas of knowledge and understanding to be covered by students, the skills to be developed by students, and the desirable levels of knowledge, understanding, and skill to be achieved by students.

These curriculum statements give direction to each school's curriculum and assessment responsibilities (section 127 of the Act), teaching and learning programmes (section 164 of the Act), and monitoring and reporting of student performance (section 165 of the Act and associated Regulations). The section which is made as a National Curriculum Statement is Mātaiaho (Learning areas and subjects). The rest is made as a Foundation Curriculum Policy Statement.

Once finalised statements are formally issued by the Minister of Education by notice in the New Zealand Gazette, school boards must ensure that they and their principal and staff give effect to those statements by the date(s) specified in that notice. The foundation curriculum policy statements in the New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho are to be implemented in the context of the required learning areas.

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government