

# Ākonga Māori in English-medium primary and intermediate schools

Findings from the NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016

Nicola Bright and Cathy Wylie



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2017

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# Ngā kitenga matua— Key findings

## Paying attention to ākonga Māori

In 2016, many English-medium schools were paying attention to tikanga Māori and, to a lesser extent, te reo Māori, recognising their importance for the wellbeing and achievement of ākonga Māori. Just under half of the principals responding said that te reo Māori and tikanga Māori were embedded in schoolwide practices that promoted Māori students' wellbeing, though only a third said these practices were used daily. Around half the principals said that te reo Māori and tikanga Māori were partially embedded, and most of the remaining principals said they were exploring them. English-medium schools that use tuakana-teina approaches for Māori students to support each other, or whānau classes, were in the minority.

Schools with high levels of ākonga Māori enrolment were most likely to have embedded practices to support their ākonga Māori, to provide Kaupapa Māori support programmes, and work with iwi-based health services. However, more than half of these schools with 30% or more of their roll identifying as Māori were not providing these support programmes or services.

Just over a third of principals identified the need for external expertise that they were unable to access, to help them implement reliable strategies to support Māori students' learning.

Most teachers felt they promoted Māori cultural values in their classroom, and incorporated te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in their teaching in ways that promoted Māori students' belonging. This attention has been supported by professional learning giving more teachers practical help in engaging Māori students (60% said they had this, up from 40% in 2013). Just over a third of teachers included becoming better at meeting the needs of ākonga Māori as one of their main achievements, up from 25% in 2013.

Whānau responding to the 2016 NZCER national survey were mostly positive about their child's school recognising and respecting their child's cultural identity. Under half said their child took part most weeks in activities at the school particular to tikanga Māori.

## Te reo Māori

Many teachers thought it important that their students learn te reo Māori. Many teachers used te reo Māori at a basic level, such as greetings and farewells, or instructions. Only 1% said they did not use te reo Māori with their students.

Thirty-nine percent of teachers overall used te reo Māori either in creative contexts such as story-telling or poetry, or in conversations with students, or to teach curriculum content. More Māori than non-Māori teachers thought teaching te reo Māori was important, and they made more use of it.

Over half the whānau responding thought their child's school helped them learn to speak te reo Māori, 27% very well.

While teachers and principals showed awareness of the value of te reo Māori, and over half the teachers reported useful professional learning to help them learn and teach te reo Māori, 13% of principals reported difficulty finding teachers of te reo Māori. By comparison in 2010 7% said one reason for their difficulty finding suitable teachers for their school was a shortage of Māori-speaking teachers.

Few English-medium schools could offer tamariki moving from kōhanga reo and other Māori immersion services the opportunity to keep learning te reo Māori at a high level.

## Relationships

Most of the whānau responding to the survey felt welcome at their child's school, comfortable talking with their child's teachers, and found it easy to ask about their child's learning. Most also contributed to their child's school through their attendance at events and support such as helping with fundraising and school trips.

While many teachers have had practical help to build positive relations with parents and whānau through their professional learning, a fifth would like more time to work with parents and whānau. Māori teachers in particular saw parent and whānau engagement as a major issue facing their school.

Māori teachers were also more likely than others to identify the development of partnerships with iwi and hapū as a major issue for their school. Just over a third of the principals thought that building stronger relationships with local iwi, hapū, and marae was one of their main school-related achievements.

## Overall

The 2016 national survey shows increased awareness and attention to incorporating tikanga Māori and te reo Māori into English-medium schools to better support the identity, wellbeing, and achievement of ākonga Māori. It also shows that there is quite a way to go before ākonga Māori and their whānau can expect to find these in every English-medium school—even in the schools with high levels of ākonga Māori enrolment. Professional learning opportunities have played a positive role, and will need to be continued and spread further. Increasing the number of teachers who speak te reo Māori, and the level at which they can speak it and use it with their students, should also be a priority.

# 1.

## He kupu arataki— Introduction

Schools play a key role in supporting the identity and wellbeing of ākonga Māori as Māori as well as their academic success:

We know Māori students do much better when education reflects and values their identity, language and culture, and this is a central focus within *Ka Hikitia—Accelerating Success 2013–2017*.<sup>1</sup>

Ākonga Māori have been a government priority for some time, as evidenced in the strategies of *Ka Hikitia*, which has had two phases, 2008–2013 and 2013–2017, and *Tau Mai Te Reo*, the Māori language in education strategy. The Ministry of Education’s Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Education in May 2017<sup>2</sup> summarised the clear purpose of these linked policies:

The starting point of *Ka Hikitia* and *Tau Mai Te Reo* is that every Māori child and young person should be able to access high quality Māori language in education and be given every opportunity to enjoy educational success as Māori.

While there has been criticism of the slow implementation of *Ka Hikitia*, the value of the strategy itself is recognised. For example, the summary report of the Office of the Auditor-General’s 5-year audit programme on Māori education noted that, although there has been only modest improvement overall in ākonga Māori academic results since *Ka Hikitia* was launched, it has helped create the conditions for improved Māori student success.<sup>3</sup> This report urged the education sector to properly implement the *Ka Hikitia* strategy in all schools, to continue to support the growth of better relationships between schools and whānau, and a more co-ordinated effort to share good practices amongst schools.<sup>4</sup>

ERO’s revised School Evaluation Indicators now include evidence-based indicators of the school practices that support ākonga Māori to succeed as Māori. ERO reviews since early 2016 have had a sharper focus on whether schools are responding effectively to accelerate the learning progress of Māori students.

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1 Ministry of Education. (2013). *Ka hikitia: Accelerating success 2013–2017* (p. 6). Wellington: Author.

2 Ministry of Education. (2017). *Briefing for the Incoming Minister of Education* (p. 24). Wellington: Author.

3 Office of the Auditor-General. (2016). *Summary of our education for Māori reports* (p. 18). [Parliamentary paper]. Available at: [www.oag.govt.nz/2016/education-for-maori-summary/docs/summary-education-for-maori.pdf](http://www.oag.govt.nz/2016/education-for-maori-summary/docs/summary-education-for-maori.pdf)

The report is supported by the Māori Advisory and Reference Group members: Mere Berryman, Lorraine Kerr, Angus Hikairo Macfarlane, Wally Penetito, and Graham Hingangaroa Smith.

4 Ibid, p. 11.

NZCER's 3-yearly national surveys provide a good means to chart some of the ways in which English-medium schools are changing how they support their ākonga Māori. Our previous report<sup>5</sup> used information from the 2013 primary national survey and 2012 secondary national survey. It showed how school responses to include te reo Māori and integrate Māori culture into school practices were stronger in English-medium schools with high ākonga Māori enrolment levels, though these schools were less able than others to access support to help them better engage with whānau about student learning at home and in school.

This report focuses on primary and intermediate schools, using information from the NZCER 2016 national survey. Since we found in our 2015 report that the level of Māori enrolment in a school made a difference to the learning opportunities for ākonga Māori, we have continued to use this in our analysis.

## **The NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016**

The survey was conducted from August to early September 2016 and was sent to a representative sample of 349 English-medium state and state-integrated primary and intermediate schools (20% of all these schools in New Zealand).<sup>6</sup> At these schools, surveys were sent to the principal and to a random sample of one in two teachers. Surveys also went to the board of trustees' chair, who was asked to give a second trustee survey to someone likely to have a different viewpoint from their own. Additionally, surveys were sent to a random sample of one in four parents at a cross-section of 36 schools. The response rates were 57% for principals ( $n = 200$ ), 38% for teachers ( $n = 771$ ), 25% for trustees ( $n = 176$ ), and 32% for parents and whānau ( $n = 504$ ). The parents and whānau responses came from 31 schools. They provide us with a good cross-section of parents' views, but not a representative picture of all parent and whānau views.

The survey returns for principals, teachers, and trustees were generally representative of the characteristics of schools in the sample, with the following small variations:

- Principal returns showed a slight over-representation of large schools, and urban schools. Decile 8–10 schools were somewhat over-represented, as were schools in the Auckland region.
- In the schools from which teachers returned surveys, there was a slight under-representation of large schools, and an over-representation of small–medium and small schools. Slight under-representations were evident of decile 1 schools and schools in the Auckland and Hawke's Bay/Gisborne Ministry of Education regions.
- The schools from which we received trustee surveys reflected some over-representation of large schools and under-representation of decile 1 schools.

The maximum margin of error<sup>7</sup> for the principal survey is 6.9%, for the teacher survey around 3.5%, and for the trustee survey around 7.4%. Sometimes we report results for smaller groups of respondents within each survey; the maximum margin of error reported for each survey does not apply to these groups. Calculating the margin of error relies on random sampling and because we rely on schools to select the teachers and trustees to complete surveys, we cannot guarantee that these samples are random. Therefore, the margins of error for the teacher and trustee surveys should be regarded as approximations.

The parent and whānau sample is not a random sample, so we do not calculate a margin of error for that survey.

In this report, we use material from principals, teachers, and Māori whānau of ākonga Māori. Many of the whānau who said they identified with Māori also said they identified with NZ European/Pākehā (64%).

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5 Bright, N., with Wylie, C. (2015). *Ngā whakarātonga mō ngā ākonga Māori i roto i ngā kura auraki Providing for Māori students in English-medium schools*. Wellington: NZCER. Available at: [www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey](http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey)

6 Further details about the sample and methodology are available in Berg, M. (2017). *NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016: Methodology and sample information*. Available on the project web page: [www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey](http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey)

7 The maximum margin of error added to and subtracted from a proportion gives a confidence interval. We can say there is a 95% chance that the proportion is inside this range of numbers.

Table 1 shows the number of Māori respondents in each of the four groups taking part in the NZCER national survey. Māori principals now comprise 12% of principals responding, compared with 8% in 2013, and 7% in 2010, indicating their increased numbers nationally.

TABLE 1 **Māori respondents to the 2016 national survey of English-medium primary and intermediate schools**

Group	N	%
Whānau	96	19
Principals	24	12
Teachers	77	10
Trustees	23	13

We have looked at whether responses differ between Māori and non-Māori teachers, and whether teacher and principal responses vary in relation to their school's level of ākonga Māori. We report those differences that are statistically significant.

Table 2 shows the national picture of how ākonga Māori are distributed among schools, alongside the 2016 NZCER survey responses from principals. We have some under-representation of schools with the highest level of ākonga Māori enrolment, possibly because we cover only English-medium schools, and not kura kaupapa Māori. There is some under-representation of those with a very low level of ākonga Māori enrolment, and some over-representation of schools with a medium level of ākonga Māori enrolment.

TABLE 2 **Ākonga Māori enrolment levels in primary and intermediate schools**

Proportion of ākonga Māori in the school <sup>8</sup>	Principals responding		All primary and intermediate schools in 2016	
	N	%	N	%
0–7% = very low	25	12	285	15
8–15% = low	47	24	468	24
16–30% = medium	69	34	519	27
Over 30% = high	59	30	678	35

Near half the Māori teachers responding were at high ākonga Māori enrolment schools (46%), with 23% at medium ākonga Māori enrolment schools, 25% at low ākonga Māori enrolment schools, and 7% at very low ākonga Māori enrolment schools.

## Report order

We start by looking at school and class support for the wellbeing and identity of ākonga Māori. Next we look at the provision of te reo Māori. We then look at support for ākonga Māori transitions between educational institutions, with a particular focus on te reo Māori. School relations with whānau and with iwi and hapū follow. Finally, we discuss the overall picture of support for ākonga Māori in English-medium primary and intermediate schools.

<sup>8</sup> NZCER has used these four categories for national survey analysis since the mid-1990s, with a minor adjustment to the third category (in the 1990s it was 15–29%). It is interesting to chart shifts over the past 20 years, which show how the growth in ākonga Māori numbers over that period has also increased the proportion of primary and intermediate schools with over 30% ākonga Māori enrolment, from 24% in 1996 to 35% in 2016, and decreased the proportion with less than 8% ākonga Māori enrolment, from 30% to 15%.

## 2.

# Te reo me ngā tikanga Māori—The wellbeing of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori

Te reo Māori, tikanga Māori, and identity are closely intertwined and are important aspects of all the facets of wellbeing for ākongā Māori and their whānau. Incorporating te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into school life acknowledges and supports ākongā Māori cultural identity and a sense of belonging.

The extent to which te reo Māori and tikanga are incorporated into school life can give some indication of how schools perceive and value the connections between identity, language, and culture as aspects of their students' wellbeing. Rata's research in secondary schools led her to the conclusion that, within a schooling context, "Māori cultural engagement predicts Māori ethnic identity, and that Māori ethnic identity predicts psychological wellbeing".<sup>9</sup> In this section, we focus on tikanga Māori.

### Valuing and promoting tikanga Māori

In 2013, we asked principals whether they incorporated Māori students' culture in schoolwide practices in ways that promote belonging. To give this 2013 question some context we gave the examples of practices that incorporate aspects of tikanga Māori, such the formal tikanga of pōhiri to welcome new students or visitors, through mihi as a less formal way for people to introduce themselves and to welcome others, or the use of wānanga as part of a school's pedagogy and ways to share information. In 2013, just over a third of the principals (35%) strongly agreed that they incorporated Māori students' culture in schoolwide practices that promote their belonging, and 47% agreed.

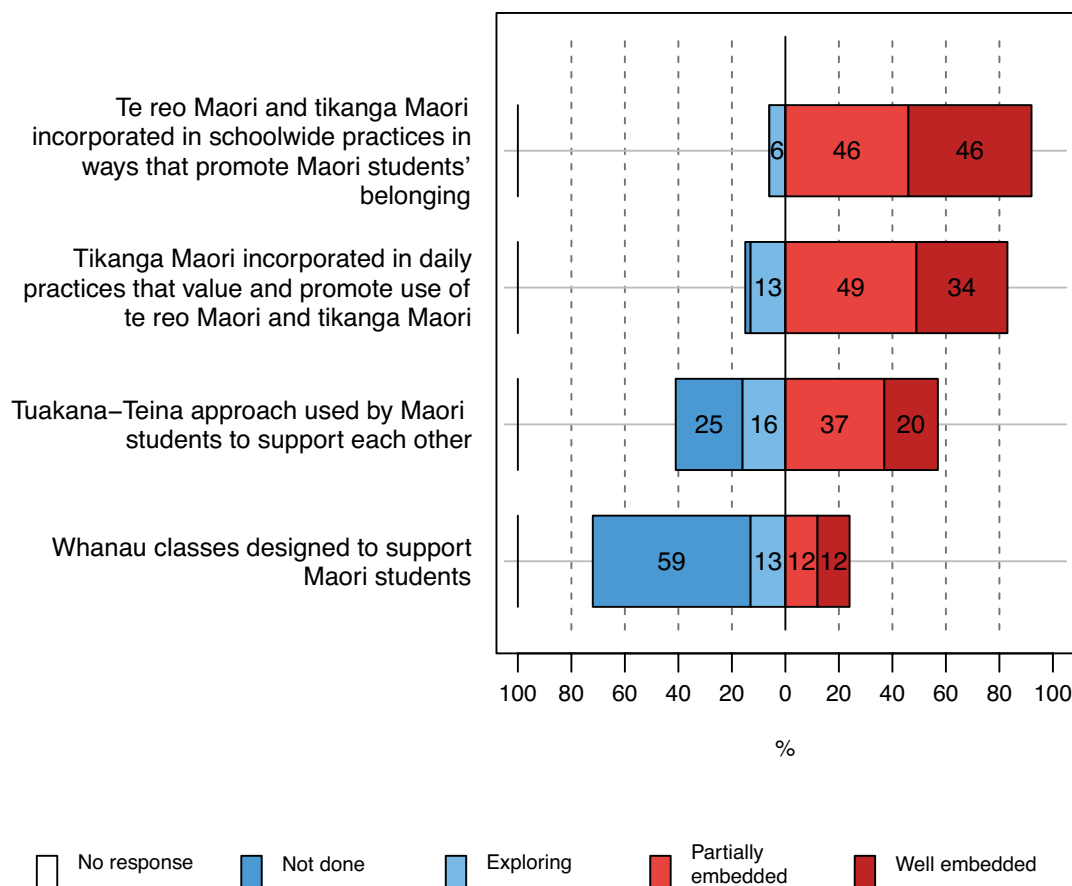
Our 2016 questions were more specific about te reo Māori, and practices known to be effective for ākongā Māori. Figure 1 shows that schoolwide practices promoting ākongā Māori wellbeing through tikanga and te reo Māori were the most well embedded: this may be where schools start in their work to better support ākongā Māori. Just under half the principals thought the incorporation of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in their *schoolwide* practices was well embedded. However, just over a third said that the incorporation of tikanga Māori in *daily* practices was well embedded at their school.

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<sup>9</sup> Rata, A. (2012). *Te pītau o te tuakiri: Affirming Māori identities and promoting wellbeing in state secondary schools* (p. 144). Unpublished doctoral thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington.

Figure 1 also shows that primary and intermediate schools that used whānau classes were in a minority, and that the tuakana–teina approach was partially or well embedded at just over half the schools.

FIGURE 1 School practices to promote ākonga Māori wellbeing—principals’ reports (n = 200)



Apart from the incorporation of te reo and tikanga Māori in schoolwide practices, the aspects we asked about were most likely to be well embedded in schools with high proportions of ākonga Māori. Forty-nine percent of these schools had well-embedded daily practices incorporating tikanga Māori, compared with 29% of those with medium levels of ākonga Māori enrolment, 36% of those with low levels of ākonga Māori enrolment, and 12% of those with very low levels of ākonga Māori enrolment.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, tuakana–teina approaches were well embedded in a greater proportion of high ākonga Māori enrolment schools (42%), as were whānau classes (27%). Note that these approaches were not universally embedded in the schools with high Māori enrolment.

When we asked principals about schoolwide approaches to assisting students who needed additional wellbeing support,<sup>11</sup> we included Kaupapa Māori support programmes for groups of students. These were well embedded in 10% of the schools, and partially embedded in 22% of the schools. Nineteen percent of the principals said they were exploring this approach.

<sup>10</sup> Ākonga Māori made up 31% or more of the enrolment of the 'high level' schools, 16–30% of the 'medium level' schools, 8–15% of the 'low level' schools, and 0–7% of the 'very low' level schools.

<sup>11</sup> Further information from the 2016 national survey about students' behaviour and wellbeing can be found in Boyd, S., Bonne, L., & Berg, M. (2017). *Finding a balance: Fostering student wellbeing, positive behaviour, and learning in primary and intermediate schools*. Wellington: NZCER. Available at: <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey>

Kaupapa Māori support programmes were well embedded in 20% of the high ākongā Māori enrolment schools. Whether schools had embedded them or were exploring them was linked to their levels of Māori enrolment, ranging from 69% of the high ākongā Māori enrolment schools, 53% of the medium ākongā Māori enrolment schools, 40% of the low ākongā Māori enrolment schools, and 20% of the very low ākongā Māori enrolment schools.

When we looked at the usefulness of professional and external support for schools in their work around student wellbeing and behaviour, we included Kaitakawaenga Māori or Māori community representatives, and local iwi-based health services.

Nineteen percent of the schools worked with Kaitakawaenga Māori: this did not seem to be related to the proportion of ākongā Māori on their roll. Seven percent of the principals found their Kaitakawaenga Māori provided very useful or useful support, 11% said this support was mixed in its usefulness, and 2% said it was not useful.

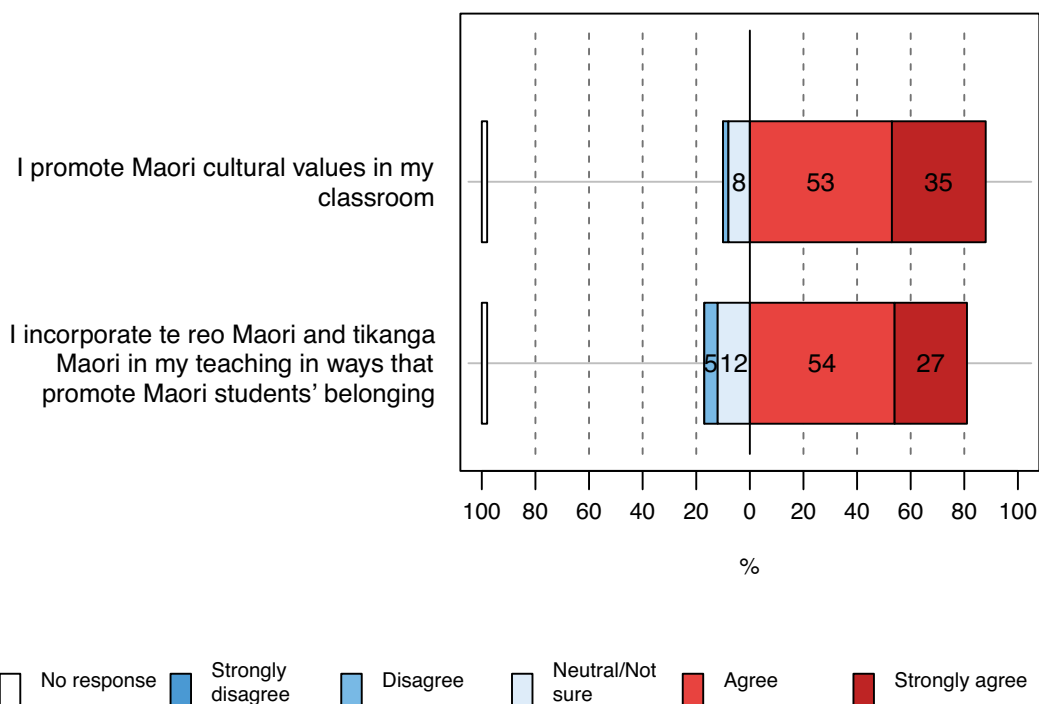
Slightly more schools (24%) worked with an iwi-based health service. Nine percent of principals found their iwi-based health service very useful or useful, 12% had mixed views, and 4% said it was not useful. The use of iwi-based health services was related to the proportion of ākongā Māori on a school's roll; 46% of schools with high levels used iwi-based health services, 26% of those with medium levels, 6% of those with low levels, and none of those with very low levels.

### **In the classroom**

Figure 2 shows that most teachers reported that they promoted Māori cultural values in their classroom, and incorporated te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in their teaching in ways that promote ākongā Māori belonging (e.g., mihi, pōhiri). There were no links with the proportion of ākongā Māori in a school, indicating that teachers' awareness of the importance of promoting ākongā Māori sense of belonging through cultural values was fairly widespread. Māori and non-Māori teachers' answers here were much the same.



FIGURE 2 Teacher reports of their practices to support ākonga Māori (n = 771)



Since 2013 there has been a marked increase in the proportion of teachers who said that professional learning they had done in the past 2–3 years had provided them with practical help in engaging Māori students, up from 40% to 60% in 2016. This was reported by similar proportions of Māori and non-Māori teachers.

Becoming better at meeting the needs of ākonga Māori was identified as one of their main achievements in the past 3 years by 36% of teachers, up from 25% in 2013. This was reported by Māori and non-Māori teachers alike. However, more teachers (46%) in high ākonga Māori enrolment schools reported this.

Implementing reliable strategies to support Māori student learning was at the top of the list of schools' needs for external expertise that they could not readily access, identified by 36% of principals. This unmet need was unrelated to the proportion of ākonga Māori in the school.

Māori student achievement was identified by 34% of principals as a major issue facing their school. The higher the Māori enrolment level, the more this was a major issue for the school; 59% of principals of schools with high levels of ākonga Māori enrolment identified this as a major issue, compared with 39% of principals of schools with medium levels, 9% of principals of schools with low levels, and 8% of principals of schools with very low levels.

Thirty percent of teachers also indicated that Māori student achievement was a major issue facing their school, with a similar pattern as principals linked to the level of ākonga Māori enrolment. Māori teachers also identified Māori student achievement as a major issue for their school more than non-Māori teachers (46% compared with 28% of non-Māori).

Māori student achievement data were reported to play a key role in school board decision making about staffing and resources by 53% of the principals: more so by principals of schools with high levels of ākonga Māori (68%), and medium levels (61%), than by principals of schools with low (36%) or very low (24%) levels of ākonga Māori enrolment.

## **Whānau perspectives**

School incorporation of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori helped 30% of Māori whānau decide on that school for their child.

Most of the whānau responding to the national survey thought their child's school recognised and respected their child's cultural identity (43% strongly agreed, and 48% agreed). Many also thought their child's teachers made an effort to understand things about their family and culture (37% strongly agreed, 45% agreed).

Forty-five percent of the whānau said their child took part most weeks in activities particular to tikanga Māori. Thirty-three percent said this happened sometimes for their child. Nine percent said this almost never or never happened.

Asked if there was any area of their child's school where they would like to have a say and felt they could not, 8% of whānau identified how students' cultural identity is supported.

### 3.

## Te reo Māori i roto i ngā akomanga—Te reo Māori in the classroom

Te reo Māori “has a special place in the New Zealand Curriculum”<sup>12</sup> afforded it by the Treaty of Waitangi and the Māori Language Acts of 1987 and 2017. The te reo Māori curriculum gives all students “the opportunity to acquire knowledge of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga”<sup>13</sup>.

The te reo Māori guidelines encourage teachers “to take an inquiry approach to teaching and learning in their reo Māori programmes”<sup>14</sup> and to recognise that language and culture both express and influence the other, and are closely interconnected.

“Students are more likely to succeed in learning te reo Māori when their teachers:

- combine learning about te reo Māori with learning about tikanga Māori
- take a communicative approach to teaching and learning
- embed teaching and learning about language forms, including grammar and vocabulary, within that communicative approach.”<sup>15</sup>

National figures show that 51% of ākonga Māori in Years 1–8 had access to te reo Māori at the lowest of the six reo immersion levels (Taha Māori, with no formal te reo Māori learning), 29% had access to learning te reo Māori at a ‘basic’ level, levels 5 and 4b), 6% at a ‘moderate’ level (levels 3 and 4a), and 12% at a high level (levels 1 and 2) using te reo Māori for at least half their learning time. Most of those learning at the high level are in Kura Kaupapa Māori.<sup>16</sup>

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12 Ministry of Education. (2009). *Te aho arataki marau mō te ako i te reo Māori—Kura auraki: Curriculum guidelines for teaching and learning te reo Māori in English-medium schools: Years 1–13* (p. 6). Wellington: Author. Available at: <http://tereomaori.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-guidelines>

13 Ibid, p. 4.

14 Ibid, p. 4.

15 Ibid, p. 22.

16 The six levels are used for funding purposes. Source of national figures: Education Counts. (2016b). *Number of students by ethnicity, funding year level & Māori language immersion level—1 July 2016*. Available at: [www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/schooling/student-numbers/6040](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/schooling/student-numbers/6040)

## Valuing and promoting te reo Māori

Almost all the principals responding said that their school valued te reo Māori (53% strongly agreed that they did, and 43% agreed). Most also felt that they actively promoted te reo Māori in the school and local community (39% strongly agreed, and 49% agreed). Just over half (56%) of the principals reported that their school provided information to whānau about how the school supports students to kōrero Māori at the school (15% strongly agreed, and 41% agreed).

Most teachers thought it was very important (32%) or important (54%) that their students learn te reo Māori. Like other learning experiences they thought were important for student learning, importance did not translate directly into how often students did these things:<sup>17</sup>

- 10% of teachers said their students learnt te reo Māori most of the time in their class
- 44% said learning te reo Māori happened quite often in their class
- 35% said it happened sometimes
- 3% said it happened almost never/never.<sup>18</sup>

More Māori teachers thought it was very important that their students learn te reo Māori (53%, compared with 30% of non-Māori teachers). Twenty-one percent of Māori teachers said their students learnt te reo Māori most of the time in their class.

The higher the level of ākonga Māori enrolment, the more teachers thought it very important that their students learn te reo Māori, doubling from 20% of those in schools with very low ākonga Māori enrolment, to 41% of teachers in high ākonga Māori enrolment schools. The latter were most likely to say they taught te reo Māori most of the time (17%).

## Whānau perspectives

Over half the Māori whānau thought that their child's school helped them learn to speak te reo Māori: 27% thought it helped them very well, and 35% well. Twenty-two percent were not sure how well the school helped their child speak te reo Māori. Ten percent said the school did not do this well. Asked if there was any more information they would like to have about their child's school, 15% of Māori whānau identified information about te reo Māori learning options.

## Communicative functions of language

In the 2016 national survey we focused our questions about the provision of te reo Māori on a range of communicative functions in order to find out more about the breadth as well as the depth of language use in English-medium schools.

Only 1% of teachers said they did not use te reo Māori with students at all. As Table 3 shows, most use of te reo Māori with students in English-medium classrooms was at a basic level, for greetings such as 'kia ora', and farewells, such as 'ka kite', or for giving short instructions or directions. Thirty-nine percent of teachers overall used te reo Māori either in creative contexts such as story-telling or poetry, or in conversations with students, or to teach curriculum content.

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<sup>17</sup> More information from the 2016 national survey about student learning opportunities is provided in Bonne, L., & Wylie, C. (2017). *Teachers' work and professional learning*. Available at the survey homepage, [www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey](http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey)

<sup>18</sup> Eight percent of teachers did not respond to this item.

TABLE 3 Teachers' use of te reo Māori with students

Use of te reo Māori with students	Teachers (n = 771) %
Use a few Māori words or phrases (e.g., greetings and farewells)	82
Use te reo Māori to give instructions or directions (e.g., E noho, E tū)	81
Use te reo Māori in creative contexts (e.g., story-telling, poetry)	21
Use te reo Māori in conversations	20
Use te reo Māori to teach content in a range of learning areas	18
Don't use te reo Māori with students	1

Twenty-four percent of teachers in schools with high ākonga Māori enrolment used te reo Māori to teach content, compared with 17% of those in schools with medium ākonga Māori enrolment, 16% in schools with low ākonga Māori enrolment, and 13% in schools with very low ākonga Māori enrolment. These proportions were not statistically significant. It is interesting that the proportion of teachers using te reo Māori to teach content in high ākonga Māori enrolment schools is still quite low.

Māori teachers were much more likely than others to use te reo Māori in conversations with students (47%, compared with 17% of non-Māori), to teach content (35%, compared with 16% of non-Māori), and in creative contexts (34%, compared with 20% of non-Māori).

## Professional learning and development

We asked principals about their school's involvement in te reo Māori professional learning and development to see what schools were doing to improve their capability to provide te reo Māori education for their learners. Over a third (38%) of principals reported te reo Māori being a focus for professional learning and/or change in teaching practice over the past 2 years.

Just over half (52%) of the teachers responding said they had participated in professional learning that provided practical help for them to *learn* te reo Māori in the past 2–3 years. Thirteen percent strongly agreed that they had had such professional learning, and 39% agreed. A similar proportion (54%) said their professional learning had provided practical help for them to *teach* te reo Māori. Again, only 13% strongly agreed with this, and 41% agreed. This might suggest that teachers' te reo Māori learning is likely to be supporting basic rather than fuller use of te reo Māori.

## Teacher supply and demand

In 2013 the Government's Māori-language strategy *Tau Mai Te Reo*<sup>19</sup> stated that the demand for Māori and teachers of te reo Māori in both Māori- and English-medium schools continued to outweigh supply. Our national surveys of primary schools in 2010, 2013, and 2016 show that with the increased awareness of the value of te reo Māori, there is also a gradual increase in principals reporting difficulty finding teachers of te reo Māori, from 7% of principals in 2010 who gave the shortage of teachers speaking te reo Māori as a

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Education. (2013). *Tau mai te reo: The Māori language in education strategy 2013–2017* (p. 27). Wellington: Author. Available at: [www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Strategies-and-policies/TauMaiTeReoFullStrategy-English.pdf](http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Strategies-and-policies/TauMaiTeReoFullStrategy-English.pdf)

reason why they could not find suitable teachers for their school, to 11% in 2013, when we asked directly whether schools had difficulty here, and 13% in 2016.

In 2016 we asked principals to identify whether they found it difficult to find teachers who could teach te reo Māori at a basic, moderate, or high level (see Table 4). Principals reported having the most difficulty finding suitable teachers to teach te reo Māori at a basic level.

**TABLE 4 Difficulty finding te reo Māori teachers**

<b>Te reo Māori teaching level</b>	<b>Principals (n = 200) %</b>
Basic <i>Māori language Immersion Level 4b and Level 5—te reo Māori taught as a separate subject</i>	10
Moderate <i>Māori language Immersion Level 3 and Level 4a—curriculum taught in Māori</i>	3
High <i>Māori language Immersion Level 1 and Level 2—curriculum taught in Māori</i>	4

Some schools used operational funding and their own locally raised funds to provide te reo teaching. In 2016, 10% of principals said that teachers were funded over entitlement in their schools to provide reo Māori support, comparable to the 11% who reported this in 2013, and the 10% in 2010.

## 4.

# Te nekehanga—Transitions and pathways for reo Māori development

One of the goals of *Ka Hikitia* is for “all Māori students [to] have access to learning pathways of their choice that lead to excellent education and Māori language outcomes”.<sup>20</sup> Effective transition practices that support ākongā Māori moving into or out of primary and intermediate school can help facilitate access to their chosen learning pathways. However, current transition practices in English-medium primary schools can lack consistency, and not focus on language acquisition. This may disadvantage those ākongā Māori who wish to acquire te reo Māori continuously over the time (and in the places) that they participate in the schooling system.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, a high proportion of ākongā Māori move from Māori-medium education (MME) into English-medium education at key transition points. *Ngā Haeata Mātauranga, the Annual Report on Māori Education 2015–2016* reports that “of the 2,628 Māori students that started school in 2014 and attended a kōhanga reo, only 1,275 students (49%) started school in MME. Of the 1,708 students in Year 6 in 2011 that were in MME, only 700 students (41%) were still in MME in Year 9 in 2014.”<sup>22</sup> Clearly, there are serious issues to be addressed in order to support ākongā Māori to remain in Māori-medium education throughout their school years. At the same time, English-medium schools need to be prepared to support the cultural, linguistic, and general education aspirations of these ākongā Māori and their whānau.

In the 2016 national survey we asked primary principals about the transition for tamariki coming into their school, and primary and intermediate principals about the transition for ākongā Māori going on to the next schooling level.

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20 Ministry of Education. (2013b). *Ka hikitia: Accelerating success 2013–2017* (pp. 23, 41). Wellington: Author.

21 Bright, N., Barnes, A., & Hutchings, J. (2013). *Ka whānau mai te reo: Honouring whānau, upholding te reo* (pp. 19–21). Wellington: NZCER. Available at: <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/ka-whanau-mai-te-reo-honouring-whanau-upholding-reo-maori>,

22 Ministry of Education. (2016). *Ngā haeata mātauranga, annual report on Māori education 2015–2016* (p. 3). Wellington: Author.

## Transitions from kōhanga reo to school

In 2015, 3,653 centre-based early childhood education (ECE) services reported that they used te reo Māori as a language of communication. This included 450 kōhanga reo and 17 education and care services that reported using te reo Māori more than 80% of their teaching time.<sup>23</sup>

We asked primary school principals about how they supported tamariki coming into their schools to continue, or begin, to learn te reo Māori. In 2016, 14% of primary school principals reported working closely with local kōhanga reo to ensure good transitions for tamariki coming from Māori-medium learning environments into their school. This is much the same as the 12% of principals who reported this in 2013. Just under half the principals (48%) said there was no local kōhanga reo. Most of these were high Māori enrolment schools.

In 2013, 23% of principals reported that tamariki moving from kōhanga reo could continue learning te reo Māori at their school. In 2016, principals were asked more specifically whether tamariki moving from kōhanga reo and other Māori immersion services could continue learning te reo Māori at a high immersion level (Level 1 and Level 2) at their school. Only 8% of the English-medium school principals reported that they could.

Just over half (54%) of the principals said that tamariki transitioning from ECEs could begin or continue to learn te reo Māori at their school. Thirteen percent strongly agreed and 41% agreed that this was the case. We assume that this learning was at a low level of immersion because most te reo Māori provision in English-medium primary schools is at the basic level.

## Transitions from bilingual units to other schools

In 2016, 14% of principals reported working closely with local intermediate or secondary schools to ensure a good transition for tamariki from their rumaki/bilingual units/classes; this is similar to the 11% of principals who reported the same in 2013. Most principals (70%) said this did not apply to their school, indicating that they did not have rumaki/bilingual units/classes. Over half of the schools that worked on such transitions (and therefore offered rumaki/bilingual units/classes) were high ākonga Māori enrolment schools.

Only 4% of principals reported working closely with local wharekura to ensure a good transition for tamariki from their rumaki/bilingual units/classes. Two percent of principals reported the same in 2013. Most principals (82%) said this pathway was not applicable at their school.

## Transitions for students learning te reo Māori

Nine percent of principals said that they worked closely with local intermediate or secondary schools to ensure a good transition for tamariki who were learning te reo Māori as a subject. Sixty-eight percent of the principals said this was not applicable to their school, indicating that they did not teach te reo Māori as a subject.

Sharing *information* with other schools to support Māori language learning continuity was done by 28% of schools; 24% shared *practices* for the same purpose.

## Involving whānau in planning for transitions

Over half the principals said they involve whānau in planning for their student transition; 20% strongly agreeing, and 38% agreeing.

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<sup>23</sup> Education Counts. (2015). *Early childhood education me ngā kōhanga reo data summary report 2015* (pp. 32–33). Available at: [www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/early-childhood-education/annual-ece-summary-reports](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/early-childhood-education/annual-ece-summary-reports)



## 5.

# Te whakawhanaungatanga— Relationships

Good relationships between whānau and schools create important connections that support ākonga Māori. Ākonga attitudes to school, and their learning and achievement, are influenced by their relationships at school and also by the “level of interest, support and encouragement for their schoolwork provided by parents/family”.<sup>24</sup>

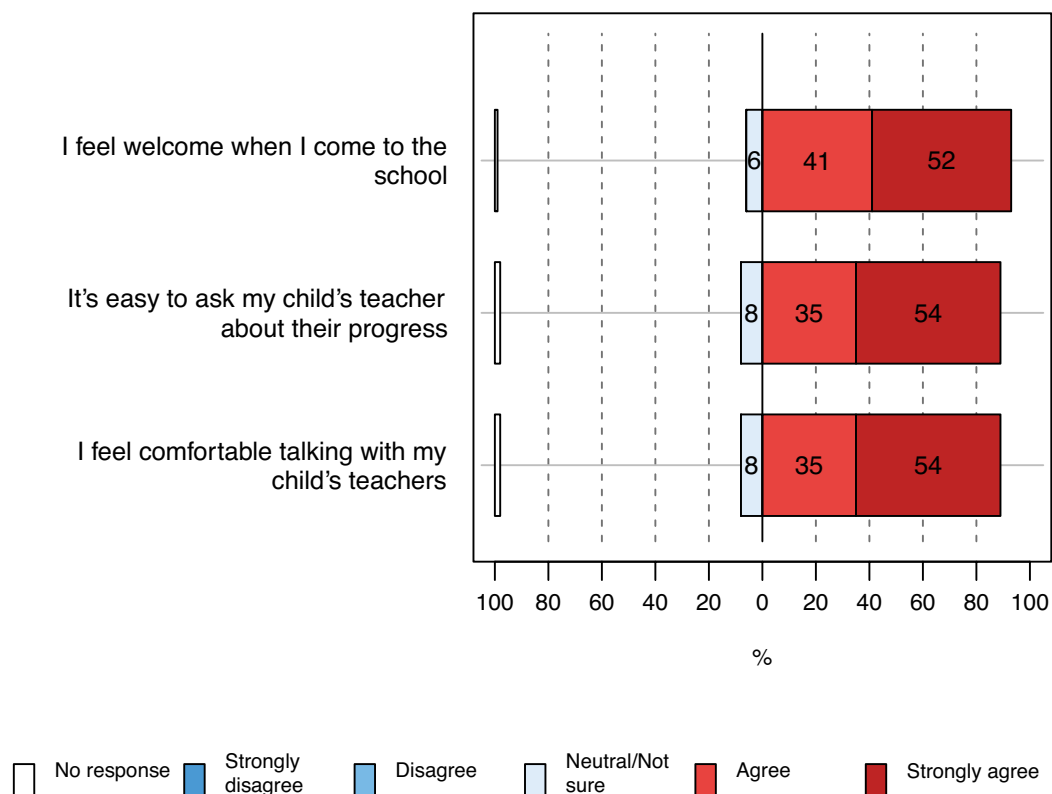
### Parent and whānau involvement in school

Around 90% of the whānau responding felt welcome at their child’s school, felt comfortable talking with their child’s teachers, and found it easy to ask their child’s teacher about their progress. Figure 3 has the details.

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<sup>24</sup> Ministry of Education. (2010). *Easing the transition from primary to secondary schooling: Helpful information for schools to consider* (p. 119). Wellington: Author.

FIGURE 3 Whānau views of their interaction with their child's school and teachers (n = 96)



Māori whānau contributed to their child's school through:

- attending sports (66%)
- responding to school surveys (49%)
- fundraising (48%)
- helping on school trips (48%)
- attending school plays or musical performances (41%)
- coaching or helping with sports (21%)
- attending kapa haka (16%)
- providing classroom help (10%).

Six percent of whānau responding were on their school's PTA, school council, or the board of trustees, and a few helped with arts activities, kapa haka, and building and maintenance.

Professional learning in the past 2–3 years had given 67% of the teachers practical help to build positive relations with parents and whānau. Around a fifth (21%) of teachers said they would like to have more time to work with parents and whānau. Parent and whānau engagement was identified as a major issue facing their school by 23% of teachers, and more so by Māori teachers (46%, compared with 21% of non-Māori).

## Schools' relationships with local iwi, hapū, and marae

The document *Te Aho Arataki Marau Mō Te Ako i Te Reo Māori—Kura Auraki: Curriculum guidelines for teaching and learning te reo Māori in English-medium schools: Years 1–13* states that "Success in learning depends on teachers and schools building productive relationships with students' whānau and

communities as well as with the students themselves” (p. 29). Schools that have relationships with local iwi, hapū, and marae have the potential to provide or facilitate important learning experiences for their ākonga. Local iwi, hapū, and marae can, for example, help teachers and their ākonga to learn about the dialect that is most used in the local community. Iwi benefit from these relationships too, by sharing their education priorities with the school, so that both can support ākonga wellbeing and learning. Iwi and schools working together can create an innovative locally informed curriculum.

In 2016, 37% of principals considered that building stronger relationships with local iwi, hapū, and marae was one of their main school-related achievements in the past 3 years. In contrast, 30% of principals, 18% of teachers, 13% of trustees, and 3% of parents saw partnerships with iwi and hapū as a major issue facing their school. We did not find a relationship with the level of Māori enrolment in the school here. More Māori teachers saw this as an issue: 34%, compared with 16% of non-Māori teachers.

Of the trustees who indicated they had consulted with their community, 12% reported doing so through hui with iwi/hapū, and 5% reported a focus on local iwi education priorities. Fifteen percent of all trustees thought that their board of trustees needed more experience or skills in creating or maintaining links with local iwi/hapū.

## 6.

# He kupu whakatepe— Conclusion

Ākonga Māori should be able to have good educational experiences that recognise and support their identity, reo Māori, and culture in any school they attend,<sup>25</sup> as well as their learning. The 2016 national survey shows increased awareness and attention to incorporating tikanga Māori and te reo Māori into English-medium schools to better support the identity, wellbeing, and achievement of ākonga Māori. It also shows that there is quite a way to go before ākonga Māori and their whānau can expect to find these fully embedded in daily practice in every English-medium school—even in the schools with high levels of ākonga Māori enrolment.

Schools are paying attention to parent and whānau engagement, and relationships with iwi, hapū, and marae. Teachers reported that professional learning and development has made a difference in their ability to engage parents and whānau, and ākonga Māori, and more teachers felt confident in their ability to support ākonga Māori. This is positive progress. However, 36% of principals identified the need for external expertise that they were unable to access, to help them implement reliable strategies to support ākonga Māori learning. Professional learning opportunities have played a positive role in enabling teachers and schools to better meet the needs of ākonga Māori. Such opportunities need to be continued and spread further.

Although “all Māori students [should] have access to high quality Māori language in education”,<sup>26</sup> and most teachers are using some te reo Māori with students, only 39% use te reo Māori in creative contexts, or in conversations, or to teach content. Few English-medium schools can offer continued Māori language learning to tamariki who enter school with a high level of te reo Māori proficiency. A large gap remains between the aspirational government strategies for ākonga Māori and the reality of Māori language options offered in English-medium schools.

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<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Education. (2013). *Effective governance: Supporting education success as Māori. Information for school boards of trustees* (p. 3). Wellington: Author.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

### Prioritising reo Māori teachers

This raises the question of how to increase the number of reo Māori teachers. This is not a new question,<sup>27</sup> indicating that new solutions are needed. It is a more urgent question now given the new government's objective to make te reo Māori universally available in primary schools by 2025.

It is not easy to recruit good teachers of te reo Māori, particularly those with high levels of reo proficiency, in large part because highly proficient te reo Māori speakers comprise only a small part of the Māori speaking population, and an even smaller part of that highly proficient group choose to teach, or remain in teaching, because they are highly sought after in other professions. Most Māori language provision in the primary sector is at basic proficiency level, and it is at this level that we also see the greatest demand for teachers.<sup>28</sup> There is less of a demand for teachers who can teach te reo Māori at moderate and high levels of immersion in English-medium primary schools, but few schools provide these Māori language education options. The result is that all learners continue to have only limited access to Māori-medium education in English-medium schools: a chicken and egg situation.

*Te Ahu o te Reo*, which recently charted Māori language proficiency and use in a range of communities, recommends that the government should “build te reo Māori capacity in the teaching sector [by including] a minimum of NCEA Level 4 te reo Māori in all ITE programmes. This is achievable through a staged process over a period of 15 years.”<sup>29</sup> The issue of teacher shortage could be addressed by building up the numbers of Māori speaking teachers to reach a critical mass so that attrition from the profession has minimal impact. It is also important to keep raising the level at which te reo Māori is taught in English-medium schools.

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27 Waitangi Tribunal. (2011). *Ko Aotearoa tēnei, a report into claims concerning New Zealand law and policy affecting Māori culture and identity*, Volume 2, Wai 262, Waitangi Tribunal report 2011 (pp.425–426). Wellington: Legislation Direct. Available at: [https://forms.justice.govt.nz/search/Documents/WT/wt\\_DOC\\_68356606/KoAotearoaTeneiTT2Vol2W.pdf](https://forms.justice.govt.nz/search/Documents/WT/wt_DOC_68356606/KoAotearoaTeneiTT2Vol2W.pdf)

28 Then Education Secretary Karen Sewell described the difficulty in keeping a relatively small pool of trained, qualified, and fluent teachers in the teaching profession because they were highly sought after in other areas of work. Ibid.

29 Hutchings, J., Higgins, R., Bright, N., Keane, B., Olsen-Reeder, V., & Hunia, T. M. (2017). *Te ahū o te reo: He tirohanga whānui | Te reo Māori in homes and communities: Overview report* (p. xxii). Wellington: NZCER.

