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WINTER 2019 | **THE COMMUNITY ISSUE**

The value of strong connections

KAPA HAKA
Educational opportunities

ECE TO PRIMARY
Building bridges

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EDITORIAL

Enabling positive change

Kia ora e hoa mā.

This winter 2019 issue of *Ako* focusses on community and the different ways it is evidenced within education.

There are many quotes about the power of community but one that really resonates with me is this from Meg Wheatley, an American writer and management consultant with expertise in organisational behaviour: “There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.”

When I think about community, I think about the many different communities that I have the privilege to be a part of, many of whom are focussed on enabling positive change within education.

There’s the community that is NZEI Te Riu Roa, made up of members from across the education landscape – we know the power of the collective, we know that all of us working together to achieve a common goal is so very powerful, we know that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This year, we have seen proof of this – and we can be proud of how we have taken the wider community of Aotearoa with us.

In my role as a teacher and then principal, I think about the community of staff, teachers, caretakers, support staff – all of those who work with the community that is the whānau, aiga, family of our students. I think about the community of the wider education sector that works alongside us to support our students to reach their potential.

As the principal of a school with a large Samoan community, I witnessed the powerful change that came from aiga, staff and the Board of Trustees working together. Together, we achieved the goal of embracing the language, culture and identity of our Samoan children through the introduction of our bilingual classrooms. No one member of that community could have achieved



this outcome by themselves – it took all of us working and learning together with courage, and playing our respective parts to make it happen.

No matter where we are or who we are, we are all part of many different communities that often intersect, inform and support each other towards achieving common goals. In reading this issue of *Ako*, I see this expressed in the many different examples of communities working together.

I have to say that the feeling of being a part of something that is so much bigger than yourself, working towards really making a difference, is second to none.

Ngā mihi,
Lynda Stuart
National President, Te Manukura



GUEST EDITORIAL

Working together effectively and consistently

Children do not exist in isolation; their lives are embedded in families, communities and societies. Nested within these communities are the schools and early childhood education (ECE) services children attend.

When I was a child, my experience was of little interaction between schools and their communities. Looking back, this seems due to the culture of practice within schools, more than the school gates. In the intervening years, writers like Bronfenbrenner¹ have drawn our attention to the complex influences of environments – both immediate and more remote – on development and the value of creating meaningful reciprocal connections between the different groups and settings that children are part of.

Today we see attention to the role of communities reflected in our curriculum documents. “Family and Community/Whānau Tangata” is one of the principles of the early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, along with the expectation that each ECE service will use the curriculum “as a basis for weaving with children, parents and whānau its own local curriculum of valued learning, taking into consideration also the aspirations and learning priorities of hapū, iwi and community”.

For kura and schools, *Te Marautanga* notes that for learners to succeed, the school, the home, hapū, iwi and community must work together effectively and consistently, while a central principle of the *New Zealand Curriculum* is “Community Engagement”, connecting with the students’ wider lives and gaining support of families, whānau and communities. The importance of community weaves through each document, with important implications for pedagogy.

Teachers often take the lead in initiating connections and building communities for learning. In a Centre of Innovation research project², teachers at Mangere Bridge Kindergarten



documented their steps in creating a community approach to starting school. They found that projects and activities were a foundation for collaboration, and that the most successful projects – those that brought more people on board – were “mutually interesting”. Over time, momentum increased, and strategic community partners were drawn in. At first, the ECE teachers initiated each activity, but eventually other members of the community began to propose and lead projects.

Working together on meaningful projects was also a feature of the *Learning journeys from early childhood into school* project³. Teachers collaboratively planned, implemented and evaluated a range of action research “mini projects”, providing opportunities for shared reflections on practice and a collective approach to supporting children’s learning. Rather than attempting to find a “one-size-fits-all” formula, the process of trying “what works here” was key. Powerful benefits came from spiralling between action and evaluation, which often sparked a new direction or more nuanced approach.

The idea of “negotiated spaces” helps with the sometimes challenging work of bringing together different and sometimes conflicting world views. A recent report, *Bridging Cultural Perspectives*, expands on this idea and provides steps to implement “respectful and negotiated conversations”⁴.

Working together effectively across different sectors and with family, whānau and other groups to enhance children’s learning may require courage and persistence, but as many teachers have found, a community approach can have valuable benefits for learners and learning.

Associate Professor Sally Peters is Head of School at Te Kura Toi Tangata School of Education, University of Waikato.

1. e.g. Bronfenbrenner, U. & Morris, P. A. (1997). *The ecology of developmental processes*. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.) *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 1. Theoretical models of human development* (5th ed., pp. 993–1029). New York: John Wiley.
2. Hartley, C., Rogers, P., Smith, J., Peters, S. & Carr, M. (2012). *Crossing the border: a community negotiates the transition from early childhood to primary school*. Wellington: NZCER.
3. Peters, S., Paki, V. & Davis, K. (2015). *Learning journeys from early childhood into school. Teaching and Learning Research Initiative final report*.
4. Superu (2018). *Bridging cultural perspectives*. Wellington: Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit.



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The community issue

*"The only way to
have relationships
with true integrity
is to have time
... because
relationships
take time and
community is built
on relationships."
– Amie Roberts*

This issue looks at the ways strong connections
to the community can benefit children, whānau
and educators.





FEATURE | THE COMMUNITY ISSUE

Strengthening, growing and reaching out

The interplay between a school and its community is complex and rich with potential – for personal connection, professional support and building capability. A range of schools throughout the country illustrate the myriad ways – and reasons why – school communities come together.

In the days and weeks following the terror attacks at two Christchurch mosques, there was a noticeable change amongst the parent community at Ilam School, just across the river from the University of Canterbury.

As ESOL team leader Kirsten Aaron walked around the school that is home to more than 50 cultures, she saw parents talking and reaching out to each other in a way they hadn't before.

"Usually they're in their own little groups, and that's just natural really. The students have always talked, they've always connected and intermingled. But for the parents, that's not quite so easy. [But] I saw them talking with [Muslim] parents and hugging them, and offering their support ... It's been a real shake-up, I think, it really has," she says.

Ensuring that all students and their families feel that their culture, language and religion is accepted and celebrated is key to quality relationships and learning.

There are 48 Muslim students on Ilam School's roll of almost 500, and the school has long nurtured a strong relationship with those families.

"When it's time for Ramadan, a lot of our children are affected by that, because they're not eating during the day. So, years ago, a mum came to me and asked if we could do something, and I said, 'Absolutely'. During Ramadan, which is for a month, we have a classroom that those children can go to at lunchtime, where they can be together. We provide Ramadan activities for them to do and we do crafts, and other things like that, while the other children are eating," says Aaron.

After Ramadan, Muslims celebrate with Eid, and Ilam School invites all the Muslim parents for a shared lunch with their children. Each child also invites a non-Muslim friend and their parents to come and join the celebration. "That's where a lot of our mixing of cultures has come from," says Aaron, "[with other] parents meeting the Muslim [families] – that's actually had a really big impact on our community. We've done that for about three or four years now."

Aaron believes that this relationship with the Muslim community and understanding of its religious practices set a strong foundation for the wider school community to be able to provide support in the wake of the terror attacks.

Even though a number of students had family members killed or injured during the attack, almost all of them were back at school the following Monday, including one who had witnessed the shooting.

Ensuring that all students and their families feel that their culture, language and religion is accepted and celebrated is key to quality relationships and learning.

"His mother said she wanted normalcy for him. She said she didn't want him going to the hospital all day, and he was much better at school. He had his friends around him, and the principal is letting him borrow his office at the moment, so he can bring his friends in there. They do fun activities and things like that to support him through it," says Aaron.

Aaron has a team of ESOL staff – one other teacher and three learning assistants – to support the 120 children with ministry ESOL funding, and the many others who need support but don't receive funding.

One of the learning assistants speaks Korean, Chinese, Japanese and English, and plays an essential role in translating for the families in those communities.

"We absolutely need that in our school," says Aaron. "One of our other learning assistants is Samoan, and she represents [Pacific peoples in] our community, and my other learning assistant is Chinese, so she deals with a lot of the Chinese children."

A key part of Aaron's role is to maintain communication and connection with the school's many different cultural communities.

Parent Zahra Emamzadeh is impressed with the school's efforts in connecting its community. "The school has successfully built strong strategies to enable networking among these diverse representatives," she says. "Ilam School, for me, is about inclusive-ness, rich communication, outstanding leadership and, of course, the great team of educators and staff. It is a second home for its students."

Every four weeks, the school holds a meeting for its Chinese community, with the assistance of two translators. "We talk about anything that they might need to know about," says Aaron. "We answer any questions they have, we fill forms and documents that need to be done – and we do it in a really supportive way, where they feel like they can ask anything."

She says a bonus is that they can meet other Chinese parents and build personal connections as well – loneliness and disconnection can be a huge issue for new immigrants, especially for those who are not confident in speaking English.

Parent Erica Sun has two daughters who started at the school in late 2018, after moving from Taiwan. She says, "My girls and my family received a lot of help from the school and the teachers, not just school-related issues, but also



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“The school has successfully built strong strategies to enable networking among these diverse representatives.”

– ZAHRA EMAMZADEH, PARENT



02



“My family received a lot of help from the school for us starting up here in Christchurch.”

– ERICA SUN, PARENT



03

for us starting up here in Christchurch.” The Chinese community meetings are a huge help. “We get to know what is happening around the school.”

Sun says the school’s staff have made all the difference to her family’s sense of community. “They are experienced dealing with students from all over the world,” she says. “We are very lucky to be at Ilam School. I love the diversity and so do the children.”

Meetings are also held for Korean families, a number of whom are international fee payers. The school has 11 fee-paying students. They also have a translator for these meetings, where many parents are interested in learning more about the New Zealand education system.

The desire and need for connection is also important in a community that is not only culturally diverse, but also being built from the ground up – literally.

In the first eight weeks of the 2019 school year, the student roll tripled at Te Uho o te Nikau Primary School in Flat Bush, southeast of Auckland. Eight weeks in, there were 33 students at the school, with eight new learners starting at the beginning of Term 2. The final roll is expected to be around 550.

Principal Mel Bland jokes that it really helps to have a good relationship with the local real estate agents. In the first two months of the school year, the development across the road from the school went from being empty to having ten houses ready for families to move in. “We work with our local estate agent. They basically sell a home and then we get the enrolment,” she says.

Ten years ago, Flat Bush was mostly lifestyle blocks, but is predicted to house about 40,000 people by 2025.

Bland says many of the families moving into the area are “new New Zealanders”, predominantly from Asia.

She sees that the parents and grandparents in the community are often very lonely because they don’t know anyone. Te Uho o te Nikau can play a role in connecting the community to each other, not just to the school.

“We are finding that we’re able to help them build friendships together, which is just so lovely. And they are very open too, when you ask, ‘What are you worried about?’ Often it’s not even about their kids, it’s stuff they don’t know yet about New Zealand. So we are able to help with that as well, which is really cool,” she says.

“The challenge for us has been looking at strategies to engage people from so many different communities, and the first thing about responding to that challenge is that it is all about whānau.”
– Sandy Jenkins



Bland and her two deputy principals have a whānau kōrero with every new family before their child or children start school.

“We get to know that family and the kids. We share our own journey, because if we are not tangata whenua then we have an ancestral journey to New Zealand, just like our new families,” she says. “We find out what the kids like, who the important people are in their lives, the hopes that the parents have, who picks them up and drops them off, what life is like at home, what’s important in their culture.”

“Then we take a photo for the Facebook page because all the parents follow us and they like to know who’s coming in. They often come out of their cars in the afternoon to meet new families – so that’s really cool.”

Bland says you can’t have a great school without great relationships. “You just can’t. It doesn’t matter how good your teachers are, it doesn’t matter how good your kids are – you have to build those relationships,” she says.

Thirty kilometres north, one of the country’s oldest (and most modern) schools has a deliberate strategy of employing staff that reflect its diverse community.

Inner-city Freemans Bay School is the closest school to the Sky Tower. Principal Sandy Jenkins estimates the students speak at least 40 different languages, and staff members speak about 10.

“The challenge for us has been looking at strategies to engage people from so many different communities, and the first thing about responding to that challenge is that it is all about whānau,” she says. “Whatever activities we have in the school are about whānau, about engaging parents – thinking about the timing of activities, and the type of activities.”

Many school events involve food from around the world, as Jenkins says sharing cuisine and recipes is a great way of engaging parents and enabling them to contribute to the life of the school.

Freemans Bay School has a very active Parent Group, which frequently sets up tables to interact with parents around pickup time, sharing information about issues and upcoming activities. “They have created a schedule of events that we are going to have across the year, and part of their driver is about engaging the community and giving the opportunity to build community, so it’s not just a fundraising focus,” says Jenkins.

The group recently engaged the community around impending school board elections and





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“[Staff] share our own journey, because if we are not tangata whenua then we have an ancestral journey to New Zealand, just like our new families.”

– MEL BLAND

lobbied Auckland Council to reduce local speed limits for student safety.

Jenkins says building a strong and active parent group is about recognising the strengths of people in the community, identifying the networkers and encouraging them to get involved.

The school also has the oldest Māori immersion unit in Auckland, Rumaki Reo, and a strong focus on engaging with its Māori whānau, which represents about 10% of the school.

At the board level, it's important that this partnership is really visible, so the unit has a co-opted member on the board. Families on the Rumaki Reo pathway, Whānau Ata, hold regular hui and select this representative. The Rumaki Reo team leader/kaiako also attends board meetings in the same capacity as the deputy principal.

Jenkins says that building community and seeing diversity as a strength is simply part of the school culture and not something they dwell on every day.

“For us, it's just business as usual.”

Building connections before your school exists

Working out of a Halswell community hub while his school was being built turned out to be a great way of building community connections for principal Mike Molloy.

When Knights Stream School in southwest Christchurch opened in Term 1, 2019, Molloy's networking with local community groups and businesses was already bearing fruit.

“One of the locals was hot desking in the hub.

He overheard me talking about wanting to build a bike track, and said, ‘That's what I do, I'm a bike enthusiast and an engineer’ – and he ended up designing [our] track. He lives just across the road, so his passion was about doing something for the school and supporting us,” says Molloy.

Other local business connections have resulted in free construction of the track, bike sheds, a tunnel house, trees for planting, beehives so students can produce honey, and catering for community events.

A “ton” of people turned up for a barbecue before construction of the school began, including prospective parents, local councillors, board members and other interested community groups.

Getting community buy-in for the new school was a key focus for Molloy and the establishment Board of Trustees.

“We started hosting events to get parents' input. We shared the emerging vision and values that we were drafting as a board. We wanted a high level of engagement to get parents' ideas,” he says. “We hosted a number of those sessions throughout the last year when we weren't open.”

At first, it was “tricky” to know who the school's community was, Molloy says.

“You know there are houses around, but I didn't have any connection with real people, so that was challenging. Probably the most successful communication tools we used were a Facebook page and a Hail website.”

The focus was on providing the community with a lot of information, says Molloy, “so people knew there were lots of things progressing behind the scenes. As a leadership team we started KSS TV, a YouTube channel where we reported to our community. This gave people an essence of who we were as people and leaders.”

As the opening day drew near, the focus turned towards ensuring the 89 foundation students and their families felt at ease in the new school environment.

During the week before it opened, the school held an open evening for whānau, as well as a chance for students to come in to meet their teachers and classmates. Parents and the wider community were invited to tour the school. On the Friday, the students were back for another half day with their teachers.

The day before opening, the school held a mihi whakatau for students and whānau, followed by a cup of tea and kai. By then, most of the children had already visited the school two or three times.

“There's no secret recipe. It's just face-to-face time with people, and being really available – lots of smiles, out on road patrol, out there playing with kids after school, pushing them on the swing... I think the parents noticed that straight away.”

“On the Tuesday, when they turned up for day one, it was like we'd been operating for a while, it was really interesting. Day one was settled and calm. Parents felt really at ease,” says Molloy.

To celebrate the end of the first week, the school held a picnic in the courtyard – another chance for whānau to get together and build connections with their school community.

For the first four weeks of term, teachers sat with the children at lunchtime, and Molloy and his two associate principals spent a lot of time in the classrooms and outside playing with the students. And in week three, parent-teacher meetings continued to strengthen relationships between teachers and whānau, and obtain more information and insights about each child.

“There's no secret recipe,” says Molloy. “It's just face-to-face time with people, and being really available – lots of smiles, out on road patrol, out there playing with kids after school, pushing them on the swing, trying to keep a very much people-orientated environment. I think the parents noticed that straight away.” ●

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The INVENT-A-MACHINE programme challenges children to work collaboratively to create a ‘super machine’ out of component parts.

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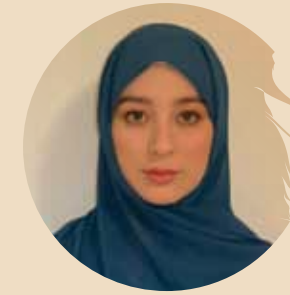
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OPINION | THE COMMUNITY ISSUE

Nida Fiazi

Fostering a sense of home in a new environment

When my mother and I first arrived in New Zealand, she was 22 and I was four. We didn't know anyone or anything. We had to learn how to use public transport, ATMs, how to buy groceries and clothes, pay bills – all while learning a whole new language. This was very overwhelming and isolating.

There's a common misconception that the struggles of refugees end when they are granted asylum. This couldn't be further from the truth. Settling in a new country is difficult enough – but add a background of forced migration, having to navigate foreign languages, cultures and systems while dealing with trauma and you have a plethora of new challenges to contend with.

When we settled into our new home in Hamilton, there was one other Afghan family in the area who welcomed us with open arms. Having people from the same country, speaking the same language and believing in the same religion was invaluable – especially in those first few years when everything was so new and unfamiliar. Their presence was a great source of

strength and comfort. We were able to keep in touch with our culture and keep our traditions alive because we had people to share them with. This, in turn, helped us foster a sense of “home” in our new environment.

Since I was quite young when we arrived in New Zealand, it was much easier for me to adjust than it was for my mother. This is not to say I didn't experience any difficulties at all.

When I started school, I didn't know any English. I'd learnt the alphabet in the six weeks I spent at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre, but that was the extent of my education.

The staff at my primary school realised quite quickly that I needed more help than my peers and enrolled me into the ESOL program. This allowed them to monitor my learning on a more personal level, helping me catch up to the other children my age. The additional support was so effective that in my final two years at the school, I was amongst only a few other students that were selected to be a part of a higher learning group.

I was also a member of the after-school club for Muslim children, which was run by Matua Rauf, the only Muslim teacher at my school. He'd supervise us for an hour after the bell rang, allowing us to go on the computer to play, helping us with any homework we might have and offering snacks from the halal shop nearby.

A lot of the children who were members of this club had parents from refugee or immigrant backgrounds, many of whom hadn't had the opportunity to receive an education – but if they had, it wasn't in English. This meant their children couldn't turn to them if they needed help with schoolwork. This was definitely the case for me.

Fortunately, the after-school club offered me the assistance my mother wasn't able to, and I was able to thrive in school because of it.

Though these people are no longer present in my life, the impact that they had on me will remain with me forever. They will always be part of my community.

Nida Fiazi is a poet and writing studies student at the University of Waikato. She is a Muslim, Afghan and former refugee.



The community of kapa haka

For nearly a decade, Kapanui School in Waikanae has been using kapa haka as a way of building community in and around the school – and the benefits have been extraordinary for both Māori and non-Māori students.

Several years ago, Kapanui School's then-principal Des Hedley decided that, in line with the school's Ka Hikitia policy of encouraging "Māori success as Māori", he would employ a teacher who could not only teach te reo and tikanga, but also kapa haka. And the whole school, staff and students, would be involved.

"I always saw kapa haka as a super educational opportunity," says Hedley. "We know from research that children involved in music are academically more successful. It also has the physical aspects, [like] brain gym, with the cross movements. On those levels, it's a tool for brain development and memory – it's a super learning tool!"

"[Kapa haka] builds confidence, gives them a sense of value. But alongside that, it's integrating into the whole school a 'te ao Māori' view of things, plus tikanga Māori. For me, I saw that it was for everybody, not just for Māori students, and that's why we put it in place for everybody to take part. But it was particularly important for us that our Māori students were successful academically and socially, and visible and proud as Māori."

The teacher Hedley hired was Rangi Halbert (Ngāti Rongowhakaata, Ngāti Kahungunu), who is now in his seventh year at the school as kaiārahi te reo. His work has been exceptionally successful. He is at Kapanui School one day a week, and further days at three other local schools.

Students from Year 3 onwards can join the kapa haka performance group, but Years 1 and 2 also get introductory instruction. Halbert says the three main tikanga he practices and teaches in his work in schools are whakawhanaungatanga (building a sense of belonging within the school), rangatiratanga (self-respect) and manaakitanga (sharing your strengths with others). "After that, there are three words: 'kia kaha, kia maia, kia manawanui' – be strong, have courage and pursue your future with heart."

But Halbert has not been working alone – he emphasises the importance of staff teamwork in building support for kapa haka, te reo and tikanga within the school. "The staff are really the backbone here at Kapanui School," he says, "so we needed to become a whānau. We needed

to show leadership within our own little rūpū here, to encourage each other. Then the teachers could go back and express that [sense of] whānau with the tamariki." A Māori leadership team works closely with Halbert, sharing their knowledge with each of the four syndicates in the school.

The Board of Trustees has also been important. Departing board chair, Charles Norwood, says, "Kapa haka and te reo have been something that the board members talk about in each meeting. It's very important to us – we want it to be even more all-encompassing."

Current principal Craig Vidulich started at the school in Term 4, 2018, and has been impressed by the school's deep commitment to "support, value, grow and develop te reo Māori and tikanga Māori," he says.

Kapa haka has been a way of building community within the school, as whānau have become involved in various ways, including making, sewing or fixing costumes, fundraising and providing transport to festivals, like the annual Takiri o te Ata Kapa Haka on the Kāpiti Coast. Hedley explains, "If you take a large group of students as we have – sometimes 100 or more – and you have to dress them, get them organised, transport them, look after them, then you need your community to be on board." Whānau even learn the waiata and actions.

"I saw that it was for everybody, not just for Māori students ... But it was particularly important for us that our Māori students were successful academically and socially, and visible and proud as Māori."
– Des Hedley



01



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“The staff are really the backbone here at Kapanui School – we needed to become a whānau so the teachers could go back and express that [sense of] whānau with the tamariki.”

– RANGI HALBERT



03



Vidulich says it is clear how much kapa haka has strengthened the school community. “I hear and see our tamariki practice and perform their whaikōrero, karanga, haka and waiata – and can feel their passion, which is awesome. This is an integral part of the Kapanui School culture, and is supported by whānau,” he says. “New parents tell me how much they love attending our pōwhiri and that they feel as though they ‘belong’ at the school.”

Parent Kiriana Papara has two children currently at the school and an older son who finished last year. “The school’s been very welcoming at letting whānau be involved in everything, which is really cool,” she says. “And the little ones as well – they’ve come along and watched it all and they love it. The haka is always exciting!”

Papara says her oldest son, Iraia, grew in confidence and developed his leadership ability through his roles in kapa haka at Kapanui School. “It definitely helps to take on leadership roles. He’s an outgoing boy naturally, he would lead the haka – and then outside of kapa haka, he’s a leader within his sports groups. In things that he’s interested in, he’s naturally a leader, which is awesome.”

Twelve-year-old student leader Anna Woodman-Aldridge is following in her family’s footsteps in her role as kaikaranga. “My sister and my dad did kapa haka,” she explains. “Even my grandma comes along sometimes. My family help me learn the words, put my hair up and put the earrings on.”

Her father, Peter Woodman-Aldridge (Ngāti Porou, Ngai Tahu) was on the Board of Trustees and was active in bringing te ao Māori into the school. He passed away in 2016, but would have been very proud of her, says Halbert.

“I’m so much better at it now,” says Woodman-Aldridge. “Rangi just believed in me, and I became really good.”

Supporting the kapa haka group has also been a way for Pākehā families and those from other countries to learn about Māori language, tikanga and culture.

“Coming from Switzerland, we have four different national languages, so learning English and [te reo Māori] here is quite important,” says Simone Burkhalter, who has a son, Sean, in Year 5. “Sean started last year in an active performance group – he had some stage fright at first, but the more confident he gets, the more he enjoys it.”



04

“We know from research that children involved in music are academically more successful – [kapa haka] is a super learning tool!”

– DES HEDLEY

Supporting the kapa haka group has also been a way for Pākehā families and those from other countries to learn about Māori language, tikanga and culture.

Every second Wednesday, sessions are held to teach parents waiata and haka, as well as giving insights into pronunciation and meaning of te reo, so they can better support their tamariki. And once a term there is a Whānau Hui, when whānau are invited into the school for shared kai and to socialise with each other and staff. The evenings build whānau engagement and give staff a chance to informally discuss plans and ideas.

“Coming from Switzerland, we have four different national languages, so learning English and [te reo Māori] here is quite important.”

– Simone Burkhalter



Building strength in kapa haka has also helped the school strengthen links with the wider community, which was a goal set by the board many years ago. “Staff member, teacher Sue Lemmon (Te Atiawa) helped us do that,” explains Hedley. “Not just for kapa haka but for tikanga and carrying that within the school – there has been a positive flow-on to the school.”

Lemmon is a member of the team leading success for Māori, and says she knew little about her Māori culture and whakapapa growing up. Her involvement with Kapanui School, as a teacher and with her children attending, means she has learnt alongside the children. And it has spread to other generations, too. “My mum went to the marae for Parihaka Day and was hugely proud when my daughter spoke,” Lemmon says. “For me, that’s what it’s about. You can get back what was lost, through your grandchildren.”

Thanks to Lemmon, Te Atiawa kaumatua have visited the school several times, and the school has also visited the local marae,

Supporting the kapa haka group has also been a way for Pākehā families and those from other countries to learn about Māori language, tikanga and culture.

Whakarongotai. “After one visit, they gifted us the pepeha that we use within the school, and so that was a valuable gift,” says Hedley. “And we also had the opportunity for some of our staff to go to marae committee meetings and consult.”

The local iwi have also invited Kapanui School’s kapa haka group to perform at various public events and the opening of new buildings. The group performs at Matariki celebrations at Mahara Place in central Waikanae. Reciprocally, aspects of Te Atiawa history and culture have been incorporated into the curriculum, like knowledge about the local mountains and waterways and the history of Parihaka, including the pacifist philosophy and leadership of Te Whiti and Tohu.

There has been next to no backlash about the school’s te ao Māori approach. “In my ten years at the school, I only ever had one parent come and see me about her children not taking part in kapa haka, on the basis that they didn’t like the noise and it was too fierce,” says Hedley.

Students keen to learn about money

More than half of secondary schools have signed up to teach teens how to make money work for them.

Sorted in Schools, Te whai hua – kia ora, is the only government-funded financial education programme available in English (New Zealand Curriculum) and in te reo Māori (Te Marautanga o Te Aho Matua and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa).

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– Reg Iharaia Blake. Kaiako, Tauranga



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Sorted in Schools
Te whai hua – kia ora!

The Kapanui School Pepeha

Mauri Ora

by Ben Ngāia and Rangi Halbert

Verse:

Mā te huatau, ka mārāma

Mā te ngākau, ka aroha

Mā te mahara, ka mākohā, ka mākohā

Mā te mahi ngātahi, ka eke taumata

Hei whare āhuru, hei huinga raukura

Chorus:

Ko Kapakapanui te maunga,

ko Waikanae te awa

Ko Kapakapanui te kura e mihi atu nei

Ko Kāpiti te motu

Ko te Rau o te rangi te moana

Ko Kapakapanui te kura

tēnēi ra e mihi atu nei

Tane chant:

Tama tū, tama ora, tama ora tama tū Whaia te iti Kahurangi

Mauri ora ki a tātou katoa, mauri ora

Verse:

Chorus

Tane chant

Bridge:

Mā te mahi ngātahi, ka eke taumata

Hei whare āhuru, hei huinga raukura

Chant:

Kapakapanui te maunga

aikanae te awa

Kāpiti te motu

Te Rau o te Rangi

Kapakapanui te kura

Mauri ora!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

In thinking, clarity

In feeling, warmth of heart

In willingness, thoughtfulness

By helping each other, we progress

Towards becoming caring and responsible people

Who impart purpose and direction throughout life

Kapakapanui is the peak of significance, Waikanae is the stream

It is Kapanui School that greets you all

Waikanae is the suburb, Kāpiti is the region

It is Kapanui that greets you all

May the principle of life, both innate and physical, embrace us all

“A strong kapa haka group becomes a visual image of success in your school.”

– DES HEDLEY

“We talked about it, Rangi as well – we went through the words of the haka, what they were saying and what was happening, and the parent went away happy.”

Survey data compiled by the school between 2013 and 2015 showed an improvement in Māori student and whānau engagement. When Māori Year 7 and 8 students were asked whether their family’s culture was treated with respect by teachers, there was a shift from 70% saying yes in 2014, to 100% saying yes the following year. There was also improved achievement right across the curriculum.

Kapanui School’s practice of integrating te reo and a Māori perspective into each classroom is in line with the government’s policy of normalising te reo Māori in schools. To help achieve this, the government this year launched a programme called Te Ahu o Te Reo Māori¹, which has been allocated funding of \$12 million over four years.

The school has used Tātaiako cultural competencies in job descriptions and appraisals, and supported teacher Sophie Cudby to spend a year learning te reo Māori at Te Wānanga o Raukawa in Ōtaki. “She’s come back to the school bringing some great new things with her,” says Norwood.

All of these achievements have a link to the school’s embracing of kapa haka. “A strong kapa haka group becomes a visual image of success in your school,” says Hedley. “It’s been very accepted, and it’s been a source of pride for the community.” ●

1. [education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/moutereao-te-ahu-o-te-reo-maori-fostering-education-in-te-reo-maori/](https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/moutereao-te-ahu-o-te-reo-maori-fostering-education-in-te-reo-maori/)



FEATURE | THE COMMUNITY ISSUE



Building bridges: from community to ECE to primary

The importance of whānau and community doesn’t lessen just because a child starts school, but it can be hard for educators to maintain these strong connections once a child leaves early childhood education. Jane Blaikie and Jane Arthur talk to educators across the country about the challenges they face when trying to build bridges between the child and their community.

Walk into a quality early childhood education (ECE) setting and there’s that immediate sense of connection and security – children curious, engaged and busy – and underlying all the activity is a baseline of calm. It’s proof that the child is at the centre of the learning environment, and for that to happen, the child’s context needs to be understood.

Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum, mentions the word “community” 36 times. Two key principles – “Family and Community” and “Holistic Development” – put the concept front and centre.

For Sally Wooller, head teacher at Inglewood Kindergarten, these two principles link to a third, “Relationships”. For her, it is responsive and responsible relationships that empower children to learn and grow.

“We acknowledge parents as the experts on their children and that we have a lot to learn from them, and then we share our new knowledge about their children with them, and we maintain that [communication] over time.”

Wooller has been able to share her thinking on community through her local Kāhui Ako/Community of Learning – she’s a member of its Key Leadership Group that meets for an hour each week to keep momentum going.

This Kāhui Ako, like many others, has an Achievement Challenge centred on transitions, and a series of workshops recently brought together junior school teachers and ECE teachers from all its services. Wooller acknowledges that “balancing the needs and expectations of teachers across ECE and primary does become a challenge.”

“It would have been ideal for all teachers to attend these at the same time,” Wooller says. While there is some funding to support releasing teachers so they can attend, “[ECE centres] needed to remain open, so two workshops were held at different times – one in the afternoon and another in the evening. This does split the group and also highlights the inequities of teachers’ ability to access PLD [professional learning and development] during the working day, with all attending in the evening sessions being from the early childhood sector.”

Despite this, Wooller says there are now more connections between teachers in the two settings and more collaborations. “Schools can see links to ECE in play-based learning in their settings in the context of their curriculum – and even to links to the inquiry learning of older children.”

A shift in expectations for children and whānau moving to school is also very welcome,

“We acknowledge parents as the experts on their children and that we have a lot to learn from them.”
– Sally Wooller



Wooller says. “It’s more about the school needing to be ready for the child than the child being ready for school.”

The PLD workshops are being followed up by a facilitator who visits centres and schools, with a focus on the section of *Te Whāriki* that looks at pathways to schools and kura.

Wooller says ECE does have an advantage in building communities in that whānau come into services to drop off and pick up children. “That gives us really good opportunities to build meaningful relationships,” she says. “We have those conversations around ‘are they ready’, ‘they haven’t settled’, ‘I’m going to keep them at home’ – and if we aren’t warm and welcoming, they don’t come back.”

She’s keen to reiterate that schools have done a lot of work in recent years on building relationships with families and creating environments that are warm and welcoming – “it has changed”.

But Hinemoa Pohatu, head teacher at Belmont Avenue Kindergarten in Hamilton, believes there’s still room for improvement. She has had a run of whānau coming back to tell her that their children aren’t settling at school and that tamariki wake up in the morning and say they want to go back to kindergarten. “For one child, it’s been a year.”

“It’s a very warm and welcoming atmosphere here – it’s the wairua that matters. We had a parent bring a child for a visit recently, and the child said afterwards, ‘That’s not a kindergarten, that’s a home!’”

Tamariki at Belmont Avenue have come from a wide range of communities – Jordanian, Somali, Cantonese-speaking, Mandarin-speaking, Cambodian, along with many from Māori and Pasifika whānau.

A lot of emphasis is put on making genuine connections with families, with staff learning words from the different cultures. “There is genuine aroha. It comes from kotahitanga and whakawhanaungatanga – we reach out.”

This enables staff to closely tailor teaching and learning to the child. “We might have individual plans to support the growth of tamariki – it might be social competency or language skills, and it fits with ERO [Education Review Office] – but we are also inspired and led by the interests of tamariki: their individual emerging interests, what they like doing and what they’re good at.”

The kindergarten recently reviewed its practices and decided that instead of setting up all the areas of play ahead of a session, they would



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leave one or two empty so that children could choose what they wanted to set up or do.

Pohatu says the close relationships with whānau also help when it comes to having the hard conversations. “We had some tamariki pushing the boundaries on acceptable behaviour, and we had to have a talk with all the whānau – at the end, there were some tears, but they also really appreciated it. It couldn’t happen unless we knew the whānau really well.”

She wishes there were stronger local connections to support the children to transition to school. “It would be really nice to meet halfway. To say, ‘This is what we do, what do you do?’ We could share ideas and resources – it could be great. We have a good Cool 4 School programme for the older tamariki, but we go to the schools with it – they don’t come to us.

“[Our] local Kāhui Ako doesn’t seem to include ECE. We’re used to being the bottom of the pile – and we have been shaking that vine for a while. But we are the foundation of learning for children, after all.”

“There is genuine aroha. It comes from kotahitanga and whakawhanaungatanga – we reach out.”
– Hinemoa Pohatu



Spreading the foundations into primary

Amie Roberts has her own perspective on how community could and should be part of a child’s learning. She is in her second year as a New Entrants/Year 1 teacher at Owhiro Bay School in Wellington, with a background of 15 years of teaching in ECE. She is also the school’s LSCo (Learning Support Co-ordinator) and her own children attend the school.

For her, community means that teachers, parents and families are all working together to support the child in a holistic way, be it social, emotional, developmental or academic. “We’re a team,” she says.

Roberts has seen first-hand how important strong community connections can be when it comes to outcomes for a child. “Strong communities reflect in many ways on children, because if children can see adults working together for them – one, that sends a wonderful message about teamwork and communication.



But also it's about building a relationship with the parents, because if they feel that you're with them, then they'll talk to you about the things that matter to them."

Roberts explains, "If you've got a child who's struggling with reading and that relationship is there, then parents are going to take that better and be more likely to implement the strategies or suggestions you have to help that child at home. And the child goes, 'Oh my gosh, all the adults in my life want me to succeed!' It's quite powerful."

But she can understand the perception that parents – or others outside the primary setting – may have, where the child arrives at school and that's it for the family, because she felt it herself in the past. "In ECE, you walk in and the teachers are able to talk to you, they know you really well, they spend a lot of time getting to know you and your child.

"But now that I'm a teacher working in

"Now that I'm a teacher working in primary classrooms, it is a lot more hectic [than I'd previously realised]."

– Amie Roberts

primary classrooms, it is a lot more hectic [than I'd previously realised]," explains Roberts. "There are certain expectations on you from the curriculum and from the Ministry of Education – you have to get a certain amount of teaching and learning outcomes achieved. So, often, in the morning you're scurrying around trying to make sure that everything is ready, and you don't have as much time to hang out with the families as you would like."

One of the biggest adjustments for Roberts moving from teaching in ECE to primary is the requirement for assessment of students. "I find it a very hard concept – particularly in children under seven – that you have to get them to a certain level by a certain time." She believes this is what fundamentally gets in the way of building relationships with families. "If teachers didn't feel under so much pressure, I think they'd have more time to engage with



families. I believe that most teachers, if not all of them, want to engage and work as a team and community, but there are so many pressures.”

It’s not just classroom pressures that prevent community connections – Roberts knows that families are busy too, each facing their own challenges. “Often by three o’clock, the kids are absolutely shattered and the parents are tired and they just want to go. So some of it is institutionalised, and some of it is just life.”

Since the before and after school times can be so busy for everyone, the school provides creative ways to connect. “We do a once-a-term family celebration in our Junior Hub, which is a celebration of children’s learning. Last term, the children organised and ran a café for their parents – the children organised and wrote menus, invitations, helped prepare and make the food and then served it to their parents and other whānau members who came.”

As children get older, they naturally become

“If teachers didn’t feel under so much pressure, I think they’d have more time to engage with families.”

– Amie Roberts

more independent, so sometimes parents need to let them spread their wings – and teachers are well-placed to encourage that. “That can be a hard thing as well, realising your child doesn’t need you as much. That’s why I like being part of the parent committee, because you can say, ‘Hey, your child may not want you to walk them to class each day, but you can still be involved – come and help run the disco!’”

Many of the New Entrants at Owhiro Bay School can be at an advantage when it comes to transitioning to school, because a lot of them have attended the onsite kindergarten – meaning the school already knows the families and children. But Roberts says the school works hard to emulate the same experience for children who are new to the school community.

“The general feeling is still the same – we try to create a very ‘family’ approach,” she says. “We do the pre-entry visits in the mornings when we’re doing ‘learning through play’, which





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Online connections

Wellington-based Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (Te Kura), formerly the Correspondence School, is running an online early childhood programme for those who may be isolated by distance, special needs or circumstances. My Early Childhood launched in 2017. Early Years Online Curriculum Specialist Hellen McConnell says the programme supports adults and children to learn together, share successes and explore their interests within their community and home environment. One feature allows tamariki to upload photos and video direct to their kaiako.

But one of its biggest successes is that it enables whānau to build partnerships within their communities – with Playcentre, with whānau overseas, and with others in their rural community, such as families with school-aged children and local schools. “It breaks down barriers and reduces distances to bring communities closer together,” explains McConnell. “This is a key enabler of deep learning, empowering tamariki to learn in an environment that represents them, their identity, culture and language.”

is a very similar philosophy to early childhood education settings, so the child thinks, ‘Hey, that’s not so different from what I know’. That also frees the teacher up to be able to hang out with them as well, instead of being up the front doing formal teaching. That builds relationships quite quickly, too.”

For Roberts, time is the most precious commodity of all. “The only way to have relationships with true integrity is to have time and to be able to step in when it’s needed. Because relationships take time and community is built on relationships.”

North of Wellington, at Papakowhai School in Porirua, Eryn Street is in her third year of teaching. She started as a New Entrants teacher, but this year is teaching Year 7 and 8 and, like Roberts, has noticed a difference in the whānau involvement of the two age groups.

“[With] New Entrants, it’s a lot more hands-on, day-to-day,” she says. “You see the parents – they come in, drop the students off, check that

“[With] New Entrants, it’s a lot more hands-on, day-to-day. As time goes on, the parents can step back a wee bit.”

– ERYN STREET

they’re settling in. As time goes on, the parents can step back a wee bit.” This is a contrast with teaching the older children. “With Year 7 and 8, I often don’t see the parents unless they’ve got a concern they want to discuss with me or if I want to discuss something with them,” Street says. “Or, occasionally, we’ll see them dropping their kids off at school.”

However, Street says the community around older students has something different to offer. “I reach out to the community when there’s a specific skill to get whānau engaged with,” she says. “We’re doing a rocket challenge at the moment, and we’ve reached out to local engineers and parents who are really interested in STEM and STEAM, and got them to get on-board with that, which is really cool.”

Street finds that if there are strong relationships in place, it’s not always the school initiating the connections. “There’s one parent here who is a librarian at another school, and quite often says to us, ‘Did you know about this event coming up?’ ‘Did you know about that?’ The students here got to go to an event with a *New York Times* bestselling author because of that,” she says. “It’s really cool seeing the collaboration between whānau, community and teacher to benefit the students.”

These sorts of connections don’t always have to happen on school grounds. In fact, Street says a lot of the work she does building community happens elsewhere. “I’ve been to a few of my students’ sports finals or arts things that they’re involved with – because then you’re out in the community and there’s that link with the school, which I think is really important for the kids.”

Strong communities are also built by showing up and being there for the children. “Being seen to be involved with the community is key,” Street says, “so the families of your students know that it is more than just a job – you really do care for these kids.” ●

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OPINION | THE COMMUNITY ISSUE

Angus Hikairo Macfarlane

Engaging parents, whānau and hapori

It is widely acknowledged that engaging whānau and community in educational activities that support the learning of their children is mutually beneficial. It is also acknowledged that this is not always straightforward.

Engaging parents, whānau and hapori (communities) can be complex given the range of dominant cultural perspectives frequently embedded within the educational conundrum. To make this partnership for learning possible, it is necessary to recognise that the system has a long history of not being open to working together with whānau and hapori as equal partners. Addressing this imbalance is a shared responsibility.

We can gain insight by looking at other educational contexts that have successfully facilitated wider engagement. A recent overseas study¹ explored how an Indigenous intervention programme delivered in British Columbia, Canada, was able to be authentically implemented in diverse communities.

The study uncovered three notable themes to fostering the active engagement of family. The first theme, overcoming mistrust, involves understanding the history of the situation. It involves working hard to gain trust and reflecting on one's own

possible personal biases and privileges. The second theme, being willing to reach out and build relationships, is about nurturing relationships with cultural leaders in the community, offering choices and sharing power, and supporting and engaging the whole family. The third theme, resisting imposing a universal way of knowing, encourages the use of strength-based vernacular, drawing on timely, non-judgemental processes and adapting these processes so as to “fit” the community. Basic messages that would resonate with the Aotearoa context, I would contend.

In my book *Kia hiwa rā! Listen to culture*², I refer to the notion that “people in the community are excellent resources”. I use the example of how a well-known taiaha exponent was invited to a school to share his knowledge and skills with a group of learners. He took the group through a wānanga on the practical and spiritual insights of traditional weaponry. “Reaching out” and “inviting in” a community leader raised the learners’ desire to attain mastery and whetted their appetite for consuming new knowledge.

The closer the whānau moves toward the education of their tamariki,

the greater potential there is for the learner to taste success – and success breeds success. Success may be manifested in academic progress, fewer behaviour challenges, increased self-esteem and social skills, better attendance and improved attitude. The paragons for this model are the immersion settings – kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori and whare kura – where whānau are integral.

The way whānau react and interact differs. There are no hard and fast rules for linking the culture of the whānau with the education context and vice versa, but there are recommended processes. The first recommendation is knowing the background of the whānau and the history of the mana whenua. Other considerations include using moderate language (gentle in tone and pitch), being personable and warm, and being honest. If unfamiliar with cultural protocols then say so, and concede that mistakes may occur.

“He moana pukepuke e ekengia” is a whakataukī that refers to navigating a choppy sea. An additional message is that it is good that we learn from our mistakes, as this will encourage us to get better at crossing boundaries among culturally different contexts, within one nation.

Dr Angus Hikairo Macfarlane (Ngāti Whakaue) is Professor of Māori Research at the University of Canterbury.

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Virtually connected

More than a quarter of New Zealand schools have fewer than 100 students¹. They are often rural and remote, with minimal infrastructure and fragile economies. For teachers in these places, the challenges are high. How can they provide a rich, varied curriculum with only one or two teachers? How can their students gain meaningful connections with the wider world and overcome their isolation? *Ako* spoke with teachers who are grappling with these questions and finding solutions through online communities.

From the grounds of Halfmoon Bay School you can watch the fishing boats come in. Twice a day, the tourists come too, attracted to Rakiura National Park and a simpler, slower lifestyle governed by rhythms of sea and tide. There are 33 students at the school, up from 2015, when the community ran an advertising campaign to attract more families to Stewart Island. A couple of extra students meant the school could keep its second teacher.

Kath Johnson, who is principal here, knows all about the precariousness of small schools. For 12 years she's worked hard, with her parent community and some rural teaching colleagues, to mitigate the worst aspects of remoteness. The result has been the creation of a vibrant and varied learning programme at Halfmoon Bay School, much of it built around online communities.

"We've got kids here learning visual art from specialist teachers, kids doing digitech, extension maths and programming. There are students learning German, French, Mandarin and Spanish," says Johnson.

"All the learning opportunities that they might get in a big city school, our kids are getting – while also experiencing the best of what a small school can offer."

Their online learning is sourced through two separate but linked communities: the Rural and Remote Network, a co-operative of rural schools, and the Virtual Learning Network (VLN) Primary School, a charitable trust governed and resourced by participating schools and, in part, the Ministry of Education.

The Rural and Remote Network began at a sole-charge principals' conference in 2011. A bunch of principals got together, talked about ways to address problems of isolation and came up with a plan.

"As a starter, we thought it would be cool if we could organise a camp for our senior kids," says Johnson, who was the instigator of the group. "We knew it would be good for our kids to spend time with a larger group of students their own age. Out of that grew an online class, initially to prepare for camp, but then to teach other things and build a community."



“They’re also sharing life experiences. A discussion about the holidays might include accounts of visiting the mall or going pig hunting. There are some really delightful exchanges.”

– RACHEL WHALLEY

Teachers volunteered to teach across the community. Soon, Year 7 and 8 students were getting together online for novel studies, poetry and social studies units. They learned about each others’ lives and shared stories.

“It’s been great to see our older students developing relationships with other kids their age. They get to know each other online and then at camp, which we now hold every two years. It’s become a very important part of school tradition.”

Leo de Beurs, principal at Kaitoke School on Great Barrier Island, agrees. “The classes and camp help prepare our senior students for high school. Most of our Year 7 and 8 [students] have never been in a big group of kids their own age. They’re used to being the big people in a classroom of younger children, some of whom might be family members. They also get to work with other teachers, with different personalities and teaching styles.”

On remote Pitt Island in the Chatham Islands, principal Rick Whalley spent two years building an infrastructure that would make it affordable for small primary schools to collaborate online. The result was VLN Primary.

VLN Primary began providing classes for schools in 2009. Initially, most of the classes were foreign languages. Teachers were hired to provide instruction across several schools at once.

“We established classes in response to requests from schools,” says Rachel Whalley, a long-time e-learning specialist who works alongside partner Rick.

“Schools tell us what their students want and we see what we can find. We are not about saying, ‘Here’s a course – come and do it.’ We’ve steered away from that because we don’t want to be another provider. We are driven by the schools.”

One of the first classes had its origins in a request from a South Taranaki school experiencing an influx of Chinese families attracted by work in the natural gas industry. The local children were keen to learn Mandarin so they could better engage with the newcomers. VLN Primary sourced a teacher through the Confucius Institute and soon students from other schools joined in the class.

Nowadays, a whole range of languages are being learned through VLN, by urban and rural students.

For Lorraine Makutu’s students at Mangere Primary in South Auckland², the opportunity to learn Japanese and Mandarin alongside students from other places is part of a drive to be nationally and globally connected.

“Who says Māori and [Pacific] kids from poor neighbourhoods can’t learn foreign languages?” says Makutu, who always believed her students would excel in the classes. All they needed was the opportunity.

“Our students already have a first language that’s different from English. They are experienced language learners who want to be the voice of their whānau.”

Te reo Māori classes are particularly popular, with almost 50% of current VLN Primary students participating. Many of the enrolments come from city schools unable to access experienced teachers locally.

“We’ve got kids from Mangere in class with kids from Makahu,” says Rachel Whalley. “And they’re not just learning te reo together. They’re also sharing life experiences. A discussion about the holidays might include accounts of visiting the mall or going pig hunting. There are some really delightful exchanges.”

The virtual classroom has come a long way over a very short period. Rachel Whalley says that, in the early years, the limitations of video conferencing technology made distance-learning challenging.

“I remember contacting Douglas Harré [then senior ICT Consultant at the ministry] when we were about to have a schools’ video conference, asking if he could call the satellite people and ask them to boost our connection as much as possible.”

Today, improved wi-fi and broadband infrastructure and the availability of platforms like Skype and Zoom are breaking down barriers to learning.

“In the early days we would have a few glitches,” says de Beurs. “Now if there’s an issue, the kids are able to troubleshoot pretty quickly and then things run like an ordinary classroom.”

Johnson agrees. “It’s like the teacher is there in the room. They get to know the students quite quickly and the students really enjoy the classes. There’s informality and jokes, and the pedagogy is similar to regular teaching and learning.”

A standard lesson will typically involve discussion and feedback. There might be whiteboard use, screen-sharing or a video shown. There are break-out groups and Google Classroom for support after the lesson.

“There’s still widespread misunderstanding of what online learning is,” says Rick Whalley. “It’s not about internet searches or being posted stuff on Google Classroom. To us, it’s about students connecting to other students and teachers online and learning collaboratively.”

At Halfmoon Bay, as in other schools, teachers have found the online experience helps students acquire skills of self-management that bridge the transition to secondary school.

“Most of our children go to boarding school, so the change is a very big step,” says Johnson. “Learning at Year 7 and 8 how to join a class at the correct time, get set up and troubleshoot without teacher prompting is invaluable for them. They learn the skill of time management by scheduling their follow-up work. At the same time, they become good online citizens.”

Former students agree. In surveys they’ve stated that the online experience has put them at an advantage entering secondary school.

There are benefits for teachers too, both personally and professionally. Observing other teachers at work in the virtual classroom provides ideas to add to their own pedagogy, and there are opportunities to learn content as well.

Anna Fourie, principal of tiny Ohura Valley School in the King Country, says it has been great for her to sit in on her students’ te reo and kapa haka classes.

“All the learning opportunities that they might get in a big city school, our kids are getting – while also experiencing the best of what a small school can offer.”

– KATE JOHNSON

“I’m learning alongside the children,” she says, “which in turn helps my own teaching.”

Like many other users of VLN Primary, Fourie first used its classes to fill gaps in curriculum and then became an online teacher. She teaches Afrikaans to students across the country.

“It gives me huge satisfaction,” she says. “I believe in cultural diversity and the richness it brings. Language learning is part of that and it is really great for the brain.”

This sharing of special skills and knowledge is a key element of digital communities. Rachel Whalley describes it as a “kete economy”, where the contributions of many provide for all.

Online communities have also helped break down some of the isolation teachers feel. Many have forged strong supports and relationships across the country.

“Geographically speaking, my nearest professional colleagues are in Invercargill,” says Johnson. “But in terms of school management or teaching and learning, I have a lot more in common with the likes of Leo de Beurs at the other end of the country.”

Members of the group often call or Skype each other for advice, and contact has increased now that NZEI Te Riu Roa is holding Zoom meetings of remote schools to gain their unique perspective.

2. She is now Deputy Principal, Senior School at Takanini School.

Rick Whalley believes that the digital space holds huge potential for teachers’ professional development (PLD). “Part of our vision has always involved experts, advisors or RTLBs working online with several schools at once, building skills and knowledge in places where there has been limited access.”

Access, equity and opportunities for students and teachers are now more possible than ever. The enabling technology is here. It’s just a matter of people catching up.

Collaborating via Facebook

The Facebook group NZ Teachers (Primary) is the profession’s most popular online community, with more than 35,000 members.

The group was established over four years ago, the brainchild of Amber Mattsson, a teacher returning to the classroom from maternity leave and looking for advice from ordinary teachers.

“I looked online to see if there was a teachers’ forum where I might find answers. There were none, so I decided I would set up one myself.”

Mattsson set up the group with the help of her friends and colleagues, Rachael Fullard and Janine Baker, and rapidly grew membership and engagement. It is now a lively place for the exchange of advice and professional discussion.

“I think it works because teachers are natural collaborators who look for ways to help their students,” says Mattsson. “We do that every day in the staffroom, and this online space has made it possible to share with a wider community. It has opened up the staffroom.”

Every day the Facebook page is alive with exchanges of advice and resources. Teachers who are looking to teach a new topic or age group seek out help from others – and invariably get it.

“That was our aim,” says Mattsson. “We wanted to build an online community where teachers could help each other out. Teaching’s tough enough without having to reinvent the wheel all the time. If someone has already successfully done something, why not draw on their expertise, rather than try to go it alone?”

“Often the advice sought is about how to cater for the needs of a particular child,” says Fullard. “A teacher may be looking for ways



This sharing of special skills and knowledge is a key element of digital communities. Rachel Whalley describes it as a “kete economy”, where the contributions of many provide for all.

to extend a particularly gifted student, or they may have exhausted their own strategies to assist a child struggling to make progress in reading. A quick post on the Facebook page will bring a flood of suggestions and resources.”

Requests for advice also come from those seeking out professional learning and development, or looking to teach overseas. Invariably, others share experience and helpful information.

Professional and industrial discussions are often lively, often spilling over from the online space into staffrooms. “We often hear that something being discussed on the NZ Teachers Facebook page has led to an interesting discussion in schools,” says Mattsson. “There’s always a richness of ideas online.”

“The [Facebook] page has brought together people who would never normally interact with each other. They’re growing understanding of people living and working in different contexts.”

– RACHAEL FULLARD

It’s a supportive space, too. When schools are impacted by tragedy or trauma, the community comes together.

“We’re there for each other,” says Fullard. “The page has brought together people who would never normally interact with each other. They’re growing understanding of people living and working in different contexts.”

Over the past few years, the three founders have remained committed to their original intention, making a safe place where teachers can share. Members are expected to treat each other with the same kindness and respect they would use in their staffroom, and it is members who decide the direction of discussion.

“We don’t drive the content,” says Mattsson. “Sometimes there is stuff being posted that we don’t agree with, but we leave it to the individual person to take responsibility. We just supply the forum.”

The page is moderated, though, and efforts are made to minimise buying and selling or advertising. The administrators don’t want it clogged up with commercialism.

“We are really proud of what we’ve achieved,” says Amber. “It is a lot of work, especially for full-time teachers and mums, but we feel great about what we are able to contribute.” ●



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FEATURE | THE COMMUNITY ISSUE

People power

School principals from around the country explain how strong communities of staff bring crucial benefits for children and whānau, from South Auckland to Southland.

01



02

“It’s all about empowerment”

Principal Paeariki Johnson uses a “one marae” concept to hold together her remarkably diverse school and its staff.

This means two things, above all: a huge amount of cultural respect, and a very close-knit community – including staff and beyond.

Rongomai School in Ōtara is relatively small, with 190 students – but the site also includes a satellite class and over 80 children at three early childhood education (ECE) centres: one English language, one kōhanga reo and one Cook Islands punanga reo. The school roll is 27% Māori, 69% Pacific Peoples and the rest is a mix of Pākehā and Vietnamese.

This structure has its unique challenges but also opportunities for community connection. “On our school site, we also have three preschools and one satellite class, who each have their own centre leaders and governing boards – but there was very little interaction or engagement between our schools,” explains Johnson.

“I started to notice new staff members in these centres and had no idea who they were, which is why the ‘one marae’ concept became very important. We are all operating on the same site, so I thought, let’s get to know each other more, share resources and be supportive of each other. This is when I decided that, as part of our termly pōwhiri to welcome new staff and students to our site, all new staff and students at any of the other four centres should also join us and be welcomed in the pōwhiri process.

“It takes a lot of work, but we share services and resources, and it all comes back to the community. When one of our ECE centres was to have an ERO visit we were able to tautoko with that by welcoming ERO with a pōwhiri. The ‘one marae’ brings us all closer together.”

Another important aspect of team-building has been the way the school celebrates Language Weeks. The school has taken something from each language and culture and



03





04

“We are all operating on the same site, so I thought, let’s get to know each other more, share resources and be supportive of each other.”

- PAEARIKI JOHNSON

embedded it in school practice. From Tonga, came the idea of feiloaki– when staff arrive at school, they greet each other with physical contact, like a high five, a peck on the cheek, a hug or a fist bump. “The kids see what we are doing and they do it too.”

From the Cook Islands came no’oanga au, which is a peace chair. During breaks, if a child doesn’t have a friend to play with or is feeling a bit lonely, they can sit on the chair, and this will signal to teachers to go over and comfort them. “It can be any of us. It’s not a teacher-on-duty thing. We can all do this.”

From Samoa has come the practice of beating the drums at the end of lunchtime, signalling to students and staff to return to class for 10 minutes of quiet reflection or devotion. It is known as ta le sā. Anyone caught outside during this time is given an extra duty.

Johnson says parents really appreciate the wider cultural practice: “I love it.”

Johnson is the first Cook Islands principal in Ōtara, where she grew up. Now 25 years into her teaching career, she took over the school in early 2016 after multiple teaching roles, a stint as a deputy principal, and some post-graduate study. She also spent a few years teaching at a youth justice facility, which inspired her move back to mainstream teaching. “We were the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. They weren’t all low achievers – some were pretty intelligent – but they all hated school. What got me was a couple of students who had been at schools where I had taught when they were little kids. One was not a surprise, coming from a very troubled situation, but the other was.

“I thought maybe I could make more of a difference back in mainstream, get in sooner and hopefully help our young people before they find themselves at the edge of the cliff.”

All this experience means that now, as a leader, Johnson recognises she is not the source of all knowledge, and the school benefits from a flat leadership model.

“When I started, we reviewed a lot. We needed systems and communication processes. It needed to be clear to everybody who you spoke to if, say, you needed to buy an item to teach something from the curriculum.

“It’s not a hierarchy – it’s all about empowerment. People have management units and budgets, and the decision-making stays with them. It’s about trust and building confidence. If we make a mistake, we learn from it.”



05



“A well-functioning team is proactive rather than reactive.”

– JO MAHONEY



06



When some changes led to grumbling in the staff community, Johnson called a whānau hui – because the staff see themselves as whānau. “I said, ‘What’s going on?’” She listened and wrote things down for senior management, and explained to staff, “‘I’m not here to block ideas, I’m here to build practices and systems so I know what you need. I do believe teachers need to offload. People want to be heard and listened to. If there’s a problem, you have to speak to the person you have a problem with first.”

The sense of whānau has spread to include children at the school. “It’s been positive for them. They see that [the staff are] very close, get on well, and no one person is talking up at the top all the time. We all genuinely care for each other,” Johnson says. “The kids love their teachers and they feel safe and comfortable going to any one of our teachers. They’re happy – and it means parents are happy to come into school.”

At Pongoroa School in the Tararua District, principal and teacher Jo Mahoney agrees that a strong staff team helps the school connect to whānau. “When staff enjoy coming to school and their school day, parents pick up on it.”

In a rural community, this is crucial. “Usually if there are problems or issues at school, the community is quick to notice. But a well-functioning team is also quick, and is

proactive rather than reactive. The community needs to feel welcome to approach the school on any matter pertaining to their child’s education.”

For herself, being the leader in an isolated area brings some challenges, but Mahoney says sources of support include colleagues, the board, her appraiser, a senior Ministry of Education advisor and even a closed Facebook page for principals, where she can read about the issues others face. The school recently decided to leave its Kāhui Ako/Community of Learning to save on workload and travel time. “The particular needs of the school are better

“If it’s about the staff and not about the kids, then you’ve lost track and you need to rethink the vision. The purpose has to be about having the best practices for children.”

- PETER HOPWOOD



07

met from here. For example, we can organise our own professional learning and development rather than sending teachers miles away.”

Mahoney recommends always being open and honest with staff, valuing them and recognising their strengths, offering support and sharing best practice – “staff feel they can share their issues and get constructive feedback and ideas from their colleagues”. Staff members need to be involved in change and leaders need to be approachable. And, importantly, “Good staff culture is when there’s lots of laughter in the staffroom.”

Trust and loyalty in the 21st century

For Peter Hopwood, who runs a large, full primary in Invercargill, the old-fashioned concepts of trust and loyalty matter. But there’s nothing old-fashioned about the initiatives his team has taken to make sure Donovan School students have the best possible future.

He says the trick to leading is to not look like a leader. “You want staff to get going and do things – and then they realise they’ve been led: you’ve been leading from the side and from the back.”

Don’t micro-manage, he adds. Let other people lead projects, and not necessarily team leaders; rather, get someone who is passionate about the project. Make sure people have the time and resources they need. And accept that change, especially cultural change, is a long game.

“When people get success, that breeds loyalty – and if you have loyalty, you have everything you need,” he says.

Another essential is having a vision – or a “main thing”, as Hopwood also calls it – and sticking to it. This can be hard to do, because in a school there are so many distractions. “If it’s about the staff and not about the kids, then you’ve lost track and you need to rethink the vision,” he says. “The purpose has to be about having the best practices for children – the most efficient practices in the school environment for children.”

At the same time, Hopwood is demonstrating the behaviour he wants from staff through a set of pointers that are very close to hand: the *New Zealand Curriculum*. “The key competencies aren’t just for kids – we need to model them ourselves. They’re even in our job descriptions.”

He says that while some of the elements of leadership and community-building can be

learnt (time management, organisation and better ways of doing things), it really all comes down to people skills. “If you’re not the kind of person who likes to connect with people, it won’t work.”

When a staff member isn’t motivated or makes mistakes, Hopwood talks first to team leaders. “I always check in with the team – what’s happening in the team around the person? Are they not being supported, are their needs not being met?”

One of the main benefits of a strong staff culture, he says, is that parents feel safe and included in the school. “They sense the joy in the school and you get the trust – then they’ll talk to you. The wider community develops from the inclusion and trust built by the teams of staff.”

Another rather interesting initiative has also helped. When asked how to sell the idea of community to whānau, especially given the emphasis on individual achievement in some quarters, Hopwood reacts with a smile. “The

Parents feel safe and included in the school. “They sense the joy in the school and you get the trust – then they’ll talk to you. The wider community develops from the inclusion and trust built by the staff.”

New Zealand Curriculum is great when it comes to community – but you have to teach and show parents how good it is.”

For the past 18 months, the school has been running curriculum workshops for parents by looking at the education parents want for their children. “They see that, compared to their childhoods, there are more devices, there’s less physical activity, less community – but that children need to be global citizens, adaptable, empathetic and resilient. At the end of the workshops, parents end up wanting the key competencies and art, and all that.

“If you don’t teach parents about the curriculum, how will they know what we’re asking them about? So it’s a bit of teaching, a bit of consulting, then you get lots of ideas. We’ve just finished the process to get a whole new curriculum-based school vision.”

For Hopwood, a community needs to look after each other – but also look ahead. “We talk about creating citizens for the future – and parents get it.” ●

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Narragunnawali

Reconciliation in education

Australia is home to more than 250 distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations – diverse geo-cultural communities, each with their own traditional languages, customs and connections to Country/place.

Today, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to identify with the unique groups that they have belonged to since time immemorial. Australia's colonial history has caused displacement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from their Traditional Lands, as well as separation of families and communities. This has resulted in complex and varied definitions of community.

According to The State of Reconciliation in Australia report (2016)¹, building mutually trusting and respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the wider Australian community is integral to fostering a stronger future of reconciliation (the strengthening of relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of all Australians)

Narragunnawali is a word from the language of the Ngunnawal people, meaning alive, wellbeing, coming together and respect.

1. reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/State-of-Reconciliation-Report_SUMMARY.pdf
2. reconciliation.org.au/narragunnawali

across the nation. While the Australian Curriculum mandates that all Australian students learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and perspectives, there is limited guidance on how to build relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education², a Reconciliation Australia initiative, supports Australian schools and early learning services to develop environments that foster a higher level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. By creating a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) using the Narragunnawali online platform, schools and early learning services can be supported to build respectful and trusting relationships with community through a formal statement of commitment to reconciliation. Narragunnawali (pronounced narra-gunna-wally) is a word from the language of the Ngunnawal people, meaning alive, wellbeing, coming together and respect.

Whether or not a school has Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students or children, building relationships is an important part of creating learning environments that demonstrate respect for, and pride in, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. These culturally respectful environments ultimately enhance learning experiences for all students and children.³

The responsibility for fostering pride in and respect for Australia's First Peoples, and for increasing understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, must be a shared one. It can only happen when schools and early learning services become more knowledgeable about, engaged with, and respectful of, the experiences and aspirations of their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members can contribute powerfully to school and early learning services' reconciliation journeys by helping to ensure that they are meaningfully contextualised, and as culturally safe and responsive as possible. Building mutually beneficial relationships between Aboriginal and Torres

"Reconciliation is about relationship-building . . . It's bringing families and parents along on the journey so they can see the importance of education."
– Geraldine Atkinson

3. caepr.cass.anu.edu.au/evaluation-narragunnawali-reconciliation-schools-and-early-learning
4. reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/reconciliation-news_issue-40_web-1.pdf

Strait Islander communities and education settings may give a powerful voice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a setting where these have been historically marginalised.

Strong examples of reconciliation in education demonstrate an active awareness of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities, histories and cultures both within and across communities. Positive relationships are transformational, rather than short-term transactional relationships. These mutually beneficial relationships are based on deep conversations, consultations and collaborations with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

Geraldine Atkinson, a Bangerang/Wiradjuri woman and highly respected educator, says, "Reconciliation is about relationship-building. So it's important that this journey isn't just for non-Indigenous [people], but for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities as well. It's bringing families and parents along on the journey so they can see the importance of education. And they can also learn with their children."⁴

Anyone can join the Narragunnawali community to access a range of free resources. Whether you're a teacher, student, parent or community member, in Australia or elsewhere, visit reconciliation.org.au/narragunnawali to find out more.



REVIEWS

Girls and Autism: Educational, Family and Personal Perspectives

Barry Carpenter, Francesca Happè and Jo Egerton (eds) (Routledge)

Traditionally, autism has been thought of as a disorder mainly affecting males. However, this is not the case. Many girls have been undiagnosed or misdiagnosed, with sometimes devastating consequences.

This book is the coming together of researchers, professionals, policy-makers and parents, as well as young women diagnosed with autism, to create awareness around the misdiagnosis or non-diagnosis of autism in girls. The contributors to the book are mostly UK-based, but New Zealand readers may be familiar with Wenn Lawson, the Australia-based lecturer.

The topics that are covered in this book provide excellent strategies and ideas

for understanding autism in girls and how to approach the behaviours that this presents, as well as how to support these young women as they enter adulthood. Suggestions include, for example, the formation of a girls group, which would provide a safe, non-judgmental place where girls can learn from each other and celebrate their differences. Ideas around building a specialist curriculum could be adapted to fit in with the New Zealand curriculum and the mainstream setting.

As this book is written mostly by people based in the UK and Australia, there may be some differences in the language and terminology used. The content is focussed on high school students, but could be adapted for primary school students as well. One theme evident throughout the book is that each person who has autism is unique – not all people with autism are the same.

I would recommend this book to teachers, parents, SENCOs and RTLBs.
– Tracy Davies

Jobs, Robots and Us: Getting a Grip on the Future of Work in New Zealand

Kinley Salmon (Bridget Williams Books)

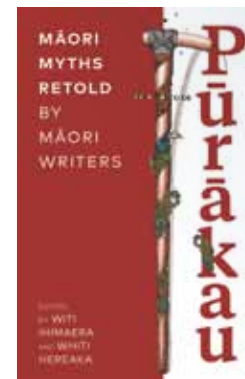
I work in education. My mind often starts racing as I see advancements in technology. I am fascinated with the question, “How well are we preparing students for their future?” I think it is *the* question to ask, and to ask often.

And my surface-level understanding of Artificial Intelligence (AI) means that I get swept up in the drastic change and transformation that we have coming our way. Self-driving cars, a constant stream of experts at the fingertips of students and educators ... In some really wild moments, I wonder about the need for schools as a physical structure at all. But is that realistic?

Jobs, Robots and Us is the reality check we need. Change is coming, but it might not be at the rate and size that Silicon Valley would have us believe. Drawing on a range of research, trends and examples, author Kinley Salmon explores a realistic view of what this could mean for us in New Zealand.

A central theme is around affirming our ability to shape what technology is going to look like and how it gets used. We do not have to be passive receivers of an amorphous technological direction, but instead we can control it to meet our needs. This book shows that through political leadership, appropriate incentives and alignment of economic models, we can use technological transformation to meet our goals and aspirations – which is no mean feat.

Ensuring that everyone is going to benefit from the advantages of technology is vital. The role of educators, business



and government will be central to our ability to succeed.

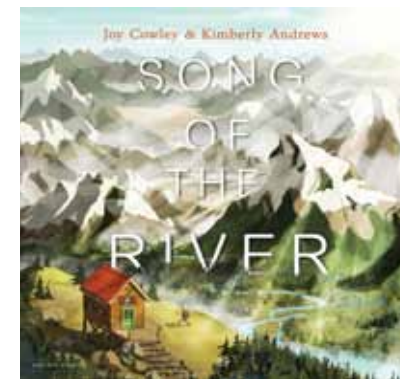
– Liam Rutherford

Pūrākau: Māori Myths Retold by Māori Writers

Witi Ihimaera and Whiti Hereaka (eds) (Penguin Random House NZ)

Pūrākau is a rich collection of gems from Māori writers, Māori poets and Māori artists. Short stories and poems are carefully arranged to take the reader on a journey along the tokotoko of the kaikōrero, using residual and long-held beliefs and understandings that are immediately turned upside-down – in a good way.

The story of Ranginui and Papatūānuku becomes the story of a dysfunctional family, with all the embellishments that situation creates in a contemporary context. The whānau of Māui-tikitiki-a-Taranga live in an apartment with their single mother. Māui the trickster visits Hollywood as an ex-rugby league player cut from the NRL, while Hinepūkohurangi encourages Uenuku to explore his artistic talents. Kaitiaki see the future and provide advice going forward. Taniwha battle Ātua on



behalf of the humans in their care, while Patupaiarehe, Ponaturi and Tūrehu attend a City Council meeting to advocate against a proposed housing project on their whenua.

Lessons are interspersed throughout *Pūrākau*, along with opportunities to apply the whakaaro of old to everyday living. An interesting and easy read that promotes Māori stories as actual events within Māori history, here and in Hawaiki.

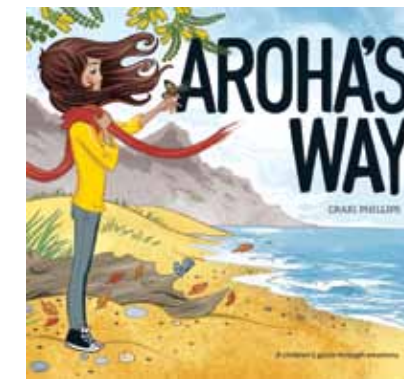
– Laures Park

Song of the River

Joy Cowley & Kimberly Andrews (Gecko Press)

You might recognise the text of this story, as it was originally published with different illustrations but has been out-of-print for almost 25 years.

This edition is newly illustrated by an acclaimed young illustrator (*Puffin the Architect*) – and it is simply stunning, with shifting settings and perspectives from bird's-eye to underwater, forest to city to beach. The story is part environmental discovery, part road-trip-on-foot, as Cam follows “a trickle of water” as it becomes a creek, a waterfall, a stream, a river – then



a bigger river – all the way into the sea. This book is ripe with teaching potential but also a pure pleasure to read, in both language and image.

– Jane Arthur

Aroha's Way: A Children's Guide through Emotions

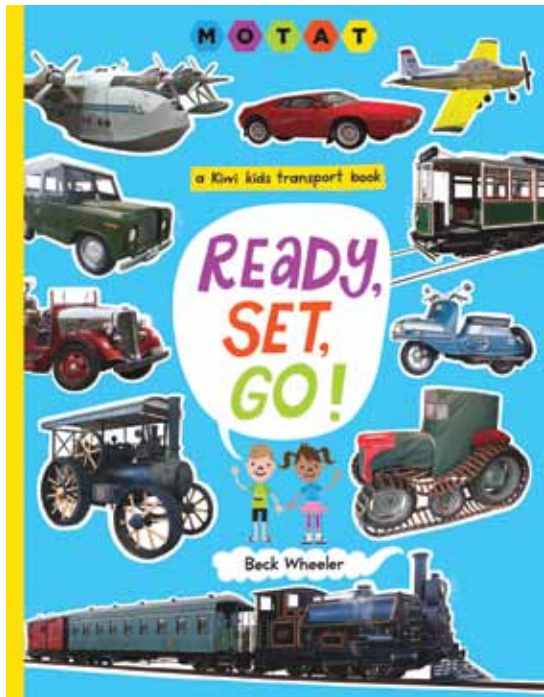
Craig Phillips with Rebekah Lipp (Wildling Books)

While there's no quick-fix for children with anxiety, it's possible that one well-timed resource could have a lifetime of positive influence.

Aroha's Way is a gentle, gorgeously illustrated story about young Aroha and the negative thoughts and emotions she sometimes has. It presents simple prompts for techniques, like mindfulness, to help these thoughts pass (“*And when that voice/Comes whispering/Aroha's no good .../She'll feel the cold air/Crisp leaves underfoot ...*”).

There are some useful teacher/parent notes at the back of the book, along with a list of helplines and further resources. “An exquisitely moving read, this book will help empower our tamariki mokopuna” – Dr Hinemoa Elder.

– Jane Arthur



Here We Are, Read Us

Various authors (Crip the Lit)

This unique, small book features eight female writers from New Zealand (Tusiata Avia, Steff Green, Helen Vivienne Fletcher, Charlotte Simmonds, Michele Leggott, Trish Harris, Te Awhina Arahanga and Robin Hyde) and looks at the challenges they have overcome in life and the things that inspire them to write. While their stories are varied, there is one thing they have in common: living with disability.

Here We Are, Read Us is suitable for a wide range of readers, from upper-primary to adults, and presents a brilliant opportunity for discussing difference, disability and diversity.

Visit artsaccessadvocates.org.nz/ Crip-the-Lit-telling-our-stories-our-way to access free copies in multiple formats, including small pocket book and large print, audiobooks, e-books, and Braille.

– Jane Arthur



The Treaty of Waitangi/ Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Toby Morris with Ross Calman, Mark Derby and Piripi Walker (Lift Education)

This exceptional book started its life in 2018 as an English language resource for intermediate students through the Ministry of Education's *School Journal* publications. The resoundingly positive reception to that resource lead the publisher to expand the booklet, creating this gorgeously designed bilingual book, now available for any member of the public to buy through New Zealand bookshops.

The history of Te Tiriti o Waitangi is told as a comic strip, with all content created in consultation with a number of iwi and other top experts of history and education, in English and – flip the book over – in te reo Māori. It's exemplary publishing that explains, with a fine balance of diplomacy and honesty, the origins, contents, realities

and implications of the Treaty in a way that is relevant to readers of all ages – adults included.

– Jane Arthur

The Girls in the Kapa Haka

Angie Belcher & Debbie Tipuna (Penguin Random House NZ)

This is an appealing, simple introduction to kapa haka for children at ECE or early primary school, especially those who might want to learn more about the activities of their older whānau. The text is rhythmic – based on the structure of nursery rhyme “The House that Jack Built” – and would make a terrific read-aloud: *“These are the piupiu / that swished and swirled, / that swung from the hips / of the group of girls / who sang in the kapa haka.”* Basic te reo Māori terms are incorporated into the English text, with a glossary provided at the back. This is a reissue of a book first published in 2006, and it's great to see it available once again.

– Jane Arthur



Ready, Set, Go!

Beck Wheeler (Little Love/ Mary Egan Publishing)

This book takes readers through some of the highlights of MOTAT, Auckland's Museum of Transport and Technology, with simple rhyming text in speech bubbles – *“The Heron is a Kiwi treasure./Driving it is such a pleasure./This car is a touch of class,/Shaped from moulded fibreglass”* – as well as a paragraph of factual prose on each spread. The colourful cartoon-style characters are placed, collage-like, over photographic backgrounds that show the real vehicles and environments. There's a FORD V8 Fire Engine, the Number 11 Tram, cars, planes, tractors and more. This would be a fun gift for a young transport fan, or a great addition to the school library – nice to have a transport-themed book with a New Zealand context.

– Jane Arthur

Dinosaur Hunter: Joan Wiffen's Awesome Fossil Discoveries

David Hill & Phoebe Morris (Penguin Random House NZ)

In the 1970s, largely self-educated Joan Wiffen found the first verified dinosaur fossils in New Zealand. Before that, it was thought that dinosaurs had never lived here. Over the next 40 years, Wiffen became an esteemed world expert.

This is a terrific picture book retelling of Wiffen's inspirational life and achievements, suitable for primary school children, and bursting with potential for classroom use. The illustrations are modern and tinged with humour, and the writing is clear, accessible and affectionate.

This is the latest title in an acclaimed series of books by the same author and illustrator. Other figures in this series include Burt Munro, Sir Edmund Hillary, Jean Batten and Sir Peter Blake, and all would be great for the school library.

– Jane Arthur



Home Child: A Child Migrant in New Zealand

Dawn McMillan & Trish Bowles (Oratia)

This nonfiction picture book is a sensitively written, incredibly moving account of the life of Pat Brown, a former “child migrant” who was sent to New Zealand from London in 1950 and separated from many members of her family. The simple factual information at the back of the book explains that “for 350 years Britain transported human cargo to populate the colonies [including] children as young as three”.

Home Child is a useful, emotional and eye-opening resource to start classroom discussions about migration, refugees, families and empathy with upper primary-aged children.

– Jane Arthur

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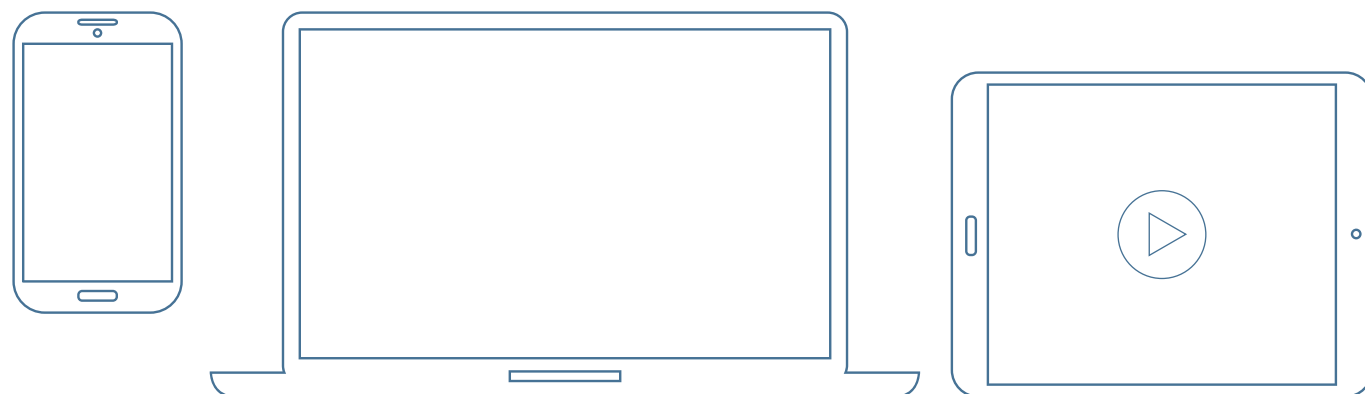
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every child is
worth it



NZEI
TE RIUROA

During the 2017 election campaign, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Minister of Education Chris Hipkins and Minister of Finance Grant Robertson pledged to restore funding to ECE, reduce ratios and group sizes, and restore the goal of 100% qualified teachers.

But their 2019 Wellbeing Budget failed to deliver – with increases for ECE simply keeping up with inflation and population growth. It's time for the Government to honour their promise to tamariki. Every child is worth it, so sign the petition today!

#everychild | everychild.org.nz/ECEpetition



Sose
Principal

NZEI TE RIU ROA IT'S OUR UNION

Joining NZEI Te Riu Roa means linking up with 50,000 other people working in education. Together we can achieve positive change for education, for our profession and for kids and their learning.

IT'S OUR UNION

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Bridget
Primary Teacher



Rangi
Kaiārahi

HOW DO I JOIN?

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Talk to your **NZEI worksite representative** at your school or centre.

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Email nzei@nzei.org.nz

NZEI
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