



TE TARI AROTAKE MĀTAURANGA
Education Review Office

Ringa Rehe

Hands of Many Talents and skills



Tahea tū te rangi paki
Tauakina te papa horo rau
Whakatahea te aho
tāngaengae ki taiao
Te rau pūtohe ka heke
Te rau mānawanawa ka ora
Ka ora i te tī karekare
Ka ora i te tī pūhake
Ka noho ai te taurira hei pūkenga
Kia puta ai te pūkenga hei wānanga
Kia ora ai te wānanga hei Poutokomanawa
Tūturu o whiti whakamaua kia tina
Tina!
Haumi e, hui e, tāiki e!

Clear the calm skies above
Clear the obstructed land
Free from obstruction our connection
to the natural world
As the impatient falls
The persistent endures
Awash with emotions
Overcome with emotions
The student remains to gain skills
The skilled leaves as experienced
The experienced becomes an instructor
Permanently fixed, established and understood
Committed!
Draw together!

Ringa Rehe

Is a metaphor that likens kaiāwhina to that of a weaver. It describes the member of staff as skilled, accomplished, and proficient in their work. They weave the aspirations of whānau, tumuaki, kaiako, tamariki, hapū and iwi throughout their mahi to ensure best possible outcomes for everyone. They are ‘hands of many talents.’

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He Kupu Arataki

Introduction

Why did we do this research?

The role of **kaiāwhina** in Kaupapa Māori is often likened to that of a teacher aide. However, in kaupapa Māori education the role of kaiāwhina is considerably different from that of a teacher aideⁱ.

This research was commissioned by The New Zealand Education Institute Te Riu Roa (NZEI TRR), with support of The Ministry of Education (The Ministry). Together, NZEI TRR and The Ministry wanted to better understand the role of kaiāwhina in kaupapa Māori settings.

This **Ringa Rehe report** seeks to illuminate the experiences of kaiāwhina in kaupapa Māori education, and their impact on tamariki and the kura as a whole.

Teacher aides usually work closely with teachers and learners, and are supported by classroom teachers, learning support coordinators, special education needs coordinators, other leadership and teaching staff, and fellow teacher aides. Teacher aides work under the direction of school leadersⁱⁱ.

The majority of research on teacher aides and their work has been undertaken outside of Aotearoa, often with a focus on settings within the United Kingdomⁱⁱⁱ. Little, if any research examines the practices of kaiāwhina or the impact this role has on tamariki in Kaupapa Māori settings.

This report captures **the voices, vision, and experiences of kaiāwhina, tumuaki, whānau and tamariki, who are part of Kaupapa Māori education settings, reflecting on kaiāwhina practice, experiences, and impact.**

While presenting new insights on kaiāwhina practice, this research also builds on existing work **Ringa Rehe** presents a fuller picture of kaupapa Māori education and the impacts this unique and diverse education approach has on tamariki, whānau, hapū and iwi.

Ringa Rehe provides purposeful and relevant insight into the work of kaiāwhina in kaupapa Māori education. The information within this research:

- celebrates kaiāwhina with examples of good practice, and presents opportunities for current and future kaiāwhina to learn from what works in the classroom
- provides a resource for agencies, and organisations who work with Kura Kaupapa Māori, to better understand kaiāwhina, their practice, and areas of interconnection with the wider kura.

Te Pou Mataaho (ERO) collaborated with seven kura kaupapa Māori from across Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa and Ngā Kura ā-Iwi to gather evidence about what works best for kaiāwhina, the education profession, tamariki and their whānau – in their own voices.

The collaboration that underpins this research mirrors the focus many kaiāwhina have on connection, community, and joint effort. It is fitting that many hands have contributed to **Ringa Rehe** “**hands of many talents and skills**” interweaving the insights, voice, and vision of kaiāwhina, tamariki, whānau, hapu, iwi, and education agencies. As a collective, we hope many more hands will continue to build upon this kaupapa to whaowhia te kete mātauranga (*fill the basket of knowledge*), enabling the best education outcomes for tamariki.

What did we hope to achieve?

The Education Review Office | Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga’s (ERO) role within this research is to highlight the unique settings in kaupapa Māori education and the use of kaiāwhina within them. This research intends to share the narratives and experiences of kaiāwhina. Bringing their perspectives and experiences to the fore, will ‘*paint a picture*’ while providing base evidence, clarity, and knowledge about the role of kaiāwhina, their contribution, and innovative practices. Of particular importance is the acknowledgement of their te reo Māori, tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori and kaupapa Māori skills and strengths.

In **Ringa Rehe** we have aimed to create a resource for those involved in Kaupapa Māori education, including learners, whānau, hapū and iwi. Education agencies and organisations, those who have an interest in Māori education, and importantly kaiāwhina themselves.

We strive to give effect to the Crown’s obligations under the articles in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This research upholds agreements made with Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa, and Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa (see page 41) and aligns to the vision of ERO. The ERO vision is grounded in our pursuit of equity and excellence for Māori learners and our focus on successful outcomes that support Māori identity, language, and culture. **Ringa Rehe** contributes to our body of evaluation and research designed to help share good practice, and levers for system improvement.

A focus on improvement is important for all parts of the education system – ERO included. **Ringa Rehe** and research like it helps build our understanding of, and capability to examine and highlight the diverse paradigms, pedagogy, and experiences within kaupapa Māori education.

Who was involved?

Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa and Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa

Te Pou Mataaho (ERO's Māori evaluation and research team) and Te Uepu ā Motu (ERO's evaluation and review team) acknowledges the seven kura who provided unwavering support, guidance, and first-hand experiences during their participation in this research.

ERO sought individual insights relating to the role of kaiāwhina from three kura affiliated to Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa, the peak body for the collective of Te Aho Matua Kura Kaupapa Māori, and four kura from Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa, the peak body for kura with special character designations as Kura-a-Iwi.

Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa

The three Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa kura are committed to the philosophy of Te Aho Matua. The wāhanga of Te Aho Matua frame the expectations for these kura. They are represented as:

Te Tino Ūaratanga o Te Aho Matua:

- *Te Ira Tangata* – physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being.
- *Te Reo Māori* – thinking, speaking, reading, and writing of Te Reo Māori and English.
- *Ngā Iwi* – ancestral links and hopes and aspirations of whānau, hapū and iwi.
- *Te Ao* – contemporary and traditional views of te Ao Māori, the wider and physical and natural worlds.
- *Āhuatanga Ako* – intellectually stimulating environments conducive to learning.

Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa

The four Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa kura are committed to fulfilling the aspirations of iwi. The overarching goal of Ngā Kura ā-Iwi kura is that uri are autonomous, confident, influential, and intelligent decision makers who contribute to society as lifelong learners.

The key outcomes for uri are:

- culturally autonomous and influential
- intellectually and academically independent
- physically, emotionally, and socially intelligent
- decision makers who contribute to society.

This report shares insights, and case studies gathered from experiences across kaupapa Māori learning environments. Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa and Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa have their respective philosophies and uniqueness, each is valued and contributes to the education of Māori and has contributed to the success experienced by raukura and manu pīrere. This research highlights the overarching themes that have emerged from across both paradigms, creating a clear picture of:

- effective kaiāwhina practice
- opportunities to further support effective practice across all settings
- shared experiences supporting Māori students.

Te Ihuwaka

Working Together looks at what good teacher aide practice and support looks like in English-medium settings. The report gives valuable insight into the experiences and skills of teacher aides in New Zealand. **Working Together** provides guidance on what schools can do to set teacher aides up for success and highlights key areas of teacher aide practice that make a difference for learners.

In **Working Together**, we found:

- Side-by-side teacher aide support isn't the best thing for most learners.
- Teacher aides can make a big difference for learners through four key areas of practice - generalised classroom support, delivering structured interventions, Te ao Māori cultural leadership and support and, collaboratively supporting individuals with learning support needs.
- Leaders need to help schools move on from traditional ideas about the teacher aide role.
- Teachers and leaders need to set the scene for great teacher aide practice.
- Collaborating to enable great teacher aide practice is worth the time and effort.

How the whole of ERO research approach benefits learners

Both, **Ringa Rehe**, *hands of many talents and skills* (2022) and **Working Together: How Teacher Aides Can Have the Most Impact** (2022), provide a wealth of knowledge pertaining to effective practices across education in Aotearoa. Read together, the reports show areas where kaiāwhina and teacher aides share common approaches, concerns, and experiences. We also found this research highlights the differences, acknowledging the different paradigms while appreciating how both teacher aides and kaiāwhina contribute to learning success for tamariki and their whānau.

Together, these research reports and their insights will benefit the education workforce and contribute to the outcomes and lives of all tamariki Māori in English-Medium and kaupapa Māori education.



Te Horopaki ā-Rangahau

Research context

What was already known before Ringa Rehe?

Kura Kaupapa Māori education defines kaiāwhina as strong contributors to the teaching and learning of tamariki. The kaiāwhina role is varied and purposeful and a valued part of the expert care and education. Kaiāwhina respond in many ways to the needs of the kaiako supporting tamariki, all the while maintaining the kaupapa Māori provision, te reo Māori, tikanga Māori, philosophical underpinnings and whānau, hapū iwi aspirations.

In kaupapa Māori education, Te aho Matua and Kura a Iwi provision, the use of kaiāwhina extends beyond the notion that those with learning needs are the sole recipients. The wider education needs align to the needs, and direction of whānau hapū and iwi.

The pay equity claim lodged by NZEI TRR on behalf of all teacher aides and kaiāwhina in September 2017 NZEI TRR (2020)^{iv}, provided evidence that neither the pay nor working conditions of this workforce reflected the level of skill required for the role. At that time NZEI TRR noted the pay equity investigations revealed that kaiāwhina working in kaupapa Māori settings, worked very differently to equivalent roles in English-medium settings.

In Aotearoa, New Zealand, teacher aides and kaiāwhina work across the sector and in a wide variety of settings. NZEI TRR reported this work is undertaken in diverse ways, in specialist schools and kura, where there is an increased number of tamariki requiring additional support.

In discussion with NZEI TRR it was stated the work of the education profession is becoming increasingly complex as more tamariki present with additional health and learning needs, including behavioural issues, mental distress, and neurodiverse issues. The level of complexity has impacted on workload overall, and is especially so for teacher aides and kaiāwhina, who often support these tamariki. In addition, NZEI TRR reported, this work is not adequately resourced across English-medium, Kaupapa Māori and Māori medium settings.

The pay equity settlement for teacher aides and kaiāwhina, highlights the commitment and success of this work force, by recognising the historic undervalued nature of this work and correcting that. The pay equity assessments recognised several workforce issues which include:

- a lack of professional development and career pathways
- the overuse of fixed term contracts that roll over from term to term
- the amount of unpaid work that kaiāwhina and teacher aides carry out
- a perception that the work mostly done by women is undervalued and framed as “women’s work” Tahuhu O Te Matauranga – Ministry of Education (2020)⁹.

These workforce issues impact kaiāwhina and teacher aides personally, while also impacting indirectly on learner outcomes.

A Sector Reference Group (SRG) has been meeting since March 2021 to review funding for teacher aides and kaiāwhina. The group is developing recommendations that aim to simplify funding, making it more predictable for schools, more secure for teacher aides and kaiāwhina, and therefore giving greater continuity and quality of support for tamariki.

NZEI and The Ministry agree that understanding the roles, responsibilities, and effective practices of kaiāwhina in kaupapa Māori settings is extremely important for the education sector.

The insights within this ERO research will build the knowledge base regarding what works for kaiāwhina, the necessary supports for their success, and provide information about the availability and accessibility of these supports. Through this research ERO hopes kaiāwhina will be further equipped to continue to make a positive difference to the lives of those tamaiti that they work alongside.

*“Kaiāwhina are valued with immense respect and dignity – they are the hub of everything we do, without them we could not function, without them we cannot be the best we can be.” - **Tumuaki voice***

Methodology: How did we do this research?

Designing the methodology

By Māori with Māori, for Māori, as Māori and in te reo Māori directs our partnership with Māori and the approach to all research undertaken by Te Pou Mataaho.

Ringa Rehe reports specifically on kaupapa Māori settings. As a result, it was important we adopt a kaupapa Māori research methodology, with mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori as expressed through the work of Smith (1999) and Pihama et al. (2002).

The journey for this research began with wānanga between ERO and NZEI TRR. Here, we were able to determine the collective aims for **Ringa Rehe**, the scope of the research and the methodology design. This led to the co-design of lines of inquiry, shaping the questions we asked in the kura we visited.

The investigative framework for this research focused on:

- kaiāwhina perspective
- tumuaki perspective
- learner, whānau, hapū and iwi perspectives where applicable
- identifying examples of good kaiāwhina practice through a triangulated process of evidence, including observations, documentation, and perspectives.

There was a shared commitment from all involved in **Ringa Rehe** to uphold the tikanga and philosophies of each learning environment, acknowledging that these are diverse and reflect the needs of the tamariki and their whānau. Our existing working relationship with Te Rūnanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori, and Ngā Kura ā-Iwi assisted with this mahi.

*Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi
With your food basket and my food basket the people will thrive.*

Kaiako, kaiāwhina, tumuaki, tamaiti, and kura whānau are acknowledged as active participants in the creation of this research, and their whakaaro (thoughts and perspectives) shared wherever possible in their own words.

How we collected information and insights

Much of the research that underpins this report came from kanohi ki te kanohi (in person) semi-structured interviews undertaken in late 2022.

All interview questions were open-ended. This practice enabled participants from across the kura, the freedom to share their whakaaro through their own lived experiences with the ERO team. Questions were developed for each of the groups identified in the investigative framework. All questions contributed to the collection of information responding to our key line of inquiry.

How well do kaiāwhina contribute to the outcomes of Māori in kaupapa Māori education?

This question required us to look at multiple areas of interest, including understanding the various roles of kaiāwhina, how the role is supported, what standard and good practices look like. This line of inquiry also enabled us to look at other factors including how kaiāwhina engage with the wider kura, whānau and importantly, tamariki.

To help us gather evidence, we spoke to tamariki, kaiāwhina, whānau and tumuaki using specifically developed questions to ensure we delved into key areas of interest. We asked:

- **Kaiāwhina:** about their day-to-day experiences, the nature of the role, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.
- **Whānau:** about the qualities of kaiāwhina, the role of kaiāwhina and whānau interactions with kaiāwhina. Questions were also designed to illuminate perceptions of what good practice is and how kaiāwhina practice impacts tamaiti.
- **Tamariki:** about the role of kaiāwhina, the impact of the Kaiāwhina role on their learning, and the kind of interactions they view as positive or impactful.
- **Tumuaki:** about the role of kaiāwhina, their impact on Kaupapa Māori, teaching and learning support, leadership and management.

In addition to interviews, ERO completed classroom observations in each of the seven Kura involved in this research. Observations focused on:

- gaining an understanding of the items discussed in interviews and their ‘real world’ equivalents
- recording photographic evidence of classroom practice for subsequent analysis
- enabling ERO researchers to gather wider context to inform this research.

Where we undertook research

Research was undertaken in the field by Te Uepū ā-Motu review officers, using the research framework and questions established by Te Pou Mataaho and NZEI TRR.

Te Uepū ā-Motu conducted on site interviews with three Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa kura:

- Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Ruamata
- Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Wairarapa
- Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Hurungaterangi

These Kura represent 5% of total number of Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa Kura.

Te Uepū ā Motu also conducted interviews with four Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa kura:

- Te Kura Māori o Porirua
- Te Wharekura o Kirikiriroa
- Te Wharekura o Maniapoto
- Te Wharekura o Ngāti Rongomai

These Kura represent 13% of the total Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa Kura.

Key insights from interviews and observations were compiled into case-studies. These case studies contribute to the summarised findings within this report. In addition, the executive leadership of Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa and Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa were also provided with the opportunity to comment.

The approach to te reo Māori used in this research

Te reo Māori is a valued taonga across kaupapa Māori education environments. ERO acknowledges that te reo Māori use includes traditional and contemporary language structures, consonant blends, use of macrons, phrases, and words (to name a few). Therefore, across hapū, iwi and between Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa and Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa affiliated kura, variations with te reo Māori exist.

Our study identified the many complexities and the different words used for the word 'students' and similarly the words used to describe those 'students with additional learning needs.' This has also highlighted how kaupapa Māori acknowledge the 'uniqueness of students with additional learning needs' using words or phrases. For example, *piiori*, *uri*, are words used for *students*, while *te iranotua* and *hautīpua* are used for *uniqueness of students with additional learning needs*. The word *kaiāwhina* is used by many while *kaitāwharau* is also used in some cases.

We understand the depth of meaning behind the te reo Māori words used, and the value and importance to each participant in this work. For this report, we will use either *tamariki*, *tamaiti*, *tauirā* for students and *kaiāwhina* for teacher aide as these terms are known by Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa, Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa, Kura Kaupapa Māori and The Ministry of Education. However, for clarity purposes we have adopted the practice of using the term teacher aide in the translated version of this report when referring to teacher aides in an English medium environment.



Ngā Kitenga

Findings

Our research aimed to better understand the kaiāwhina role in kaupapa Māori kura, and what works best for them within the kaupapa context that includes tamariki, whānau, kura, hapū and iwi. In summary, our research findings revealed four key themes within the Kura Kaupapa Māori involved in this research.

What did we find?

1. **Kaiāwhina play a fluid, adaptable and versatile role to meet the individualised needs of each tamaiti and their whānau.**
 2. **Kaiāwhina are part of an extensive and crucial network including kaiako, whānau and tamariki providing unwavering support as a way of ensuring optimal positive outcomes.**
 3. **Kaupapa Māori education settings provide an inclusive environment for kaiāwhina to be supported by leaders who place significant value on their role and contributions.**
 4. **Kaiāwhina are essential to Māori achieving success as Māori.**
-

In the following sections, we will delve into each of these key findings. Sharing deeper insight. The detail within these sections was found through observations, and interviews within kaupapa Māori education settings.

1. Kaiāwhina play a fluid, adaptable and versatile role to meet the individualised needs of each tamaiti and their whānau.



Kaiāwhina work with tamariki of varying ages and abilities across a wide span of curriculum levels. Our research found they may also work more intensively with an individual tamaiti who requires extra support with subject learning, te reo Māori acquisition, participation in physical activities, or moving safely around the kura and classroom spaces. In the classroom we observed kaiāwhina also work with groups of tamariki to accelerate fluency of te reo Māori, as well as developing proficiency in other curriculum areas as required. The role is complex, requiring kaiāwhina to effectively utilise their skill set to increase responsiveness whilst upholding kura principles.

ERO found the kaiāwhina role within kaupapa Māori settings we studied is fluid and adaptable. We observed that kaiāwhina are shapeshifters within this education paradigm, as they:

- respond to the needs of the kura
- align to meet the individualised needs of each tamaiti, and their whānau aspirations
- consider the whānau, hapū and iwi systems, networks, and expectations
- understand and embed the philosophical underpinnings of the Kura Kaupapa.

In this environment ERO noted whānau support for both the application and continuation of the kaiāwhina role upholds the collective responsibility and wider accountability to outcomes for tamariki. In action we found this approach lays a solid foundation for ongoing support for kaiāwhina from the outset, creating the appropriate conditions for elevated levels of good practice to be developed and maintained.

We found that many interviews highlighted a general understanding across all groups of the pivotal role kaiāwhina play in the learning and development of tamariki, the influencing culture at kura, and in the homes of whānau.

We found kaiāwhina are chosen to work alongside certain individuals because they demonstrate the necessary attributes and personality traits best suited to the needs of the tamaiti and their whānau. Once appointed, kaiāwhina go through a comprehensive induction process to grow their understanding and expectations of the role. Kaiāwhina explore responsibilities, guidelines, and the aspirations of the kura for their tamariki. Through this process kaiāwhina in turn create shared aspirations of the position, within the fabric of the kura. In most cases, we found the role is constantly developing and evolving in response to the needs and aspirations of whānau, kaiako and tamariki, reiterating a necessity for kaiāwhina to be agile and malleable whilst offering differentiated support to a diverse range of tamaiti.

“Ka nui ngā momo o te kaiāwhina, he kaitiaki mō ngā tamariki motuhake.”

– **Tumuaki voice**

“They look for the right person that connects with the tamaiti.”

– **Whānau voice**

Whānau voice

A tamaiti with autism left his original school because it was a modern learning space and he struggled with the level of noise in that environment. His mum looked for another kura for him and even though they lived in Huntly she chose Kirikiriroa in Hamilton because a few of her whānau were staff there. Her son transferred at the age of 10 and now at the age of 13 he no longer requires one on one support from a kaiāwhina. He is now able to self-manage and self-regulate. Upon starting at Kirikiriroa, a decompression area was set up for him to enable him to expend energy when he needed to. His māmā was a bit shocked that the kura agreed to do this for her son (which included the purchase of items such as a mini tramp, hammock, beanbags, swiss ball etc). She thought it was a lot of resourcing for just one child. The tumuaki responded with “Oh we have got heaps of Tamariki that will benefit from the area – it won’t just be for him.” When signs of anxiety or stress were evident, he was encouraged to run and be physical – his kaiāwhina was a young male who was able to physically keep up with him. The kaiāwhina also spent time with this boy in his home with his whānau. He would join them for kai and then take him outside to kick the ball around. The tamaiti struggled during lockdown so the kaiāwhina gave up his own time and would do art with him in the garage wearing full PPE gear – This was an immense help to the tamaiti and to the whānau.



“Our kaiāwhina would go into the home. The kaiako would be online. It’s the stuff outside the kura that matters most.” – Tumuaki voice

Kaiāwhina go beyond the requirements of their defined roles and responsibilities. This work included development of curriculum supports, resource making, translations of English-medium material into te reo Māori to ensure equity of access to learning materials, offering expertise in mātauranga Māori, working with special education needs coordinators, and attending external sports competitions to support tamariki with physical disabilities who need support to actively participate in daily activities. In our interviews it became clear some kaiāwhina have devoted their time to coaching and managing a variety of sporting codes which in turn contributed to the growth of tamariki and the future prosperity of hapū and iwi. In other instances, the kaiāwhina role has extended to working as a reliever, or in the homes of tamariki during school holidays on a volunteer basis. In short, kaiāwhina make certain each tauira has what they need to achieve daily success in a range of learning environments. ERO researchers found kaiāwhina viewed their participation in extracurricular activities as an opportunity to establish connections with the wider community and as an effective way to ‘give back to their people’.

*“Ka haere ki te whakangungu me ngā kaiāwhina.” (special education needs coordinator) – **Tumuaki voice***

Kaiāwhina often follow planned daily timetables and maintain regular routines set out by the kaiako while remaining responsive to tamariki needs throughout the day. We found that kaiāwhina are viewed by those around them as flexible in their roles and always ready and able to support any potential situation or scenario. Our interviews indicated they consistently demonstrate a high level of versatility, adaptability and a skill set that enables them to effectively support a diverse range of tauira and roles.

*“He karu, he tāringa anō ki te akomanga.” – **Whānau voice***

*“No one organises me. I just know what to do. I have a routine.”
– **Kaiāwhina voice***

2. Kaiāwhina are part of an extensive and crucial network including kaiako, whānau and tamariki to provide unwavering support as a way of ensuring optimal positive outcomes.



The success of tamariki is not attributed to one single support system. Instead, positive, and optimal outcomes are drawn from everyone involved. Together, these networks of support combine to form a korowai of guidance and aroha for each tamaiti as they navigate and flourish in all aspects of kura life. A shared understanding of collective responsibility demonstrates the level of respect that kaimahi have towards kaiāwhina.

“For us it’s all in the whole package. If you’ve got a child who needs their kope to be changed, it’s not assigned to one person: it’s all of us – even the tumuaki.” – Tumuaki voice

“It’s not right to be running around looking for someone to help a child. We are all responsible for the child, not just the kaiāwhina.” – Tumuaki voice

Kaiāwhina work from an ethos of whakawhanaungatanga, establishing and maintaining meaningful and inclusive relationships. We heard kaiāwhina often undertake the role of liaison to assist with interactions and communications between kura and whānau. In action this means kaiāwhina are responsive to regular feedback and engage with whānau, who determine and assess the outcomes for their tamaiti. We found kaiāwhina and whānau co-exist in a safe environment where everyone feels comfortable communicating their thoughts, ideas, and concerns. Whānau voice is paramount, and kaiāwhina demonstrate this understanding by going beyond expectations while working together with whānau, kaiako and tumuaki to seek solutions which drive the best outcomes for the tamaiti concerned.

*“Ka whai wāhi ngā whānau ki te kōrero mō ngā kaiāwhina mē ngā kaiako, ngā kitenga me ngā hua i puta.” – **Tumuaki voice***

*“Ka tohaina te kaiāwhina i waenga i a māua.” – **Whānau voice***

Kaiāwhina are resourceful, and their connections with the wider community increase the availability and access to effective external resources. We found kaiāwhina are skilled at adapting and developing learning resources to fit the teaching and learning context. ERO repeatedly heard about the commitment of kaiāwhina who dedicate a considerable amount of time to creating and translating resources. In doing so, kaiāwhina ensure kaiako and tamariki have access to valuable tools necessary for learning.

In interviews ERO researchers noted examples of kaiāwhina who are so dedicated to the kaupapa that they would sooner fund resources from their own personal finances rather than have tamariki go without.

*“Human resources are awesome because we have a lot of knowledge in our community.” – **Kaiāwhina voice***

*“Kāore he maha ngā rauemi Māori, kāore i tino whai māramatanga nā te reo pākehā.” – **Kaiāwhina voice***

*“...the challenge was trying to find mahi for her [tauirā] and not knowing where to find it, there is stuff online for her [tauirā] but not in Māori. I have to translate it.” – **Kaiāwhina voice***

There is a priority to maintain strong whakapapa connections by seeking out and encouraging whānau within the community to accept kaiāwhina roles. We found these individuals may be whānau members, past taura or staff already working within the kura who have the desired skills and qualities with the potential to provide the support needed. In action we found tumuaki respond to these recommendations with expediency which has allowed whānau members to progress into such positions both naturally and successfully. Thus, strengthening pathways of support for tamariki not only inside the classroom but within the kāinga and among whānau as well. This proactive strategy is beneficial for the kura as they have managed to bring back retired whānau and kaiako into the kaiāwhina space and capitalise on individual experience and skills.

“I was applying for the Junior Reception job, but aunty told me to apply for the kaitāwharau job.” – Kaiāwhina voice

“I timata hei kaiāwhi. Kātahi ka whai turanga hei kaiāwhina nā te inoi a te tumuaki.” – Kaiāwhina voice

“Nō te whānau te katoa ō ngā kaiāwhina.” – Kaiāwhina voice

As part of kaupapa Māori kura-wide practice, kaiāwhina are actively involved in supporting the wider community and whānau that are in need. In one example of this within Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Hurungaterangi, Rotorua, we found Kaiāwhina know whānau well and are often the first staff member to hear about how issues are impacting on certain students.^{vi}

When discussing community with Te Wharekura o Maniapoto, Te Kūiti – ERO found kaiāwhina view their participation in extracurricular and Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) activities as an opportunity to establish connections with the wider community and as an effective way to develop more meaningful relationships with pīori and whānau^{vii}.

Actions like these exemplify kura principles and values and demonstrate the role kaiāwhina have in these settings as a part of the intricate fabric that has been woven to love and protect every child as they grow and mature. This sees a collective constructive collaboration radiating between kaiāwhina, leaders, kaiako and whānau in the best interest of tamariki within the Kura.

Tamaiti experience

A tamaiti with cerebral palsy transitioned from te kōhanga reo into this kura so that he could continue learning te reo Māori. Initially the māmā was very nervous and her initial concern was that her son might get bullied because he was the only child at kura with a physical disability. Compounding her concerns was that the Special Education Advisors thought he would be better off in the ‘special needs unit’ at an English-medium school. However, as time progressed the māmā observed that he was treated better than she could ever have hoped for. All the adults and all his peers cared for him immensely. The tumuaki and staff did not use the word ‘disability’ and instead focused on individual abilities. The kaiāwhina that works with this tamaiti started as a whānau volunteer initially helping him get from the front gate of the kura to his class. As each day went by, the whānau volunteer would stay longer and is now very proud of the fact that he has a full-time job supporting not only the tamaiti with cerebral palsy, but other tamariki as well. He is now considering pursuing a teaching qualification.



“There are no disabilities, there are only differences.” – Tumuaki voice

“In his current environment, he is acknowledged as he is and there is no negative weight given to his differences.” – Whānau voice

3. Kaupapa Māori education settings provide an inclusive environment for kaiāwhina to be supported by leaders who place significant value on their role and contributions.



“Most important people in our kura, they support our teachers and keep all our functions in fine working order.” – Tumuaki voice

Kaiāwhina are treated as equals to all adults in the kura. We found there is no differentiation or established hierarchy between these roles as all are viewed as equally important. Throughout the interviews it became clear there is a shared commitment toward providing a physically, emotionally, and spiritually safe environment conducive to learning. The proficiency of kaiāwhina means that kura have a high level of confidence in their ability to work effectively with tamariki, whānau and kaiako. Kaiāwhina are always consulted with and included in professional discussions that contribute to the planning and delivery of quality learning opportunities that meet individuals' needs.

“I used to think my son was so lucky because he had all these experts in the room talking about how he was going to learn.” – Whānau voice

“The biggest thing is the respect that kura Māori have for kaiāwhina to manaaki and tiaki tamariki in the same way that kaiako do.”

– Kaiāwhina voice

The pairing of kaiako and kaiāwhina naturally brings together a reciprocal relationship of guidance, support, and collaboration. Kaiako, in the first instance, may recognise how additional assistance can support tamariki to experience success. ERO found careful consideration is given to strategies that will effectively support the identified learning needs of tamariki, and a plan can be implemented in consultation with whānau. Our case studies highlight the ways kaiako and kaiāwhina organise roles between themselves to maximise and utilise each other's strengths and competencies. Thus, giving opportunity to work dynamically within a classroom setting by enabling one-on-one, group, and whole class teaching styles to meet the learning needs of tamariki each day. Together, this team structure and coupling builds efficacy and capability within current classroom contexts while contributing to future workforce potential.

“.. I hear them talk about ways they can help improve tamariki.”

– Whānau voice

“Through assessment, results, and observations, we identify tamariki within the kura who are in need of additional one-on-one support.”

– Tumuaki voice

Kaupapa Māori education providers have shared a multitude of benefits associated with the presence of kaiāwhina in classroom settings. Due to heavy workloads and high demands experienced in kura, leaders are prioritising the maintenance of low kaiako to tamariki ratios in each classroom. Originally, kaiāwhina were assigned to tamariki who required additional learning and behavioral support. However, there is now a focus on allocating kaiāwhina to classrooms based on specific tamariki needs, shared through whānau voice, the school roll, and adult to tamariki classroom ratios. Overall, this practice's implementation is to best support quality teaching and learning in the classroom and tamariki and kaiako well-being.

We found in some cases kaiāwhina are present in every classroom. In action this provides the space for kaiako to be more attentive to the learning needs of all tamariki which can be monitored and tracked by kaiāwhina. This inclusive approach has been shown to be a contributor to success as it allows for more intimate and personal relationships to flourish between kaiāwhina, kaiako, whānau and tamariki.

“Our kaiāwhina are an important element to our success.” – Tumuaki voice

Together, kaiāwhina and kaiako nurture this environment to encourage growth and development of all tamariki. Therefore, as the kura roll increases, maintaining lower student ratios has increased the number of permanent kaiāwhina positions required in each Kaupapa Māori kura.

“I ngā tau ō mua ko te tautoko mai i ngā whanonga.” – Tumuaki voice

“Katahi kia matapaki kōrero me pēhea tātou e tiaki, e awhina ngā tamariki me te kaiāwhina.” – Tumuaki voice

“He kaiāwhina mō nga kaiako katoa.” – Tumuaki voice

“He karu, he tāringa, he ringa, he waha kōrero hei tautoko i ngā take me ngā whakaakoranga a te kaiako.” – Tumuaki voice

Although we did not specifically seek to understand the financial implications for the education settings who support education with kaiāwhina in this way, we found in some interviews tumuaki noted kaiāwhina are seen as a priority and budgeted for accordingly.

Within our interviews were clear examples of how kaiāwhina are provided with constant support.

Within our interviews were clear examples of how kaiāwhina are provided with constant support by leaders, kaiako, whānau, hapū and iwi through ongoing communication, reflection, and appraisal during their journey. This includes encouragement and support for kaiāwhina to attain a kaiako qualification^{viii}, and recognition of the importance of professional learning and development (PLD) for kaiāwhina^{ix}.

The current shortage of suitably qualified te reo Māori speaking kaiāwhina and kaiako have influenced various kura to implement a strategy to ‘grow their own.’ Limited Authority to Teach (LAT) has given opportunities for some kaiāwhina to fill these roles. During the induction phase, kura provide kaiāwhina with insight into what further training is available whilst giving kaiāwhina the opportunity to design their own pathway plan. We found that over time, kaiāwhina observe kaiako teaching, familiarise themselves with the kura and can attend iwi wānanga while being guided and supported by leaders. The findings revealed that across kura, there is a goal to encourage and support kaiāwhina to pursue a formal teaching qualification. As a result, there have been a considerable number of kaiāwhina that have chosen this path to study.

“I had no-one. We had to LAT them... it was good as they had the reo.”

– **Tumuaki voice**

“I’m in a LAT for Term 4 because I’m teaching taiao.” – **Kaiāwhina voice**

“Came in for a meeting with whaea [tumuaki] and we did a 5-year plan.”

– **Kaiāwhina voice**

“Kei te whakatupu mātou i a mātou ake kaiāwhina.” – **Tumuaki voice**

Kaiāwhina are supported by kura to pursue Professional Learning Development (PLD) to strengthen their capabilities. The major issue at hand is the lack of appropriate PLD available to them sector wide that focuses specifically on mātauranga Māori.

Attendance at English medium PLD have led kaiāwhina to believe that the pathways of support look very different for tamariki in kaupapa Māori settings. One size does not fit all. There is an emerging preference for kaupapa specific courses, hui and wānanga. All kura have an embedded common philosophy that tamariki are unique and come with their own mana. This determines that professional learning should focus on how best to preserve these ideas when working with tamariki. It is through their own involvement and commitment to various external kaupapa that kaiāwhina develop relevant knowledge and skills to share and utilise in their roles. This is reflected across both Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa and Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa.

Throughout our conversations with kaiāwhina, tumuaki, and kaiako the need for training that enabled Kaiāwhina to meet the specific needs of tamaiti was a common theme. As was, the need for PLD which supported pathways towards teacher accreditations.

“Era atu whakangungu, kare he hua, he pākehā katoa.” – Kaiāwhina voice

“One of our kids have a learning disability, I want to go on PLD to support her.” – Kaiāwhina voice

*“More taiao specific PLD – that’s what I’m wanting to do.”
– Kaiāwhina voice*

*“... do lots outside of kura and bring back the knowledge.”
– Kaiāwhina voice*

We found kaiāwhina are surrounded by expertise within the kura to further enhance their skill set. In particular, the tumuaki is readily available to provide support and advice to help guide kaiāwhina. We found kaiāwhina are provided with the same opportunities as kaiako for resourcing and PLD.

Tumuaki voice

The tumuaki is inspired by her own personal career journey and the need to grow the capability of her people – Ngati Maniapoto. Her roles in a kura in sequential order were volunteer, administrator, to kaiāwhina. She then pursued a teacher training qualification. The tumuaki has recognised the need to ‘grow their own’ staff. This is mostly due to the increasing kura roll but also some lingering historical kura issues still affecting the recruitment of kaiako into this kura. Thus, suitable individuals of Ngati Maniapoto descent were identified as potential future kaiako. They were encouraged to accept kaiāwhina positions at the kura with the goal of developing their skillset. They were provided with support and guidance and as they became more adept, the tumuaki would consider their readiness to transition into a Limited Authority Teacher role. The proviso was that they would enrol in a teacher training programme. The tumuaki reflects that 2020 was the first year in many that Te Wharekura o Maniapoto could celebrate having a full staff of trained teachers. They continue to look for suitable candidates.



4. Kaiāwhina are essential to Māori achieving success as Māori.



The role of kaiāwhina is nuanced, unique and can only exist through knowledge and understanding of mātauranga Māori. The education tamariki receive aligns closely to who they are at home, in the community and on their marae. We found that kaiāwhina use this pathway to ensure tamariki are motivated to achieve success by nurturing their tino rangatiratanga and mana motuhake. It was noted in one interview that kaiāwhina love and nurture tamariki as if they were their own and consistently participate and contribute to the growth and development of each tamariki in their care.

“He kura hei kainga, he kainga hei kura.” – Tumuaki voice

“Sending him to kura is like sending him to the marae.” – Whānau voice

Within kaupapa Māori education philosophies tamariki are viewed as precious taonga with unique strengths and passions. Kura work to ensure that ‘te mana ō te tamaiti’ remains intact, regardless of tamariki behaviours and or differences. Kaiāwhina were reported as adapting the planning and learning activities to best meet the needs of tamariki within this framing. We identified throughout the interviews that kaiāwhina apply a teaching pedagogy that is responsive and positive. Kaiāwhina have a genuine commitment to working with tamariki to achieve the best possible outcomes for all concerned.

Aroha is a superpower

The whānau of this tamaiti decided to move him to this kura when it became clear that the school, he was attending saw his disposition as a potential risk to other students and set about trying to modify his behaviour. This kura immediately accepted their son for who he was and for the gifts that he had. The kura considers all children to be unique and special, especially ngā ira noa tua. They come for our learning and test our ability to uphold Te Aho Matua. The superpower at this kura is aroha – unconditional love for all from all. The kura have intimate knowledge and relationships with the kura whānau.



“Aroha ki te tamaiti, poipoi i te wairua, tiaki tuakiri.” – Whānau voice

Tamariki recognise the many ways that kaiāwhina care for and support them and will replicate what they observe by taking initiative to assist other tamariki in need. We found tamariki are part of creating an environment where they work collectively with kaiāwhina and kaiako to contribute to their own wellness and success. We heard kaiāwhina will often be of the whānau or will know the whānau well and are often the first and only staff member to hear about the varied social issues impacting certain tamariki. Kaiāwhina work closely with the tumuaki to seek ways to support whānau and tamariki to work through challenges.

“Sometimes our kaiāwhina know a little more about the child than the kaiako do.” – Tumuaki voice

*“Ka koa rawa i te taha o [kaiāwhina]. Ka kite i tona kanohi, ona emotions.”
– Hautīpua voice*

“E āhei ana te kōrero ki a ia mō ngā āhuatanga o te kāenga me ngā raru o te papa tākaro.” – Tamaiti voice

“Te āwhina ia kia pai ake tōnā roro.” – Hautīpua voice

Learning through Maramataka

In this particular kura it is crucial that all staff understand the Kaupapa with adherence to the maramataka. For example, if the timetable says it is hakinakina (Physical Education/Sports), but the moon phase is a low or negative energy, they classes will still do games and activities: however, these will be adapted to suit the lunar energy. This supports both the tamariki and the kaiako having optimum teaching and learning times. All tamariki at this kura are remarkably familiar with the phases of the moon and are more aware of how they need to be with one another on certain days. This ensures the maintenance of positive and meaningful relationships with others. This kura also seeks suitable people from within the whānau for kaiāwhina positions because they are already committed to their whānau learning through Maramataka.





Whakarāpopototanga

Conclusion

Early in our wānanga with NZEI TRR they shared their understanding of “kaiāwhina as supportive people, working in diverse ways to support the complex and unique needs of tamariki in Kura Kaupapa Māori.” Our discussions with tamariki, whānau, kaiako, tumuaki and importantly kaiāwhina documented within **Ringa Rehe** “Hands of Many Talents and skills” supports this view.

Ringa Rehe builds an understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and effective practices of kaiāwhina in Kura Kaupapa Māori settings. The interviews, case studies and report collate the adaptive skills of kaiāwhina; and their ability to weave together the needs of many to create the best outcome for tamariki. This may mean creating resources, sharing specialist cultural knowledge, or connecting with whānau and the wider community outside the classroom.

Examples of effective practice vary, as they relate unique contexts of each of the seven Kura Kaupapa Māori we studied. However, our research findings revealed four key themes which can be used to understand kaiāwhina practice, experiences and avenues for leverage and support.

- Kaiāwhina play a fluid, adaptable and versatile role to meet the individualised needs of each tamaiti and their whānau
- Kaiāwhina are part of an extensive and crucial network including kaiako, whānau and tamariki to provide unwavering support as a way of ensuring optimal positive outcomes
- Kaupapa Māori education settings provide an inclusive environment for kaiāwhina to be supported by leaders who place significant value on their role and contributions; and lastly
- Kaiāwhina are essential to Māori achieving success as Māori.

We also noted shared attributes of kaiāwhina and Kura Kaupapa across the seven settings.

We found the kaiāwhina in our research are:

- included in all aspects of the school's life and are seen as critical partners in tamariki learning
- highly adaptive and responsive to the unique philosophies, needs of tamariki, and aspirations of whānau within their kura
- present in many classrooms, and in some cases every classroom
- work as true partners with classroom teachers in teaching and learning
- support whānau and the wider community to ensure tamariki are supported to learn.

We found the Kura Kaupapa Māori in our research:

- deliberately engage the skills and experience of kaiāwhina for their deep cultural knowledge to enrich the teaching and learning of Te reo Māori, Mātauranga Māori, and Te Ao Māori
- work with kaiāwhina to create a holistic approach to the education and care of tamariki and their learning needs
- support Kaiāwhina, their work and careers
- philosophies and approaches differ from English-medium settings. This drives a broad role for kaiāwhina which can extend beyond typical classroom type work in English-medium learning.

For these very reasons, significant expectation, value, and mana is placed on kaiāwhina as a critical component to supporting each tamariki to succeed.

In recognising this, many kura are placing a priority on having kaiāwhina in every classroom to maximise support for kaiako and tamariki as heavy demands and heavy workloads are increasing. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of permanent kaiāwhina positions available.

We found people filling these roles are largely whānau and community members already involved or connected to the kura. As a result, whakapapa connections are strengthened, which can enable the wider community, hapū and iwi to grow an understanding of, and capability in the knowledge and skills important to them as a collective. Kaiāwhina therefore come into the kura, with an understand of the philosophies that shape every facet of the learning experience.

Due to the current shortage of te reo Māori speaking kaiako and te reo Māori resources, kaiāwhina have proven that their extensive skill set and dedication to tamariki has successfully filled these voids. This is one contributing factor to the increase for the kaupapa Māori workforce. Nevertheless, the current pay and workload of kaiāwhina does not adequately consider the level of knowledge, skill, commitment, and value that they contribute to the learning of tamariki.

All kura who took part in this research have a 'superpower' that is unique to them. It is influenced by their locations, the presence of iwi and hapū and the depth and complexity of thinking around te ao Maōri. The narratives gathered from a wide range of voice sees Kaiāwhina viewed just as much a 'superpower' within these environments. Tamariki are central to all planning and implementation. Kaiāwhina are key contributors in every aspect of this process with the understanding that everyone has something to offer to the education of tamariki. Consequently, tamariki will be enriched with strong foundations to navigate their future no matter where they are in the world.

Recommendations

Kaiāwhina hold a pivotal role across the kura where they support tamariki, whānau, kaiako, and tumuaki. This cross kura focus supports high quality education opportunities in numerous ways. From working one on one with learners as they navigate their education journeys, through to supporting effective teacher practice with resources and specialist knowledge. Evidence shows Kaiāwhina adapt their skills and approach to respond to the needs of the classroom and learners. We believe further inquiry may be required to fully understand this role, responsibilities, best practice and how success may be transferred into other settings.

Consequently, we recommend:

- **Strengthening career and development pathways for kaiāwhina.** We found many kura rely heavily on kaiāwhina for te reo me ona tikanga Māori and mātauranga Māori knowledge and expertise. The knowledge kaiāwhina have and share ensures tamariki are afforded rich learning experiences. Although these skills are useful, kaiāwhina filling this role indicates shortages in the pool of kaiako with requisite skill sets in these areas. Currently, Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa, and Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa have designed pathways with tertiary education providers to deliver a Bachelor of Teaching programme that kaiāwhina have access to. However, despite encouragement this is currently not being extensively utilised by kaiāwhina. In this research there was a desire to ‘grow their own’ and one kura ERO spoke with shared their detailed processes for transitioning kaiāwhina towards achieving a teacher qualification.
- **Establishing and utilising fit-for-purpose programmes which support kaiāwhina in the development of teaching and classroom practices.** Programmes should be created using insight from, or a co-developed approach with kaiāwhina and kura. This will ensure that the resulting programmes align to the reality of practice, workload, and skill set required in the classroom.
- **Strongly promoting and supporting clear pathways for kaiāwhina to progress into fully recognised kaiako roles.** As kaiāwhina are seen as integral to kura, their communities, whānau and tamariki, providing them with learning, pathways that support them to learn and continue to serve the kura, is mutually beneficial.
- **Clarifying LAT policy to ensure equitable application of LAT, ensuring where needed kura can expedite verification** should those kaiāwhina who are fulfilling substantial language teaching, tikanga and a matauranga Maori roles be employed in a teacher aide capacity or be classified in LAT roles. LAT’s can be used to ensure kaiāwhina can teach at the required level in the classroom. A LAT will also ensure kaiāwhina pay reflects their mahi. There are situations where there are shortages of kaiako with requisite skills including te reo me ona tikanga Māori and mātauranga Māori. Shortages are forecast to remain the situation for some time. The LAT policy should be adapted to ensure kaiāwhina can access LAT quickly, and/or for a longer period. Doing so would also ensure that teaching continues with an educator who aligns to the kura; with the required deep understanding of the philosophical underpinnings, and whānau, hapū and iwi aspirations.

- Given the nature of the expertise that many kaiāwhina bring in to their kura, **address current differentials between primary and secondary LAT pay scale for these roles.** Current differentials lead to substantial inequality between those who may be fulfilling such roles between primary schools/kura with secondary school/whare kura.
- **The kaiāwhina role be accurately reflected within teacher aide pay equity work matrix.** The matrix enables kaiāwhina to expand their pay, in line with their mahi. Currently, kaiāwhina practice and their contribution does not always align well with the matrix. Examples include verifying the te reo Māori language proficiency of kaiāwhina - the matrix does not recognise Te Reo Rangatira Level 3. In another example, the need for kaiāwhina “to support immersion in at least two cultures and provides leadership across cultural boundaries” would restrict them from being placed within grade D of the matrix, given they work ostensibly in a kaupapa Māori and Te Reo Māori setting.
- **Ensuring PLD experiences that align to kura, and kaiāwhina practice.** In October 2020, The Ministry noted that with any future curriculum developments it is imperative that a robust and responsive PLD strategy be developed to enable kura to access “the support they need when they need it”. Conversations with kaiāwhina, kaiako and tumuaki in **Ringa Rehe** supported this view. PLD in specialist areas needs to better reflect the realities and unique nature of Kaupapa Māori settings, and the role kaiāwhina play in these settings. PLD would likely benefit from being produced in collaboration with those the learning opportunity seeks to serve, such as Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa, and Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa.
- **A national programme to capture and develop resources which reflect the mahi kaiāwhina and kiako undertake in the classroom is put in place.** Kaiāwhina we spoke to in **Ringa Rehe**, told us they spend a large amount of time translating and designing resources for their kura. ERO agrees with the view of The Ministry that significant resource investment is needed in kura kaupapa Māori. Existing research notes English-medium (educators) can default to a ‘enormous corpus’ of existing resources that define the norms for support, but these resources do not exist in Māori medium settings (Stewart, et al., 2017).
- **Further building the kaiāwhina evidence base.** As part of completing this research, ERO looked at existing information around the experiences of, and practice of kaiāwhina in kura. As demonstrated in **Ringa Rehe**, the kaiāwhina role is relatively unique and reflects the context and distinctive needs of kura and whare kura. **Ringa Rehe** provides a base for which further inquiry can be created; and by publishing this research we hope other researchers work with Kaupapa Māori, kaiāwhina, whānau, hapū and iwi to further strengthen these roles, through:
 - building fuller understanding of the role
 - enabling good practice to be shared.
- **Areas for inquiry include:**
 - longitudinal research looking at the number/experiences of kaiāwhina moving into Kaiako roles
 - investigation of good practice across a larger sample size of kura
 - inquiry into the role kaiāwhina play in the revitalisation of te reo Māori and mātauranga Māori
 - examination of paradigm specific kaiāwhina practice.

Report Glossary

Aotearoa	New Zealand
aroha	love
hapū	sub-tribe
hautipua	talented
hui	meetings
Ira nō tua	term used by Te Aho Matua
iwi	extended kinship group
kai	food
Kaiako	teacher
Kaiāwhina	teacher aide
kāinga	home
kaitāwharau	protector
kaupapa	initiative
korowai	cloak
kura	school
mahi	work
Māmā	Mother
mana	authority
Mana motuhake	sovereignty
Manu pīrere	graduates of Ngā Kura ā Iwi
Māori	indigenous people of Aotearoa, New Zealand
Maramataka	the Māori lunar calendar
mātauranga	knowledge
piiori	students at Te Wharekura o Maniapoto
Raukura	graduates of Kura Aho Matua
Reo Māori	Māori language
Ringa Rehe	Hands of many talents
taiao	environment
tamaiti	child
tamariki	children
taonga	treasure
tauirā	student
Te Ao Māori	Māori worldview
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi
Tikanga Māori	Māori customs
Tino rangatiratanga	autonomy
Tumuaki	principal
wānanga	series of discussions
whakapapa	genealogy
whakawhanaungatanga	process of establishing relationships, relating well to others.
Whānau	family

Quote translations

Pg 15	“ka nui ngā momo ō te kaiāwhina, he kaitiaki mō ngā tamariki motuhake.”	“Kaiāwhina have many attributes, they take care of our children.”
Pg 17	“Ka haere ki te whakangungu me ngā kaiāwhina.”	“Our special education needs coordinator supports and provides professional learning development for teacher aides.”
	“He karu he taringa anō ki te akomanga.”	“Another set of eyes and ears in the classroom.”
Pg 19	“Ka whai wāhi ngā whānau ki te kōrero mō ngā kaiāwhina me ngā kaiako, ngā kitenga me ngā hua i puta.”	“Whānau are given the opportunity to discuss outcomes with Kaiāwhina and Kaiako.”
	“Ka tohaina te kaiāwhina i waenga i a māua.”	“Kaiāwhina alternate between us all.”
	“Kāore he maha ngā rauemi Māori, kāore i tino whai māramatanga nā te reo Pākeha.”	“There were no resources in Māori, and I could not understand the english versions.”
Pg 20	“I tīmata hei kairīwhi. Katahi ka whai tūranga hei kaiāwhina nā te īnoi a te tumuaki.”	“I started as a reliever. The tumuaki requested that I apply to become a kaiāwhina.”
	“Nō te whānau te katoa o ngā kaiāwhina.”	“Our kaiāwhina are whānau.”
Pg 24	“I ngā tau ō mua ko te tautoko mai i ngā whanonga.”	“In previous years, we have had to strategise.”
	“Katahi kia matapaki kōrero me pēhea tātou e tiaki, e awhina ngā tamariki me te kaiāwhina.”	“We are always discussing with Kaiāwhina how we can foster and nurture our tamariki.”
	“He kaiāwhina mō ngā kaiako katoa.”	“A Kaiāwhina working alongside every Kaiako.”
	“He karu, he taringa, he ringa, he waha kōrero hei tautoko i ngā take me ngā whakaakoranga a te kaiako.”	“Another pair of eyes, ears and hands, a Communicator to assist the Kaiako during lessons.”
Pg 25	“Kei te whakatupu mātou i a mātou ake kaiāwhina.”	“We continue to grow our own Kaiāwhina.”
Pg 26	“Era atu whakangungu, kāre he hua, he pākeha katoa.”	“I found it difficult to relate to mainstream professional learning development courses.”

Pg 27	“He kura hei kāinga, he kāinga hei kura.”	“...the kura is their home.”
Pg 28	“Aroha ki te tamaiti, poipoi i te wairua, tiaki tuakiri.”	“Love the child, nurture their spirit, and protect their identity.”
	“Ka koa rawa i te taha o kaiāwhina. Ka kite i tōna kanohi, ona emotions.”	“I am happy to see kaiāwhina, as they are always happy to see me – I see it.”
	“E āhei ana te kōrero ki a ia mō ngā āhuatanga o te kāenga me ngā raru o te papatākaro.”	“I cant talk to them about everything – whats happening at home or issues in the playground.”
	“Te āwhina ia kia pai ake tōnā roro.”	“They help to stimulate the mind.”





Appendices

Questions used in evaluation

We asked kaiāwhina:

- › What made you apply for this role?

- › How were you inducted into your role as a kaiāwhina?

- › How is your role organised, and who does the organising?

- › What does a day in a life of a kaiāwhina at your school look like?
What are the variables?

- › What do you think is good practice – share some of your own practices and experiences.

- › What are the highlights of your work as a kaiāwhina?

- › What are the challenges?

- › How well resourced are you to carry out your role as a kaiāwhina?

- › What PLD have you had? Was it useful? Why or why not? What PLD do you think you need?

- › If you were responsible for kaiāwhina, what would this look like?

We asked whānau:

- › Tell us about your story, how are you and your whānau connected to kaiāwhina in this school.

- › Thinking about the kaiāwhina that works with your tamaiti?

- › Who decides if your tamaiti needs a kaiāwhina and do the kura talk to you about this first?

- › Do you get to choose the kaiāwhina that works with your child? If you could what qualities would you be looking for in a kaiāwhina and why?

- › How are the kaiāwhina organised to work with your tamaiti?

- › How much do you and your whanau know about the role of the kaiāwhina in your kura?

- › Thinking about the kaiāwhina that works with your tamaiti

- › What are the skills and qualities do you think they have /would you look for?

- › How have they ensure worked effectively with your tamaiti? Share some experiences with us.

- › Tell us about an experience when kaimahi have made a positive difference to the life of your tamaiti?

- › How does the kaiāwhina support you as a whānau?

- › Is there anything else you need?

- › Anything else you think is important to share about kaiāwhina in your school?

We asked these questions to open conversation about the qualities of kaiāwhina, the role of kaiāwhina and whānau interactions with kaiāwhina. These questions were also designed to illuminate perceptions of what good practice is and how kaiāwhina practice impacts tamaiti.

We asked Tamaiti:

› Who are the kaimahi at school that help you with your learning?

› Tell us about her/him? What does he or she do?

› What is your favourite thing about working with kaiāwhina?

› Can you tell us about some mahi that you have done with kaiāwhina that you really enjoyed?

We asked these questions to open conversation about the role of kaiāwhina, the impact of their role on tamaiti, and the kind of interactions tamaiti view as positive or impactful.

We asked tumuaki:

› What does Kaiāwhina mean to this kura?

› How do you determine where a kaiāwhina is needed in your kura?

› Who organises the everyday functions of these roles? What works well? What would you do differently?

› What is the role of the kaiāwhina?

› Can you share examples of effective practice of kaiāwhina in your kura?

› How well resourced is the kaiāwhina to carry out her role effectively?

› How do you determine what PLD is required for your kaiāwhina?

› What PLD has kaiāwhina undertaken?

› Was it useful?

We asked these questions to open conversation about the role of kaiāwhina, their impact on the wider Kura Kaupapa Māori, support, leadership, and management.

Collaboration and connections underpinning this report

How Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa and ERO work together

Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa and ERO established a working relationship in 2000, underpinned by a shared commitment to students who attend TAM Kura Kaupapa Māori.

Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa and ERO formally documented and then began the full implementation of a jointly developed review and evaluation methodology for use in TAM Kura Kaupapa Māori (2008) and the development of the complementary approach to evaluation and specifically the differentiated review (2009).

How Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa and ERO work together

Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa and ERO established a working relationship in 2014 acknowledging the shared commitment to students who attend Kura ā Iwi. The relationship acknowledges the shared commitment to students who attend Kura ā Iwi. Together, ERO and Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa have worked to develop indigenous review and evaluation methodology that reflects the ‘special character’ of Kura ā Iwi and supports the aspirations of both Ngā Kura a Iwi o Aotearoa and iwi.

About Kaupapa Māori education

Kaupapa Māori education is an alternative to the English medium system built on the dedication of leaders, kaiako, whānau, hapū, iwi and the wider community who support every aspect of its success.

“Kaupapa Māori theory is drawn from Māori ways of knowing and being and assumes the normalcy of Māori knowledge, language, and culture. It gives voice to Māori aspirations and expresses the way in which Māori aspirations, ideas and learning practices can be framed and organised. The implementation of kaupapa Māori theory emphasises practices that enable Māori to achieve educational success as Māori. At its core is the retention of the Māori language and culture, which provides a foundation for positive transformations and brings about educational, social, and economic advancement.” (Ministry of Education, 2017, p.14)

We know that insights about what works for Māori in and across kaupapa Māori provision, builds education research, captures good practice while influencing improvement more broadly, across the system.

Kaupapa Māori education has been more explicitly acknowledged as a distinct education provision during 2022, with the formal establishment of Te Matakāhuki (*representing Te Rūnanga Nui O Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori, Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust, Ngā Kura ā Iwi and Te Tauihu o Ngā Wānanga*).

The New Zealand Education Institute Te Riu Roa

NZEI Te Riu Roa is the union of more than 46,000 principals, teachers and support staff and specialist staff working in primary, area and secondary schools, early childhood centres, learning support and school advisory services.

The NZEI Te Riu Roa vision is to be the most powerful education union in New Zealand. With a mission to advocate for a strong, vibrant, and well-resourced public education system where all tamariki can reach their full potential.

The Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education is the Government's lead advisor on New Zealand's education system. The Ministry shapes direction for education agencies and providers and contribute to the Government's goals for education.

The Education Review office

The Education Review office is the New Zealand Government's external evaluation agency that informs and facilitates improvement in early learning services, kōhanga reo, puna kōhungahunga, kura and schools.

Te Pou Mataaho | Evaluation and Research Māori

Te Pou Mataaho is ERO's Evaluation and Research Māori group. This group undertakes evaluation and research and provides specialist kaupapa Māori expertise. There is always a focus on providing national insights to foster improvement, advance and grow the evidence base, delivering a work programme that examines and builds on quality and the value of education provision for Māori learners.

In this research, Te Pou Mataaho builds upon the research base it has created with Rūnanganui and Kura a Iwi which began in 2021 with the creation of *Te Kura Huanui, The treasures of successful pathways (June 2021)*.

In the production of **Ringa Rehe**, Te Pou Mataaho collaborated with Te Uepū ā-Motu the evaluation and review group within ERO responsible for working with education providers across the Māori-medium paradigm.

ERO's Te Ihuwaka | Education Evaluation Centre

Te Ihuwaka is ERO's Education and Evaluation Centre. This centre evaluates the performance of the education system, the effectiveness of programmes and interventions, and shine a light on good practice.

As noted, ERO has found research relating to teacher aide experiences in Aotearoa has been limited. In 2022 Ihuwaka released its national report, **Working Together: How Teacher Aides Can Have the Most Impact**.

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TE TARI AROTAKE MĀTAURANGA
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