



TE REO MĀORI
IN ENGLISH-MEDIUM

Nihinihi whenua

Valuing te reo Māori: Student and whānau aspirations



“My primary
motivation is
knowledge,
credits are
just a bonus”

— Year 12 Student

97%

of Māori students
are enrolled in
English medium
schools in Aotearoa
New Zealand

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ERO would like to acknowledge the six participating school leaders, teachers, students and their whānau. Your willingness to share your collective knowledge and expertise has been invaluable in this project. Your contributions have provided ERO with important insights to help build our knowledge about the provision of te reo Māori education throughout the country.



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

***“Ko te reo te mauri
o te mana Māori.***

***Ko te kupu te mauri
o te reo Māori.***

***Ē rua ēnei wehenga
kōrero e hāngai
tonu ana ki runga
i te reo Māori.”***

*“The language is the life force
of the mana Māori.*

*The word is the life force of
the language.*

*These two ideas are absolutely
crucial to the Māori language.”*

— Sir James Henare, 1985

The Education Review Office (ERO) is committed to actively protecting and promoting the Māori language, in alignment with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

This Nihinihi Whenua – “surveying the landscape” – report is part of a planned series that seeks to build a picture of the current provision of te reo Māori in English medium schools. Where this report features a snapshot of student and whānau perspectives, our accompanying report Te Tāmata Huaroa provides our findings in more detail.

The schools that we talked with as part of this research recognise te reo Māori as a taonga, and want to do more to promote and grow it.

Our research found that a focus on capability building and improvement is needed to support our system to provide genuine learning opportunities in the language in our schools.

This series and ERO’s work programme that will follow this research are among the important steps to supporting the transformation required.

TE AKA O TE REO MĀORI



Te reo Māori is the only indigenous language of Aotearoa. It was also recognised as an official language of New Zealand in 1987. As such, it is a component of New Zealand's bicultural identity and considered a taonga (treasure) to Māori.

A once-thriving language, te reo Māori has endured a long and turbulent history. At the beginning of the 19th century, it was the predominant language spoken yet, by the 1850s, the arrival of settlers and onset of colonisation saw te reo Māori fast become a minority language. The number of te reo Māori speakers was systematically reduced through marginalising policies that saw the prohibition of te reo Māori in schools and stigmatisation of Māori culture (Reese, Keegan, McNaughton, Kingi, Carr, Schmidt & Morton, 2018).

As the effects of our colonial history on the endangerment of te reo Māori become more widely recognised, language revitalisation strategies intensify.

In 2018, the New Zealand Government issued Maihi Karauna, the Crown's strategy for Māori language revitalisation 2018-2023. The strategy aims to create 'the right conditions across government and New Zealand society for the revitalisation of te reo Māori', by setting out the following three goals to achieve by 2040.

AOTEAROTANGA

85%

of New Zealanders (or more) will
**value te reo Māori
as a key part of their
national identity**

HONONGA

150,000

**Māori aged 15 and over
will use te reo Māori as
much as English**

MĀTAURANGA

ONE MILLION

**New Zealanders can
speak at least basic
te reo Māori**

TE REO MĀORI IN EDUCATION



Within the education sector, we are striving to ensure the goals set out within the Maihi Karauna strategy sit at the forefront of our minds when planning and delivering education in Aotearoa.

The national curriculum document guides schools and kura in the design and implementation of curricula that meet the needs of their students. It acknowledges the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa, stating, "All students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga."

Further, guidelines currently exist to support the teaching of te reo Māori in English medium schools (*Te Aho Arataki Marau mō te Ako I te Reo Māori: Kura Auraki – Curriculum Guidelines for Teaching and Learning te Reo Māori*) and in schools where at least half the curriculum is taught in te reo Māori (Te Matauranga o Aotearoa).

This report, 'Nihinihi Whenua', is part of a planned series of projects undertaken by ERO that seeks to build a picture of the current provision of te reo Māori in English medium school settings. Subsequent projects will explore in more detail the extent, effectiveness and quality of te reo Māori in English medium settings.

WHAT DID WE DO?

This exploratory research project used qualitative methods to determine the current provision of te reo Māori in English medium schools. The research was not intended to evaluate provision of te reo Māori, but rather to provide a snapshot of what that provision looks like currently.

"This is an opportunity to work alongside ERO, to learn with and from each other"

— Secondary School Principal

SCHOOL SELECTION

ERO used Ministry of Education Māori language programme funding data to identify an initial list of 50 schools who had data showing both an in-school increase in students funded to learn te reo and an in-school rise in the level of funding over the previous three years. From this list it was decided that all schools would be selected from Te Tai Pūtahi Nui region, as they had the highest number of students funded across all levels.

Six schools were selected, ranging in school type, size, geographic location and decile rating to ensure a range of context was covered. Each school was approached by ERO and invited to participate in the project, with all principals accepting the offer.

SECONDARY			SECONDARY			INTERMEDIATE		
YEARS	DECILE	ROLL	YEARS	DECILE	ROLL	YEARS	DECILE	ROLL
9-13	6	1956	9-13	5	734	7-8	9	601
PRIMARY			PRIMARY			PRIMARY		
YEARS	DECILE	ROLL	YEARS	DECILE	ROLL	YEARS	DECILE	ROLL
1-6	4	260	1-8	1	67	1-8	3	263

ONSITE PHASE

As well as holding interviews and doing classroom observations, ERO gathered information during the school visits about each school's charter, strategic plans, planning and assessment for te reo Māori.



INTERVIEWS: Interviews facilitated by ERO evaluators were held with school leaders, programme leaders, parents, whānau, teachers and students. Parents, whānau and students were identified by the school leadership teams. Participants were interviewed in small focus groups. Some groups were comprised of people who had connections to a specific te reo Māori programme i.e. learners, parents and whānau from a rumaki class, whereas other groups were comprised of a mix of participants. These discussions were documented by the ERO team.



OBSERVATIONS: ERO evaluators observed the provision of te reo Māori in classrooms and, where relevant, in the wider school environment. These observations were made through classroom visits during school hours and were documented by the evaluators.

At the end of each exploratory investigation, ERO shared its findings with the leaders of the school. Each school was then provided with a special report that reiterated what had been discussed in the meeting.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN FINDINGS?

As ERO embarked on the journey to gain a better understanding of the provision of te reo Māori in English medium school settings, student and whānau voice was of high interest. This is not to disregard the rich discussions had with school leaders and teachers but more to place value on the realities, opinions and perspectives shared by the students and their whānau. ERO acknowledges that the use of student and whānau voice are critical for informing and improving learner outcomes, and should be considered for improving school-wide systems and structures to support the development of te reo Māori. This ultimately ensures that the taonga remains secure.

The four interrelated themes that emerged through student and whānau voice were:

- 1 A desire to learn te reo Māori
- 2 Valuing the importance of te reo Māori
- 3 Prioritising te reo Māori
- 4 Building capability

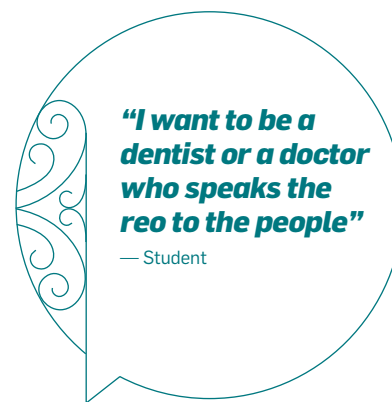
Student and whānau voice have been presented as woven through these themes.

ERO acknowledges that the use of student and whānau voice are critical for informing and improving learner outcomes...

1

A DESIRE TO LEARN TE REO MĀORI

The onsite visits in each of the six participating schools revealed an unwavering desire to learn te reo Māori. It was clear that students and their whānau had positive attitudes and aspirations about learning through te reo Māori.



Students told ERO:

“I want to be fluent so I can speak to my own family in Māori”

“I want to learn to teach te reo Māori so I can teach the future generations and keep the reo alive”

“I want to speak my native tongue and be fluent like my nan”

“I grew up in a home with no te reo and now we are learning as a whānau – I want to converse with my peers”

“We want te reo Māori to be celebrated”

“My primary motivation is knowledge – credits are just a bonus”

“I want to be surrounded by Te Ao Māori experiences”

“We do more Mandarin than te reo Māori, it would be good to learn more Māori and have a Māori teacher like you do for learning Mandarin”

“I’m not Māori and I love learning te reo Māori”

“I love learning about the legends of Māori and then I tell my parents and they tell me other versions”

“When I grow up, I want to be Rangatira and teach the kids”

“I want to be able to have a conversation in te reo Māori”

“I want to be a dentist or a doctor who speaks the reo to the people”

“My koro told me if I have the reo I will go far in my life”

“I want to speak te reo outside the classroom with my peers”

“You could have different groups – experts, middle and beginners for both teachers and students to learn off the teachers and students who speak fluently (Tuakana/Teina)”

“During pōwhiri if students knew what was being said then people wouldn’t fidget”

1

A DESIRE TO LEARN TE REO MĀORI

***“I want te reo
Māori to be
normalised”***

— Whānau member

***“I would like
to see 50/50 in
every classroom
and every day
should start
with a karakia”***

— Whānau member

***“Te reo should
be a language of
communication,
not just a
ceremony”***

— Whānau member

***“Teachers
are using te reo
Māori every day
but there are no
structured
lessons”***

— Whānau member

Whānau told ERO:

“I want te reo Māori to be normalised”

“Te reo Māori lessons would benefit the students and the teachers”

“Schools need to connect with whānau and iwi so they know the right karakia, waiata and legends that belong to mana whenua”

“The kids love kapahaka, they share their learning”

“It’s about hearing te reo Māori, not just tokenistic wall hangings”

“I would like a Rumaki class”

“I would like to see 50/50 in every classroom and every day should start with a karakia”

“I would like to see progression of te reo Māori across the school and further opportunities for richer and deeper experiences”

“Te reo should be a language of communication, not just a ceremony”

“Teachers are using te reo Māori every day but there are no structured lessons”

“Te reo Māori needs to be a priority and it needs a sequential approach”

“Why are children learning Mandarin when that time could be used for learning te reo?”

“Utopia – not bilingual but should just be bringing our kids up in te reo Māori”

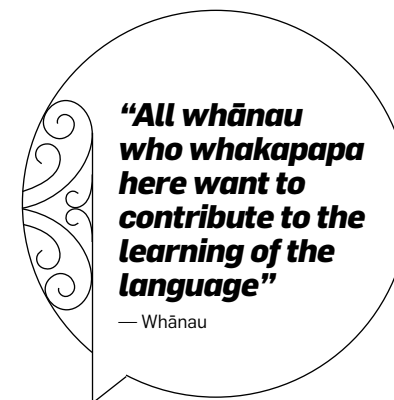
“Te reo Māori is my children’s national language – I am from another country and I can’t believe that this language is not taught in every school – I want them to know and learn their language, not butcher it”

“My son loves Kapahaka, I would like to see waiata practice for parents too”

2

VALUING TE REO MĀORI

Students and their whānau experienced an increased sense of belonging in the school environment through the normalisation of te reo Māori in everyday teaching and learning. Given the importance of the language to cultural identity, Māori students and their whānau subsequently felt their cultural identity was respected and valued.



Students told ERO:

“Our principal tries to speak it a lot, it’s pretty powerful, he’s putting in an effort and that’s pretty cool in my opinion”

“Te reo Māori has allowed growth here, it has addressed the wellbeing of our people because we are now reconnecting to whakapapa and there is a strong sense of belonging”

“You can tell which teachers have had te reo Māori lessons, their classes are welcoming and you can feel it”

“Our teacher speaks Māori so we hear it all day”

“Te reo Māori is fun, it’s mean and I like it – I like communicating with my friends and my teachers in Māori”

“I’m proud to be Māori and I want Māori children to feel the same about themselves”

“This place use to be the hood, now it’s the hub! It has taken a generation to change the attitudes but we are getting it done and we have aspirations of transitioning all our tamariki into a wharekura”

Whānau told ERO:

“All whānau who whakapapa here want to contribute to the learning of the language”

“At our school the focus is – use the language of the region, Reo is taught to reflect the meta. Be the voice of our people!!!!”

“I would like to see te reo Māori lessons, it would benefit the teachers and the students”

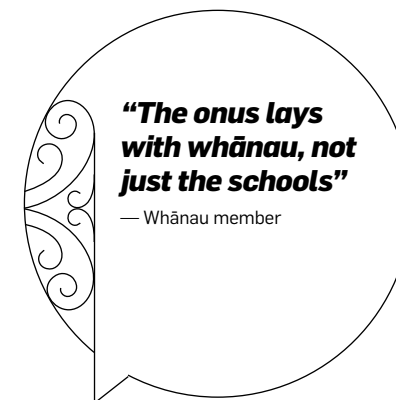
“I like the way kapahaka is not during lunch time but is during school time”

Where the aspirations of whānau are understood, educators are likely to achieve successful outcomes for children (ERO, 2018, 10).

3

PRIORITISING TE REO MĀORI

Where leaders prioritised te reo Māori me ona tikanga programmes in their school environment, ERO observed an increase in the number of fluent speakers of te reo Māori, effective and frequent whānau, iwi, and hapu engagement, and more competent teachers of the language. These leaders were confident and often fluent speakers of te reo Māori themselves, or were actively learning the language as a professional goal. ERO also observed the same leaders providing strong te reo Māori language models that included local hapu and iwi reo. In one instance, a teacher was given extra allowance as mana whenua with a job description to oversee all iwi and whānau engagement.



Students told ERO:

"There are high expectations for us in our Māori classes, we are role models and the teachers hold us to account – That's why we achieve high"

"We learn kupu hou, proverbs, whakatauki, kiwaha, sentence structures, reading and writing in te reo and we speak it all day"

"We are surrounded by the reo, our teachers and other tamariki speak Māori and teach those that can't"

"We learn in a safe environment – our Māori teachers laugh with us not at us"

"Kapahaka started the te reo journey for me"

"Te reo is a part of our culture – people should be able to stand without hesitating"

Whānau told ERO:

"Our school now has strong links with local iwi, our tamariki get greater opportunities because of this"

"The culture of the school is 'Māori is normalised' – it is not an add on"

"The onus lays with whānau, not just the schools"

"Opportunities for students to learn and study and complete NCEA in te reo have been provided here"

"Te reo is now a part of who we are at this school – it has been infused and embedded into the whole school. It is normalised"

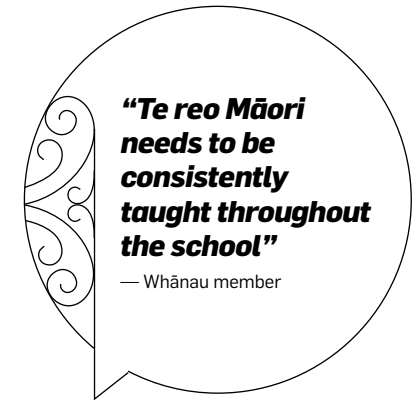
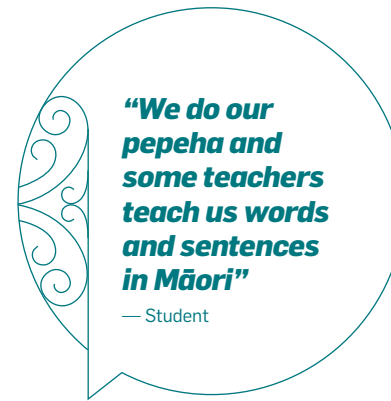
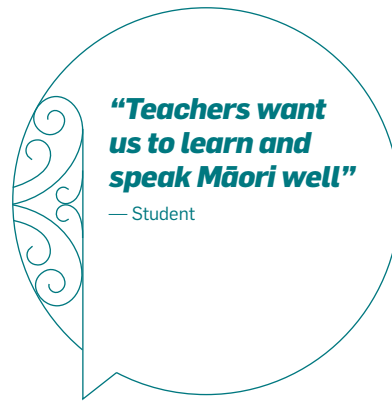
Leadership is the exercise of influence, whether based on positional authority, personal characteristics, or quality of ideas (ERO, 2016). Effective school leadership is a defining characteristic of the achievement of equity and excellence at the school, and system, level.

4

BUILDING CAPABILITY

All schools visited as part of this research shared evidence of a te reo Māori programme in their school. The programmes varied, with most schools favouring an integrated or thematic approach rather than an approach that had sequential planning and assessment through the year levels, focused on second language learning and acquisition.

Only one of the six schools was using Te Aho Arataki Marau mō te Ako i Te Reo Māori – to support the teaching and learning in its te reo Māori programme.



Students told ERO:

"Teachers want us to learn and speak Māori well"

"Teachers are trying to include Māori around our school"

"We are encouraged to speak te reo Māori"

"We don't have tests about te reo Māori"

"We do our mihi, colours, counting, kapahaka, waiata and some poems in te reo Māori"

"We learn some Māori but just mainly the basics"

"We do our pepeha and some teachers teach us words and sentences in Māori"

Whānau told ERO:

"Te reo Māori needs to be consistently taught throughout the school"

"I like seeing te reo Māori integrated in the school but I would like to see actual te reo Māori lessons taught specifically"

"I admire the teachers who have upskilled themselves and gone and done te reo Māori lessons in their own time"

"Teachers need professional development"

"Still doing basic stuff they covered in their early learning centre"

Quality of teaching is a major determinant of outcomes for learners. What teachers know and do is one of the most important influences on what learners learn (ERO, 2016). In New Zealand, the inclusion of dimensions of practice that create culturally responsive classrooms and schools reflective of a Māori worldview and ways of working offer significantly enhanced learning opportunities for all learners (ERO, 2016).

CONCLUSION



The Maihi Karauna strategy for the revitalisation of te reo Māori includes a focus on the compulsory education sector as a significant contributor to the survival and flourishing of the language. Based on the voices shared in this snapshot, there is evidence to suggest that students and their whānau have a strong desire to learn te reo Māori as a part of their everyday schooling in English medium school settings. This desire is affirmed when they can see clearly that te reo Māori is valued and prioritised by school leaders and teachers in their learning environment.

Our findings suggest a need to focus on growing the capability of leaders and teachers, so that they may better deliver high-quality te reo Māori programmes. For this to be possible, the education system needs to provide high-quality professional development, time and resource to support all leaders and teachers who need this. Thus strengthened, English medium schools can better play their role in ensuring that this taonga is rightfully protected, and te reo Māori will once again be spoken, sung and cherished in every corner of Aotearoa.

It is clear that the survival of the language lays partly in the hands of the education system

Nihinihi Whenua – Valuing te reo Māori:
Student and whānau aspirations

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