

Years 0–10

Across Years 0–10, the Arts learning area takes students on an increasingly sophisticated journey exploring the rich forms, history, and artistic practices of New Zealand and from around the world.

Students participate in experiences of creating, making, observing, listening, and responding.

Years 0–3

In Years 0–3, teachers introduce foundational knowledge across Performing Arts, Music, and Visual Arts. They support students to learn subject-specific terminology and explore how foundational concepts such as line, colour, rhythm, movement, and voice are used to express ideas and construct meaning. Teachers expose students to works from New Zealand, including Māori and Pacific traditions, alongside relevant contemporary and historical global examples.

Through guided experiences, students begin to respond and create using basic techniques, developing an early understanding of how artistic elements and forms communicate.

Years 4–6

In Years 4–6, teaching supports students to make deliberate artistic choices and apply foundational techniques with increasing control. Teachers help students apply knowledge of dramatic conventions, choreographic devices, musical structures, and design principles to create and present performances, musical pieces, and visual compositions. They introduce works from New Zealand, the Pacific, and global traditions such as narrative theatre, street dance, pentatonic music, pattern-based practices, and folk art, helping students understand how artistic forms are shaped by cultural and historical contexts.

Across these years, teachers advance students' practice in the arts to represent and express ideas, preparing them to create more complex work.

Years 7–8

In Years 7–8, teachers guide students to refine their creative practice through exploration, rehearsal, iteration, and reflection. They support students to develop performances focusing on character, mood, and thematic intent; compose music using harmony and layering; and create artworks using symbolism, abstraction, and composition.

Teaching includes contemporary works from New Zealand, the Pacific, and global contexts, and encourages students to create artworks that represent aspects of their lives and identities. Teachers help students understand how artistic choices convey meaning and reflect disciplinary conventions.

Years 9–10

In Years 9–10, teachers support students to create layered, intentional works that respond to cultural, historical, and social contexts.

Depending on the choice of strands students make (Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts), teachers guide students to analyse artworks using discipline-specific terminology and make creative decisions using tools, techniques, and technologies. Students develop choreography, compose music, devise drama, and produce visual artworks that reflect complex ideas and stylistic influences.

Teaching connects students with artistic practices from New Zealand, Pacific, and global contexts such as political theatre, avant-garde movements, classical fusion, and abstract expressionism, preparing them for advanced disciplinary learning and interpretation.

The Arts learning area prepares students with the knowledge and practices to access related curriculum subjects in Years 11–13, such as Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts