

The Cook Islands Curriculum

Te Kōpapa Kura Āpi`i o te Kūki `Airani

The Cook Islands Curriculum is the official policy for learning, teaching, and assessment in Cook Islands schools. It is set out in this document, and in a series of supporting statements, curriculum, and professional development materials.

The Cook Islands Curriculum sets out national directions for schooling consistent with achieving the goal of education in the Cook Islands, which is

“...to build the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values of its people to ensure the sustainability of the language and culture of the Cook Islands, and its economic growth, and to enable the people of the Cook Islands to put their capabilities to best use in all areas of their lives.”¹

The Cook Islands Curriculum describes a framework for learning and assessment that produces a broad and balanced education. The great majority of students will spend twelve years of their lives in school. It is important that during this time, they develop the essential skills and knowledge to cope effectively with the opportunities and challenges, which they meet, both now, as young people, and in future, as adults.

It recognises that all students should have the opportunity to develop essential skills through study in essential areas of learning. This would enable them to develop their capabilities to engage in life long learning, and to participate effectively in the communities in which they live and work.

The Cook Islands Curriculum seeks to improve the achievement levels of students through quality learning and teaching programmes in Cook Islands schools. It provides a structure around which schools can build those educational programmes to suit the needs of their students, and to respond to changes in society. It requires the schools to provide learning opportunities that are enriching, enjoyable and challenging.

The Cook Islands Curriculum recognises and promotes links with the home and the wider community. It builds upon the early childhood learning experiences, and creates pathways to post-secondary education and training opportunities.

The Cook Islands Curriculum applies to:

- all schools in the Cook Islands, both government and private schools;
- all students regardless of gender, ethnic group, religion, location, background, ability or disability;
- all years of schooling, from early childhood to the completion of secondary school.²

¹ Taken from Cook Islands Education Guidelines

² Although compulsory school age is 5 to 15 years, the Cook Islands Curriculum applies to learning programmes beyond 15 years and until Form 7.

The Setting

Te 'Akano'o'anga

The Cook Islands Curriculum builds upon the positive features of Cook Islands traditional and modern democratic society, having regard for, and appreciation of the historical, geographical, demographic, spiritual and economic impact upon all aspects of education particularly the delivery of curriculum in Cook Islands schools.

The Cook Islands Curriculum recognises the past curriculum development experiences as a response to perceived needs of the time. It draws from that experience, as well as the policy statements and the findings of recent education reviews, as it responds to the changing needs of Cook Islands society and economy. The Cook Islands Curriculum seeks to develop students with a strong Cook Islands identity and the ability to play a full part in their communities.

The Framework

Te 'Akapā'anga

The Cook Islands Curriculum Framework identifies the elements that are fundamental to learning and teaching in Cook Islands schools. It establishes the principles that give direction to learning and teaching. It identifies eight essential areas of learning and sets out the essential skills to be developed by all students. It reflects and reinforces the values and attitudes that underpin Cook Islands society. The Framework outlines the policy for assessment at school and national levels. It gives direction to the development of national curriculum statements that define in greater detail the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for each essential learning area. It recognises and builds upon the learning foundations of early childhood education. The Framework encourages and endorses school-home-community partnerships that enhance learning and teaching, which contribute to high achievement levels.

The interconnectedness of these elements in all phases of schooling from early childhood to upper secondary is portrayed in *The Tree of Learning* (Figure 1). The Tree is an appropriate representation for the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework³. The Tree symbolises the Cook Islands people's close connection and affinity with nature and the land, their bond to spiritual beliefs, and their relationship to economic well-being.

The soil represents Cook Islands society, the home and village environment, traditions and customs, cultural and spiritual beliefs and values. It provides the medium for the roots of the tree to grow. The roots represent those values and attitudes that need to be developed and nurtured in children at an early age. Hence, this part of the tree equates to the early childhood education programme where the focus is on developing positive attitudes towards identity, involvement and inquiry in an environment that is closely linked to the home and the community. An important part of this link is the active participation of parents and caregivers in the centres. The early childhood education programme lays the foundation for later learning, gradually exposing children to some knowledge content of essential learning areas, in an environment that is both supportive and challenging.

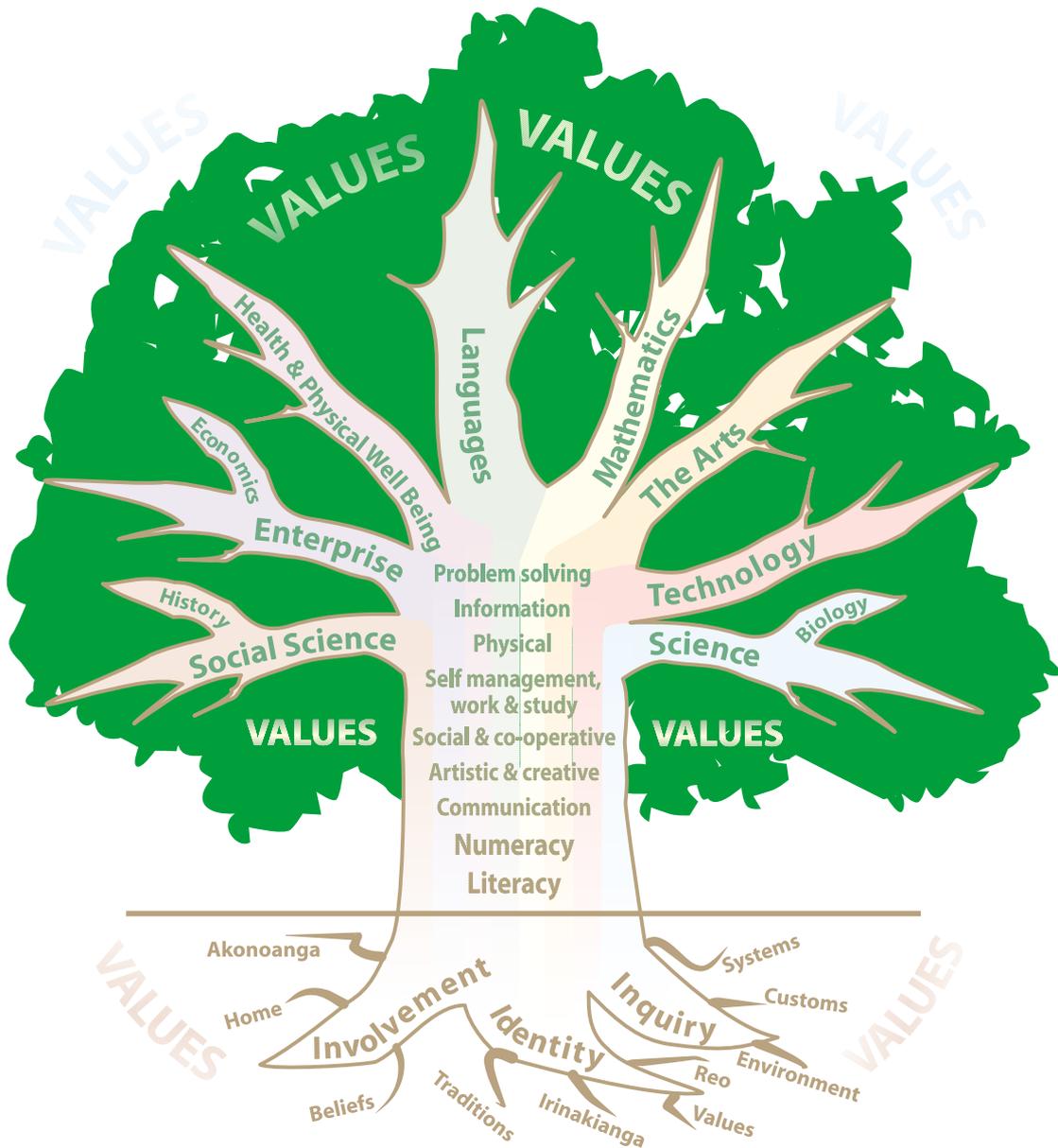
The trunk of the tree represents the essential skills that are set out in the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework. This part of the tree equates to early and middle primary education, where the particular emphasis will be given to developing literacy and numeracy. Consequently, there will be an increase in the knowledge content of essential learning areas for this level of education, for they provide the context within which the skills are to be developed. They underscore the importance of linkages and integration across all learning areas.

³ This portrayal has been adapted and developed for the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework after the concept of the *Tree of Opportunity* put forward by the Colloquium for Rethinking Pacific Education conducted by IOE, USP in association with Victoria University, Wellington.

Fig 1: Cook Islands Curriculum Framework: *The Tree of Learning*

*“E tau a i a ki te rākau i tanumia ki te pae kauvai ra
 Ko tei ‘ua i tona ra tuataw tikai,
 ē ko tei kore roa i mae tona rau;
 ko tana katoa e rave ra, te meitaki ra ia.”*

*“He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water
 That brings forth its fruit in its season,
 Whose leaf also shall not wither
 And whatever he does shall prosper.”*



The branches represent the eight essential learning areas that provide a broad and balanced education. There are eight main branches with languages being the central one. Sub branches of the tree represent specialisations within the essential learning areas that may occur at upper secondary school level. Hence, this part of the tree equates to late primary and secondary school education.

The Cook Islands Curriculum Framework recognises that Cook Islands society undergoes change, and internal and external forces influence its values and practices. Values in the soil are those shared values of the Cook Islands that our children need to know, to have and to experience from an early age. They include honesty (tuatua tika), integrity (tiratiratû), charity (ngakau öronga) and love ('inangaro). Values in the air around the tree represent those that will come from outside our nation that will impact on behaviour and practice in our society. Values in the foliage of the tree represent values that are inherent in the learning areas themselves.

The *Tree of Learning* brings all of these components together, depicting unity in all phases of education and schooling. The Tree denotes learning as living and on-going. It recognises and supports continuity and consistency in schooling, and promotes an integrated and holistic approach to planning and implementing curriculum.

The *Tree of Learning* is firmly rooted in Cook Islands society and culture, its trunk strengthened by the skills, and its branches and leaves providing the learning areas and contexts for the children to learn, to grow, to prosper and to bear good fruit in time.

In this document,

The Cook Islands Curriculum consists of a set of national curriculum statements, which set out the principles and achievement aims, and objectives that all schools in the Cook Islands are required to follow.

The **school curriculum** consists of the ways in which the school plans to implement the policy set out in the national curriculum statements. It will have regard for students' needs, the local community's aspirations, and resources. It will be developed in consultation with the parents and the community.

The Principles

‘Akakoro’anga Tumu

*“Mou i te ko, Mou i te ‘ere,
 Kia pūkuru o vaevae, kia mokorā o kaki”
 “Take hold of the planting stick, Take hold of the tether
 So your feet will stand firm, and your neck will be strong.”*

The words of our ancestors speak to the student who is at the centre of all learning and teaching about things that are of value, and of skills and attitudes that are of worth. The words of the wise counsel the student to **stand firm, stand tall and be aware**. They urge the student to work in order to survive, mindful of traditional ways, while being alert to modern ways and practices. These words encapsulate the principles that underpin learning and teaching in Cook Islands schools. It is grounded in a view of learning as a process of exploring and constructing new understandings through relating new ideas to previous experience and knowledge of earlier times.

The principles give direction to the national curriculum, while ensuring that differences in school context and environment are recognised and addressed. All schools are required to express the principles in their learning and teaching programmes.

The Cook Islands Curriculum recognises that the formal school curriculum is one of a range of factors within and external to the school that influence learning. It accepts that learning in school cannot remain separate from the learning that occurs in the community. School programmes will be shaped by the experiences, aspirations, and values of the students. The values, attitudes and behaviour of teachers, parents and families will also impact upon those programmes, as will the changes and developments beyond the shores of the Cook Islands. The principles seek to ensure that school practices uphold the formal curriculum.

The Cook Islands Curriculum fosters achievement and success for all learners.

The school curriculum will provide learning opportunities and programmes to enable all students to achieve the learning outcomes to the best of their ability. Schools will provide teaching approaches, supported by high quality resources, that are appropriate to students’ abilities and aptitudes, and that challenge them to strive for their full potential in all fields of experience and endeavour.

The Cook Islands Curriculum reflects the unique nature of the Cook Islands including cultural and spiritual beliefs and values.

The school curriculum will acknowledge and value the special place that is the Cook Islands, and will give students the opportunity to learn about Cook Islands culture and language. It will ensure that Cook Islands cultural traditions, spiritual beliefs, histories and events are recognised and respected.

The Cook Islands Curriculum recognises the primary importance of language in the delivery of the curriculum. It promotes the use of an effective bilingual approach.

The school curriculum will promote the use of Cook Islands Maori and English languages for transmission of knowledge, values and culture, and for creating and fostering understanding of self, of others and of the world around us. It will provide students with the opportunity to be proficient and confident in communicating in Cook Islands Maori and English in a variety of situations. The school will use a bilingual approach that is responsive to the language profiles and learning needs of the students, and that will promote biliteracy.

The Cook Islands Curriculum encourages students to be life-long learners and to take responsibility for their own learning.

The school curriculum will provide programme content and teaching approaches that will give students enjoyment, satisfaction and a sense of achievement as they learn and so develop a keenness for life-long learning. It will develop in students the capacity to be independent learners.

The Cook Islands Curriculum promotes relevant, meaningful, and useful learning. It emphasises the need for students to have a broad and balanced education.

The school curriculum will offer learning programmes that build upon students' experiences, reinforce prior learning, cause reflection, encourage deliberation, challenge them to new knowledge and skills, and prepare them for future roles and responsibilities. It will give all students the opportunity for a broad and balanced education that supports cultural literacy as well as academic, technological and vocational knowledge and skills to live and work in the modern world. It will take cognisance of local conditions and situations as meaningful contexts for learning.

The Cook Islands Curriculum provides for a coherent progression of learning and enables that progress to be measured against clearly defined achievement objectives.

The school curriculum will provide opportunities that build upon students' previous learning experiences and ensure their readiness for new challenges and learning by monitoring their performance and progress against learning outcomes. The school curriculum will provide learning situations and experiences that will enable students to achieve their potential. Through appropriate reporting procedures, the school will inform students and parents of how students are progressing.

The Cook Islands Curriculum provides the flexibility to meet the needs of individual students, local conditions, and change.

The school curriculum will respond and be adaptable to the learning needs of students, to the particular requirements of the local community, to the changing social, economic and technological conditions in society, and the changing resource base and expectations of society.

The Cook Islands Curriculum recognises the importance of an integrated approach to learning.

The school curriculum will develop learning programmes that take account of and link with the foundations established through early childhood education and the home, and that connect with the post secondary education and training opportunities. It will make use of integrated approaches that foster linkages across the eight essential learning areas demonstrating the interconnectedness of learning. It will develop a collaborative approach to planning learning and teaching programmes that reinforce the collective responsibility for students' learning.

The Cook Islands Curriculum provides equity of educational opportunity, recognising that students have different ways of learning and learn different things at different rates.

The school curriculum will provide for the educational needs of all students regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity, social and economic backgrounds, location, abilities and disabilities. It will recognise and provide for the different learning paces and styles, and previous experiences of students. It will seek to identify and eliminate barriers to the provision of learning opportunities and their accessibility to students.

The Cook Islands Curriculum recognises the Cook Islands' place in the wider world including its special relationship with New Zealand and its role in the Pacific.

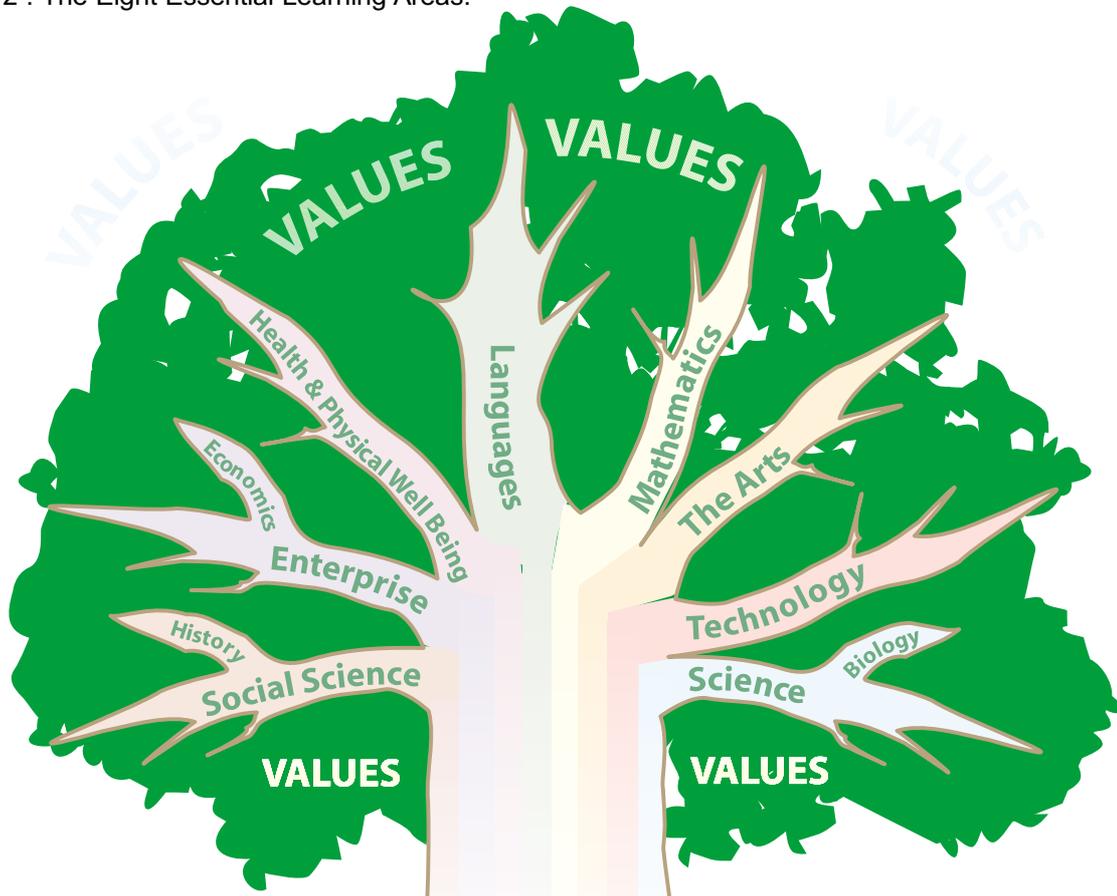
The school curriculum will acknowledge the place that Cook Islands have in the Pacific and world settings, and the range of relationships and interactions that the country has in those settings. In particular, it will acknowledge the special relationship that Cook Islands have with New Zealand.

The Essential Learning Areas

Tu'anga Āpi'i Pu'apinga

The Cook Islands Curriculum identifies eight essential learning areas, which provide a broad and balanced education.

Fig 2 : The Eight Essential Learning Areas.



The essential learning areas together form the body of knowledge and understanding that all students need to acquire, and provide the context within which the essential skills, attitudes and values are developed. Individual Curriculum Statements will guide learning and teaching in each of the eight essential learning areas and the skills, attitudes and values appropriate to each learning area. They will describe the linkages to the early childhood education programme to support the smooth transition to formal schooling. They will identify connections to career pathways and post secondary education and training.

Schools are to ensure that all students undertake courses of study in all the learning areas during the first ten years of schooling (that is, up to Form 4 or Year 10). Thereafter, schools are to maintain a balanced curriculum, while providing for the pursuit of courses for a range of qualifications, in preparation for future training and career pathways for students.

The essential learning areas are interrelated and any learning activity that students participate in will draw on more than one learning area. Students should be given opportunities to see the different connections between the learning areas. For example, some important areas of study such as the environment, conservation, culture and careers education are in a number of the essential learning areas. A study of 'raui' may focus primarily on science, but may also contribute to students' development in mathematics, social studies, language and cultural studies. Similarly, students should also be encouraged to appreciate the relationship between knowledge and values and skills.

The interconnectedness of learning areas needs to be understood and incorporated into the school programmes. This may be achieved by school-wide planning across the eight learning areas. It can also be seen through utilising a variety of approaches such as the integrated approach, the centre of interest, or the thematic approach.

Schools are to have regard for the needs of students and to have programmes that meet those needs, ensuring that the knowledge and understanding in all eight essential learning areas are incorporated into these programmes.

Schools are expected to continue to provide students at upper secondary level with a balanced curriculum that builds upon learning of earlier years. Programmes will enable students to be better prepared to make the transition to the work force, to take up further training and education, and to participate in the community that they live in.

Form 5 (Year 11) students will be required to undertake study in a minimum number of subjects, including designated core subjects. At Form 6 and Form 7 (Years 12 & 13), students will be offered a choice of courses that will lead them to further study, or to employment and training opportunities.

Language of Learning

Reo o te 'Āpi'i

Every teacher is a teacher of language.

The Cook Islands Curriculum recognises that the two major languages of the country fulfil important roles in the lives of the people of the Cook Islanders. Cook Islands Maori⁴ as the indigenous language of its people is the means by which cultural values, traditions and customs are expressed and communicated, and is vital for identity, while the English language as an international language is prevalent in business, industry, commerce and international transactions.

The development of both languages is therefore central to strengthening nationhood. The Cook Islands Curriculum supports this view and will facilitate bilingualism by providing the opportunities for all children to develop the ability and confidence to communicate in Cook Islands Maori and English across all learning areas.

The Cook Islands Curriculum recognises that language issues in the wider community impact on language development in schools. It acknowledges that schools alone cannot achieve the goal of bilingualism. That is a collective responsibility and requires commitment of all sectors of society. The commitment must come from a shared belief in the importance and value of both languages to the people and the nation.

The Cook Islands Curriculum supports bilingualism where high levels of proficiency in Cook Islands Maori and English are aspired to as a goal of language development and learning in schools. The aim is to add another language to the children's linguistic capacity at no cost to their first language. The Cook Islands Curriculum endorses the interdependence between languages that bilinguals use, and recognises that bilingual education done well impacts positively on academic achievement, as well as personal, social and cultural enrichment.

⁴ Cook Islands Maori refers to the two distinctive languages of the Cook Islands: Cook Islands Maori (that is a collective of every island dialect from Penrhyn to Mangaia) and Pukapukan.

The school will determine from a range of bilingual programmes the approach that will best provide the conditions for their students to achieve bilingualism. The choice will be largely guided by the language proficiencies of the students at entry to school, the language acquisition principles, and the linguistic context of the community. The focal point of language planning in education is the development of bilingual students, literate in Maori and English by Form 2 or Year 8. The Ministry of Education will provide guidance to the school and community in this regard.

The Cook Islands Curriculum promotes the high level of fluency that is achieved when the language being learnt also becomes a language of instruction for other essential learning areas. The school curriculum will have regard for this. It is acknowledged that development of materials, especially in Maori, will be required to effect this. The Ministry of Education will provide guidance in this regard.

The Cook Islands Curriculum acknowledges that positive attitudes of the principals and teachers, expectations of success by teachers, students and parents, along with implementation models based on modern research, and an environment rich in spoken and visual language will contribute towards high levels of bilingualism.

The statements that follow give a general outline of the knowledge content, and indicate some of the skills, values and attitudes that are relevant to each essential learning area.



**The
Essential
Learning
Areas**



Languages

Te Reo

Language plays a central role in human life. It is a vehicle for communication, a tool for thinking and creating, a means of making sense of the world in which we live, and a source of enjoyment. An understanding of language and the ability to use spoken and written language effectively, to read and to listen, to present and interpret information through the visual media, and to use language appropriate to sociocultural contexts, gives students access to knowledge, enables them to play an active part in society and contributes to their personal growth.

Language is a medium for transmitting values and culture. It is a vehicle through which children create world views, develop and express values, thoughts and understandings. Confidence and proficiency in one's first language contribute to self-esteem, personal and group identity, and achievement.

Through the learning programmes, students will have opportunities to strengthen and build confidence in their use of language for a range of situations, purposes, and audiences. They will have opportunities to observe, learn, and practise oral, written, visual and cultural forms of language, to learn about the structures and use of language, and to access and use information. Language and literacy learning will receive particular emphasis in the early years of schooling. The school curriculum will utilise a variety of approaches to language learning.

Students will have the opportunity to develop their ability to create and respond critically to a wide range of texts, including works of literature and examples from the media. In selecting text and literature, schools will have regard to gender balance, diversity of viewpoints, and to the inclusion of a range of cultural and historical perspectives, including the literary works of the Cook Islands and the Pacific.

The school curriculum will promote the use of non-discriminatory language, and will take account of the background, interests, experiences, values and capacities of all students. Schools will provide for students with special learning needs including those with hearing and speaking disabilities.

The Cook Islands Curriculum recognises the Cook Islands Maori and English as the two major languages in the Cook Islands. It promotes the learning and teaching of both languages as a means to strengthening nationhood and contributing to the country's social, cultural, spiritual and economic growth, and to personal growth.

Cook Islands Maori is the language of the indigenous people of the Cook Islands and is the essence of Maori identity. Without language, culture will cease to exist, for the loss of a language spells the loss of a culture. Language is the means by which the knowledge, ideas and values of the people are passed through the generations. The school curriculum will enable students to develop the ability and confidence to communicate competently in Maori in spoken, written, visual and cultural forms. Provisions will be made for students whose first language is not Cook Islands Maori.

English is the international language for much of the activities in modern Cook Islands society, particularly in commerce, technology, science and industry. The school curriculum will enable students to be competent users of English in all its forms to enable them to participate successfully in society and to access opportunities for personal growth and national development. For the majority of students, English will be a second language.

There will be opportunities for students to develop functional proficiencies in international languages that may provide significant opportunities for employment, and enhance social interactions and diplomatic relations. This will be dependent on availability of resources.

Language is integral to learning in all the essential learning areas. Students can apply their language skills to the specialised demands of other learning areas. Language learning and development can occur and be further enhanced within the contexts of other learning areas.

Mathematics

Mātemātika

Everyone needs to learn Mathematics. It is valuable to us individually and as a group. In the Cook Islands, as in the rest of the world, Mathematics is needed in almost every aspect of everyday life and is essential in most areas of employment. An appreciation of symmetry and patterns will help a person lay out a *tivaevae* design, create a carving, or arrange a dance. An understanding of measurement and an appreciation of space will help a new homeowner plan a house and set out a garden. Basic number skills are needed to manage a family budget. An understanding of Mathematics helps people to develop logical approaches to procedures and arguments. A feeling for Mathematics helps people appreciate symmetry and patterns in the world around them.

Mathematics involves developing an appreciation of order and structure in the world around us, communicating ideas about it, and using specific language and skills.

Mathematics learning develops the ability to calculate, to estimate, to interpret and to reason logically. Problem solving is central to mathematical activity. Mathematical problem solving involves selecting and applying basic skills, discovering working with patterns of shape and number, making models, interpreting data, and recognising and communicating related ideas. The solution of mathematical problems requires creativity as well as a systematic approach. Creativity in problem solving plays a major role in innovation, invention, and scientific and technical discovery.

The school curriculum will provide opportunities for all students to be actively engaged in mathematics learning, to be challenged with new mathematical experiences and risk-taking, and to be persistent in their efforts. It will encourage them to be enquiring, systematic, creative, resourceful, self-reliant, and persevering.

The school curriculum will develop in students the confidence and competence in the use of number, and will develop the skills of measurement, construction, and spatial interpretation. The students will learn to collect, organise, record and interpret data, to use apparatus and appropriate technology, to generalise from patterns and relationships, and to think abstractly. They will learn to solve problems in a wide variety of relevant and meaningful contexts, and in doing so develop their logical and reasoning skills and their ability to communicate mathematical ideas to others.

As students progress in their study they will see the relevance of mathematics to their lives. Through the school learning and teaching programmes, the students will be able to connect new mathematical skills and concepts with existing knowledge and skills, and with previous experiences. They will learn of the relevance and use of mathematics in cultural settings and customs, and in the day-to-day lives and works of their ancestors. They will be able to apply their mathematics learning at home, at work and in every part of their lives.

Mathematics is found in many subjects of the school curriculum, wherever there is a need for calculation or estimation, quantitative research, measurement, decision-making, or precise communication through symbols or graphs. On the one hand, Mathematics learning contributes to or is required for learning and achievement in most other learning areas of science, technology, social science, health and physical well-being, enterprise, the arts, and languages. On the other, while the major responsibility for developing numeracy skills in students lies with Mathematics, all other essential learning areas contribute to numeracy development by providing a range of contexts and settings within which students are expected to use their mathematics.

Enterprise

Kimi'anga Pu'apinga

Enterprise recognises that all students are active participants in an economic and social environment that is rapidly changing and that constantly demands new ways of doing things, new solutions to problems, and a willingness to meet challenges. Enterprise involves the development and application of skills and attitudes that enable students to respond to and be involved in social and economic activities and changes.

In the Cook Islands, the activity may be in the marine sector, (fishing or pearl farming), the agriculture sector, (growing and marketing vegetables, pawpaws, nono, pigs, poultries), managing or working private businesses (accounting, banking, retail, wholesale, offshore banking and trust companies), operating or working in a tourist-related venture (accommodation, vehicle rental, sightseeing tours, café or restaurant), self employment opportunities (in art, carving, clothing and garment industry), organising and managing a community group for sports, church, youth, growers, women or cultural entertainment.

Enterprise as a learning area focuses on encouraging Cook Islands students to become active participants in activities that contribute to the social, economic, cultural and spiritual development of their nation. This is a life-long process that begins when children first start handling money, making plans, organising and managing time, working on projects, interacting with others, and making decisions. This learning is essential in the Cook Islands to provide its young people with the opportunity during their schooling to develop the capacity, resourcefulness and willingness to shape their own future and to fulfil their role as responsible and productive citizens.

Through enterprise, the school curriculum will provide opportunities for students to develop an enterprising ethos in which initiative, innovation, resourcefulness, responsibility, hard work, adaptability and entrepreneurship are practised and promoted. Students will have the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in finance, organisation and management, and a broad range of vocational skills. They will be challenged to develop the ability, imagination and desire to create or carry out new projects and activities, to seek new ways of doing things, and to develop the knowledge and skills of enterprise and business activity. In this way, students will enhance their critical thinking and creative abilities, as well as their capacity to work collaboratively and in a team.

Enterprise acknowledges the close relationship between the school, the workplace, and the wider community. The school curriculum will provide students with opportunities to develop and practise the skills, knowledge, behaviours and attitudes that enable them to effectively make the transition between each of these settings. The school curriculum will utilise different contexts of the workplace and the community as part of the programme content for the enterprise learning area. Students will be encouraged to identify and pursue specific work-related goals, and develop the necessary skills, knowledge and attitude.

Enterprise has strong links to other areas of learning, building on the knowledge and skills developed in, for example, mathematics, science, languages, technology and social science, in a practical economic context. Subjects and programmes, which contribute to this area of learning, include accounting, economics, business studies, tourism and hospitality, and careers education.

Health and Physical Well-being

Ora'anga ē te Tupu'anga Meitaki

Health and Physical Well-being embraces the physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions of an individual's growth and development. It is an important factor in the academic development and achievement of students.

Cook Islands society is experiencing change in all aspects including work and leisure activities, sports and physical activities, dietary patterns, family lifestyles and structures and roles, health care and health practices. All these either singularly or collectively impact on the health and physical well-being of the people. They have an important bearing on the national image, and on the magnitude and cost of the government's social responsibility towards its people.

This area of learning is therefore important in empowering students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to make rational, informed decisions about their own health and the importance of developing lifelong patterns of physical activities. It builds their confidence in their physical abilities and capabilities, in taking responsibility for achieving and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, with the added potential of having a positive impact on the lifestyle of others. It enables students to make decisions to avoid physical injury and to reduce threats to their health and physical well-being.

Through health education, the school curriculum will provide opportunities for students to set realistic and worthwhile personal goals as part of achieving and maintaining healthy patterns of living. Students will develop the skills to participate in a wide range of social activities, and to build responsible and satisfying relationships with people. They will be encouraged to develop personal responsibility and judgment in matters of values and ethical standards relating to healthy lifestyles. The school programmes will develop interpersonal skills in students to enable them to act responsibly in challenging and conflict situations, and in times of personal stress and social pressure.

Through physical education, opportunities will be provided for students to participate in a range of individual and team activities. Such activities will improve the students' physical skills and fitness and develop a wide range of motor skills. Students will learn the importance of disciplined training, competition, and teamwork. They will have opportunities to face challenges, and to find satisfaction in recreation, relaxation, and personal fitness.

The school programmes in this learning area will be appropriate and inclusive, not restricted by gender or student's ability or disability. The school will utilise resources and facilities within the community as a means of encouraging support for the school. Cook Islands cultural perspectives, related customs and practices will be taken into account.

Although this area of learning has relevance to the whole school curriculum, the two subjects of health education and physical education have major responsibility for developing associated knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes. Health education incorporates nutrition, drug education, family life education, personal hygiene, interpersonal skills, community and environmental health. Physical education includes dance, movement, sports, and physical recreation. Other subjects and activities, which contribute to this area of learning, include home economics, social studies, drama, mathematics, languages and science.

Science

Tāieni

Science is investigating and making sense of our world. It is an area of learning through which people investigate the living, material, and physical features of their environment, and make sense of them in logical and creative ways. It helps people to investigate phenomena systematically, to clarify ideas, to ask questions, to test science explanations through measurement and observation, and to use their findings to establish how good their ideas are. Knowledge of science enables people to appreciate the systems and processes that support life in our world, and to adopt a responsible role in using science in their lives.

Students will develop their understanding of the changing nature of science, and the values and assumptions on which it rests. They will recognise that people from different backgrounds and cultures have different ways of experiencing and interpreting their environment. These diverse perspectives and worldviews are to be respected for their contribution to the progress of science. The school curriculum will recognise and explore the Cook Islands traditional knowledge about the natural and physical worlds.

Students will learn that scientific understanding progresses through disciplined observation and careful analysis, and is built on existing knowledge and experience. Education in science will help students to develop the attitudes on which scientific investigation depends. These will include curiosity, perseverance, flexibility, open-mindedness, honesty in recording data, willingness to accept uncertainty and an acceptance of the condition nature of scientific explanation. The development of such attitudes will lead students towards investigation through focusing, planning, gathering information, interpreting and processing data and reporting on their findings.

Creative thinking also plays a major role in advancing scientific understanding. Students will learn about the ways people have used scientific knowledge and methods to meet particular needs. The students will gain an understanding of how the changing world of science has brought about changes in the way of life for people in the Cook Islands. They will examine the influence of science on the lives of people of different gender, cultures, and backgrounds.

Studies of the environment are an important part of this area of learning. Students will be given the opportunity to explore environmental issues that are important to their community, to the Cook Islands, to the Pacific, to the wider world, and to future generations. They will learn how and why people conserve and modify their environment. They will develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to make responsible decisions about the protection and wise use of local, national, and global resources and environments. Students will examine decisions about the use of resources, considering their effects on different groups, and the ethical questions and values underlying these decisions.

Learning in science will enable students to contribute to informed decision-making in scientific developments, the application of scientific ideas, and the issues affecting the Cook Islands environment. It will develop their appreciation of the world they live in. It will foster their ability to be curious and to investigate.

Science has strong links to the essential learning areas of technology and mathematics. Subjects that contribute to this area of learning include science, biology, chemistry, physics, geography, and earth sciences, and applied studies such as agriculture, marine studies, environmental studies and horticulture.

Social Science

Ora'anga 'Iti-tangata

Social Science is the study of people as social beings, and how they live and work together.

Through social science, students develop a better understanding of themselves, their culture and heritage, and of the wider community that will enable them to take their place within Cook Islands society as confident, informed, and responsible citizens.

Through the social sciences, students will develop the knowledge and understanding of how and why people live together, interact with and within their environment, manage resources, and create systems and institutions to meet their physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs. They will understand that these relationships, interactions, systems and institutions may change over time.

The social science learning area will place an emphasis on learning about Cook Islands society. This will include an understanding of the migration, settlement, life, interaction and interrelationships of people within the Cook Islands. It will provide opportunities to study the ways that people have adapted to the environment over time, and explore appropriate responses for future sustainability. Societies having close relationships with the Cook Islands such as communities of the South Pacific, New Zealand, Australia and Asia will provide other important settings for studies. The social science learning area will help students appreciate the place of the Cook Islands in the international environment, and reflect on relevant global issues.

Students will be helped to understand their roles and responsibilities as individuals and as members of families, villages, community and island groups, and as citizens in a democratic society. They will be challenged to think clearly and critically about human behaviour, and to explore different values and viewpoints. Such learning will help them to clarify their own values, to make informed judgments, and to act responsibly. The learning experiences should help students observe and practise the actual processes, skills and values expected of them.

Students will develop a wide range of general and specific skills including literacy skills, critical and creative thinking, communication, and social participation.

Students will learn about the impact of change and development on people's lives in various contexts and times. They will examine the events, beliefs, and forces that have changed, as well as preserved, aspects of our world. They will explore the influence and contribution of groups or individuals, both women and men, on a community or society. Students will study Cook Islands history as one context.

The school curriculum will provide students with opportunities to gain understanding of the relationship or interdependence between people and place. By studying local and global examples, students will appreciate that interactions differ from place to place, from people to people, and from time to time. Students will explore how people make decisions about, and manage or mismanage resources. Students will recognise the importance of caring for the environment and will demonstrate their commitment through appropriate behaviour.

Social Science has links to all other learning areas. Its content area provides meaningful contexts for the enhancement of learning in languages and culture, mathematics, science, enterprise, technology, the arts, health and physical well being. The skills and values that are being developed in social science are further enhanced in other learning areas as well. Subjects that contribute to this area of learning include social studies, history and geography.

Technology

Tekinorotī

Technology is a planned process of applying knowledge, skills and resources to satisfy needs that arise in everyday life, create solutions to opportunities, and extend capabilities. It focuses on developing the student's competence and confidence in understanding and using existing technologies to meet their daily needs and to cope with change and challenges.

Technology education helps to develop in students the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to function in a world of rapid technological change. Technology education will give students the opportunity to be informed and enable them to contribute to their society.

The school curriculum will provide opportunities for students to develop the capability to design, make, evaluate and improve products, systems and environments. They will be taught how to work through a defined technological process in order to create a solution for an identified need or opportunity. It may be finding new uses for local fruit, improving communications between islands, finding a new solution to fixing machinery, or increasing crop yield.

Technology influences all aspects of our daily lives. Students will develop an understanding of the ways in which technology both transforms and is transformed by society. They will learn how technology has influenced the lives of people of different cultures, backgrounds and times and how people have developed and used technologies to meet human needs. Students will develop an awareness of the impact of technology on the environment.

People of the Cook Islands have worked and are working with traditional technologies as well as a range of technologies from elsewhere. It has brought changes to Cook Islands society for instance in transportation, communication, education, business, agriculture, sports and leisure activities. Technology education will help students to make informed decisions about appropriate technologies for the Cook Islands and be able to work effectively with these. Students will understand that technology has applications in all other essential learning areas of the curriculum.

Technology will develop students' knowledge and skills in areas that may lead to further studies or careers in graphics and design, electronics, multimedia, communications, horticultural research, information technology and food technology amongst others.

The Arts

Peu Ora'anga

The arts are a personal form of expression reflecting social and cultural ideas and issues. They are the expression of the life and culture of a society, and are important vehicles for the transmission of values and ideas from generation to generation. The arts forms include dance, drama, music, visual arts, media, and literature. They develop skills that are essential for employment, recreation and leisure.

The arts are a powerful means of expression and communication of life experiences and imagination. They have developed in societies and cultures in response to practical and aesthetic needs and therefore contribute to the development of an understanding of the various dimensions of human experiences: physical, emotional, social, intellectual, aesthetic, moral and spiritual. They are an integral part of the identity of a community and a country.

The arts help build self-confidence and pride. Students will focus on arts of the Cook Islands both in traditional and contemporary forms. Learning through the arts will enable students to appreciate, understand and value their own heritage. In addition, the study of international arts in areas like New Zealand, the Pacific and Europe will enhance their appreciation of this form of expression in the context of the global community.

Through the arts students explore their values in relation to those of others. They learn to recognize the aesthetic and spiritual elements in their lives and society. They also learn to use the various arts forms to express and convey ideas, feelings and experiences.

Students will be given the opportunity to explore, to create, to develop and communicate their arts ideas in appropriate arts forms utilising a range of arts skills, techniques and processes. They will develop arts skills using traditional and modern technologies.

Through participation in the arts students will develop critical awareness and enjoyment of the arts. They will recognise and value the arts forms of their own culture both traditional and contemporary, as well as those from other cultures and time periods. They will be given the opportunity to develop their sensory skills to appreciate and enjoy the arts. They will also develop an understanding of how arts work, (whether their own or others), and impact on people.

Students will be given the opportunity to participate in a wide range of experiences in the arts forms of dance, drama, music, media (film and video), literature and visual arts. Schools will have regard for culturally significant arts forms, including oratory and craft.

The arts has strong links to all other learning areas. This linkage is enhanced when the concepts and content of other learning areas are integrated into the various arts forms and activities or when the arts forms are used in the learning of content and ideas in other learning areas.

Learning in the arts may lead to further studies and careers in art, music, film and production, designing, advertising or in leisure activities.

The Essential Skills

Kite Karape Pu'apinga

*“E āpī'i i te tamaiti i te arata'a e tikai i a ia kia aere ra;
E kia pakari a ia ra, kare e'akaruke i taua arata'a ra.”*
*“Train up the child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it.”*

The Cook Islands Curriculum specifies eight groupings of essential skills to be developed by all students throughout their years of schooling.

The eight categories represent the full range of skills that are considered essential to enable Cook Islands students to achieve their potential and to participate fully in society, both within the Cook Islands and outside of it. They also reflect and respond to the call from parents, the community, the workplace and other stakeholders for Cook Islands schools to produce fine, responsible, able young people capable of meeting the demands of the modern world, with a strong sense of who they are, where they have come from, and where they want to be.

The categories are simply convenient ways of grouping and labelling the skills that students will develop. They are not linked to any particular essential learning area or subject, but will be developed through the essential learning areas and in different contexts across the curriculum.

Teachers must plan learning programmes that provide students with opportunities to develop the whole range of essential skills at levels appropriate to their stage of learning and development, and in ways that make them meaningful and relevant.

Students will develop the range of essential skills to the best of their ability in different contexts within the various curriculum areas through group and individual activities, classroom based programmes, and activities outside the classroom or school.

Developing the full range of skills will enable students to function confidently and effectively as individuals, to operate co-operatively in groups, to competently deal with a variety of situations, and to succeed in a challenging, ever-changing environment.

The eight groupings of essential skills are:

Communication Skills

Students will

- communicate competently and confidently by listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and by using other forms of communication where appropriate;
- pass on and receive information, instructions, ideas, and feelings appropriately and effectively in a range of different cultural, language, and social contexts;
- examine and respond to aural and visual messages from different sources including the media;
- argue and discuss a case clearly, logically, and convincingly;
- become competent in using a range of new information and communication technologies.

Numeracy Skills

Students will

- calculate accurately;
- estimate competently and with confidence;
- use calculators and a range of measuring instruments confidently and competently;
- recognise, understand, analyse and respond to information which is presented in mathematical ways, for example, in graphs, tables, charts, or percentages;
- demonstrate logic and reasoning;
- recognise and use numerical patterns and relationships.

Artistic and Creative Skills

Students will

- develop, create, interpret and explore ideas in a variety of ways;
- use oral, visual, aural, and other senses to generate, manipulate and control ideas;
- evaluate, respond to and reflect on artistic and creative works;
- develop critical awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of artistic and creative works;
- participate in appropriate artistic and creative programmes and activities with confidence;
- express and communicate experiences and views in a variety of ways, using the arts forms of dance, drama, literature, media, music and visual arts.

Self-management, Work and Study skills

Students will

- develop the desire and skills to continue learning throughout life;
- work effectively, both independently and in groups;
- develop sound work habits and attitudes;
- show initiative, commitment, motivation, perseverance, courage, and enterprise;
- adapt to new ideas, technologies, and situations;
- develop positive approaches to challenge and change, stress and conflict, competition, and success and failure;
- build on their own learning experiences, cultural backgrounds and preferred learning styles and develop the skills of self-appraisal;

- achieve self-discipline and take responsibility for
 - their own actions and decisions
 - their own learning and work;
- develop self-esteem, personal integrity and positive identity;
- take increasing responsibility for their own physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health, and personal safety;
- develop a range of practical life and work skills;
- set, evaluate, and achieve realistic personal and career goals;
- make career choices on the basis of realistic information & self-appraisal.

Physical Skills

Students will

- develop personal fitness and health through regular exercise, good hygiene, and healthy diet;
- develop locomotor, non-locomotor, and manipulative skills;
- develop basic first aid skills;
- develop specialised skills related to sporting, recreational, and cultural activities;
- learn to use tools and materials efficiently and safely;
- develop relaxation skills.

Social and Co-operative Skills

Students will

- develop good relationships with others, and work in co-operative ways to achieve common goals;
- take responsibility as a member of a group for shared decision making and actions;
- participate appropriately in a range of social and cultural settings;
- learn to recognise, analyse and respond appropriately to unfair practices and behaviours;
- acknowledge individual differences and demonstrate respect for people;
- demonstrate consideration for others through qualities such as respect (‘ākangateitei), integrity (tiratiratū), trustworthiness (irinaki’ia), care (tākinga meitaki), compassion (aro’a), fairness (tika), diligence (aruaru), tolerance (‘aka’koromaki) and charity (ngakau ‘ōronga);
- develop a sense of responsibility for the well-being of others and for the environment;
- participate effectively as responsible citizens in a society;
- develop the ability to negotiate and reach consensus.

Information Skills

Students will

- identify, locate, gather, store, retrieve, and process information from a range of sources;
- organise, analyse, evaluate, and use information;
- present information clearly, logically, concisely and accurately;
- identify, describe, and interpret different points of view, and distinguish fact from opinion;
- use a range of information-retrieval and information-processing technologies confidently and competently.

Problem-solving Skills

Students will

- think critically, creatively, reflectively, and logically;
- exercise imagination, initiative, and flexibility;
- identify, describe, and redefine a problem;
- analyse problems from different perspectives;
- make connections and establish relationships;
- inquire and research, and explore, generate, and develop ideas;
- try out innovative and original ideas;
- design and make;
- test ideas and solutions, and make decisions on the basis of experience and supporting evidence;
- evaluate processes and solutions.

Literacy and Numeracy across the Curriculum

Kite Reo ē te Kite Nūmero i roto i te Kura 'Āpi'i

All teachers are teachers of literacy and numeracy.

Literacy and numeracy are critical for successful learning in school and beyond. Both need to be developed at an early age, as they are essential for accessing other learning throughout life, and for all forms of communication in most economic, social and cultural activities.

Literacy is the ability to use and understand those language forms valued by individuals and communities and required by society in order for a person to operate successfully in it⁵. In the Cook Islands, the aim is for biliteracy or literacy in two languages, namely Cook Islands Maori and English. Numeracy is the ability and inclination to use number effectively in our lives, at home, at work and in the community.

Changes in our society have produced different forms of communication that place demands on our literacy and numeracy skills. In particular, technological developments and advances in day-to-day activities such as banking, shopping, and telecommunications require greater literacy and numeracy skills. Students will need to be prepared for these new challenges.

The Cook Islands Curriculum expects all students to be literate and numerate but acknowledges that some will require more assistance than others, and the learning and teaching approaches will need to be varied. It recognises that for students with special needs, their success will be personal to them.

The school curriculum will plan and implement literacy and numeracy programmes and initiatives, with special emphasis in early primary levels, and building upon the preparatory foundation work in early childhood education. The approach will be multi-faceted, requiring joint undertakings by the school, the parents, the community and government. The school will set achievement expectations in literacy and numeracy at designated schooling milestones, monitor progress of students, and implement intervention programmes for at risk students.

While languages and mathematics have the major responsibility for developing literacy and numeracy respectively, the two learning areas are not able to fully capture all that is literacy and numeracy. Students must learn to connect the mathematics from situation to situation and the language from context to context. Consequently, all learning areas contribute to the development of literacy and numeracy by providing the contexts for meaningful and relevant learning and interaction.

Teachers and principals are key figures. They will require greater guidance and support, with a strong emphasis and focus on pedagogy. The Ministry of Education will collaborate with schools to provide professional development programmes for teachers and principals that incorporate current local, national, regional and international research findings on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Such programmes will focus teachers on how students learn, what they need to learn, and the key items of knowledge they need for that learning, the best practice in teaching, and the supportive resources and learning environments.

Paralleling professional development will be the preparation of structured instructional materials for use in language, literacy and numeracy programmes. Priority will be given to the preparation of reading and instructional materials in the Cook Islands Maori Language.

Literacy and numeracy initiatives will be extended into the homes and community as a strategy to raise awareness of the importance of these basic skills, to endorse what parents and family members are already doing for developing language and mathematics learning, and share ways to make greater impact on their children's literacy and numeracy development, achievement levels and success at school. Families will understand the significant influence that they and the home environment have on their children's learning.

⁵ Adapted from definition used in the Literacy Leadership Programme for Principals, Learning Media, New Zealand.

Values and Attitudes

Te Au 'Irinaki'anga ē te Au 'Tū Tangata

*“Ka 'akara ana ki te mato i pao'ia mai ei koe.”
“Look to the rock from which you were hewn”*

The Cook Islands Curriculum acknowledges that the Cook Islands is a country of tradition and change, of traditional customs and ceremonies, and of western practices and laws. Its values reflect its traditional and tribal structures and related practices, as well as its spiritual and religious beliefs. In addition, the Cook Islands have embraced the western culture and its related values and practices. This is the essence of what is depicted by the Tree of Learning (Figure 1): the blending of the old and the new, the traditional and the modern.

Values and belief systems determine behaviour in society including how members communicate and interact with one another, what knowledge is learnt, and how such knowledge is imparted.

Values and attitudes are therefore a fundamental part of the Cook Islands Curriculum. They take their place alongside the essential learning areas and essential skills as the three complementary components in the Cook Islands Curriculum.

The Cook Islands Curriculum acknowledges the diverse values systems among the islands, and in doing so, recognises the strength that affords to the whole. It reflects and promotes the shared values of the Cook Islands people.

Through its practices and procedures, the school curriculum will reinforce the commonly held values of individual and collective responsibility that underpin Cook Islands traditional and modern society. These commonly held values include respect ('akangāteitei), honesty (tuatua tika), integrity (tiratiratū), care and compassion (tākinga meitaki ? te aro'a), fairness (tuku'anga tika tau), tolerance ('akakoromaki), love ('inangaro), charity (ngakau 'ōronga), and fulfilment of mutual obligations (apai tu'anga).

Values are learned through exposure, example and experience, and the school environment and teachers have a strong influence on values development. The school curriculum through its content and learning contexts will help students to develop and clarify their own values and beliefs as individuals and as members of family and other social groupings in sports, church, village, vaka, and island. It will generate in students an awareness and understanding of themselves as Cook Islanders, of their culture and heritage, of their environment and resources, and of their place in the world.

The school curriculum will help students understand values relating to personal as well as group and community development and well-being, and the appropriate behaviour in these contexts. It seeks to find and maintain a balance between the development of the individual on the one hand, and the well-being of the community and country on the other.

Students will develop an appreciation of how values and attitudes influence and are influenced by cultural, social, spiritual and religious beliefs, economic, technology and environmental changes.

The Cook Islands Curriculum promotes life-long learning and recognises that attitudes to learning strongly influence the process, quality and outcomes of learning. The school curriculum will encourage positive attitudes towards all areas of learning by providing challenging learning activities that are meaningful to present day life and as preparation of students for future roles as responsible and productive citizens. It will foster student understanding of values and attitudes associated with particular essential learning areas, and encourage appropriate behaviour.

The school curriculum will foster the attitudes that enable students to contribute effectively in a democratic society, including acknowledgement of cultural and ethnic diversity, respect for the environment, access to full and balanced information, and equitable participation in decision making.

The Cook Islands Curriculum recognises and values parental and community support as significant factors in building and sustaining positive learning attitudes, and raising achievement levels.

Learning and Teaching Environment

Te Ngā'i no te Tāmou'anga ē te 'Āpi'i'anga

The Cook Islands Curriculum acknowledges that the school is one of many settings within which learning and teaching occur. The home, the preschool centre, the church, the community organisations, the training centres and the workplace are other such settings. The school provides the place for the delivery of the formal education for the community that it serves, and within which it is located.

The school will provide a positive learning and teaching environment that is supportive, safe, stimulating, stable and satisfying, having regard for the different learning needs of the students according to age, readiness to learn, ability or disability. The school will promote high expectations of success and recognition of academic achievement and progress as well as social ability and adaptability.

The classroom environment will present high standards of tidiness, cleanliness and safety. It will be conducive to learning, encouraging creativity and interaction, displaying appropriate resources particularly in literacy and numeracy, celebrating and reinforcing achievement, in order to develop positive attitudes towards learning.

The school will engage parental and community support to build and maintain safe school environments within which students will have meaningful education experiences, and which best contribute to the realisation of high achievement levels.

National Curriculum Statements

'Akapapa'anga Kura Āpi'i o te Pātireia

The national curriculum statements are the base documents, which schools will use to develop teaching and learning programmes to enable students to meet the requirements of the Cook Islands Curriculum.

The Ministry of Education will develop and write the national curriculum statements following wide consultation with teachers, educators, community and industry representatives. The consultation process gives recognition and builds upon the experience and appropriate knowledge in the wider community to enrich and enhance the curriculum statements.

The national curriculum statements define in greater detail the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are described in the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework⁶. Each national curriculum statement will include:

- a general aim or general aims;
- strands of learning;
- achievement aims for each strand;
- achievement objectives for each strand;
- achievement levels, usually eight, to indicate progression in learning;
- approaches to learning and teaching, recognising that skills and strategies of learning are just as important as knowledge;
- suggested assessment procedures, with examples;
- guidance on use of appropriate materials and resources;
- focus on development of essential skills;
- suggestions for incorporation of values and attitudes;
- promotion of language development of all students;
- ways for integration with other essential learning areas.

The national curriculum statements will provide guidelines on incorporating cultural themes and topics in the learning and teaching programmes. They will promote the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, with greater weighting and focus for these in early primary and early childhood education levels.

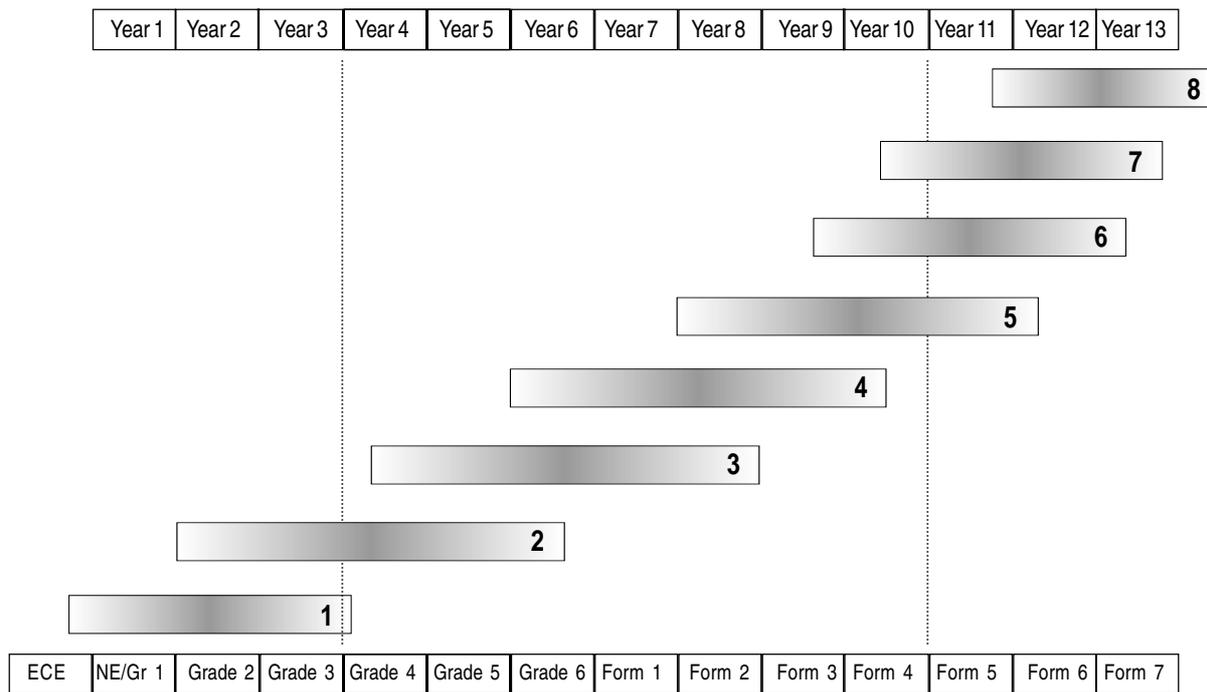
Some essential learning areas will require more than one curriculum statement. For example the languages learning area will have the Cook Islands Maori Language curriculum statement and the English curriculum statement. For some essential learning areas where specialisation occurs at senior level, there will be a need for other curriculum statements to be developed. Examples are history and geography for the social science learning area, chemistry and physics for the science learning area, and economics and accounting for the enterprise learning area.

The eight levels of achievement assist teachers to identify the student's progressive development throughout the years of schooling from New Entrants/Grade 1 to Form 7 (Year 1 to Year 13). It gives an indication of what a student can do, what the next step should be, and helps the teacher to provide an appropriate programme.

The following diagram (Fig 3) indicates the approximate parallels between the eight levels of achievement, the class and year bands. It recognises that in any one class, students may be working at a range of different levels and at different rates in the learning areas. Students will work at their own levels while being encouraged to strive for higher goals.

It is expected that students will be achieving at Level 5 by the end of Form 4 (Year 10). Levels 6 to 8 will be closely aligned with those achievement levels in the curriculum statements for the New Zealand qualifications, as these qualifications are available to Cook Islands students from Form 5 to Form 7 (Year 11 to 13). Early childhood education level will be considered as preparatory for Level 1.

Fig 3 : Levels of Achievement, Class and Year Bands.



The statements are sufficiently broad and flexible to allow schools to plan and implement programmes that are relevant and appropriate to the learning needs of their students and the expectations of communities. At the same time, the statements are clear on what is to be learned and achieved during the years of schooling.

Other support documents will focus on specific elements of the Cook Islands Curriculum to provide greater detail and guidance for planning and implementing learning and teaching programmes. These will include assessment, essential skills, cultural issues in the curriculum, bilingual approaches, best practice in teaching.

Early Childhood Education

Āpi'i Tamariki Pōtiki

Early childhood education is a vital link between the informal learning in the home and the formal learning programme of the school. It draws and builds upon the language and cultural experiences of the child and reflects the nature, values and aspirations of the family and community as it prepares the child for future learning at primary schools.

The Cook Islands Curriculum recognises early childhood education as the foundation upon which is built the learning and teaching in primary and secondary schools. It endorses planning of learning and teaching programmes that span the years of schooling from early childhood to upper secondary school level, as encapsulated in the Tree of Learning (Fig 1).

From birth into the early years of primary schooling, children progress through a process of learning and development that is predictable to a certain extent, but differ in pace and stages, direction and style, and capacity to learn and absorb new things.

The curriculum statement for early childhood education in the Cook Islands will reflect this and give clear direction to learning in the early childhood education centres with focus on identity, involvement and inquiry. The programme will help the children to grow up confident and secure in knowing their identity: who they are, and the special relationship they have with family, their learning centre, their community, their society and their country. The children will have the opportunity to become involved, develop self-confidence, and build relationships with their peers and with adults other than their parents and family members. They will be encouraged to increase awareness of their environment, to inquire, to explore and to expand their understanding of the way things are and the different ways of doing things.

The learning approaches in early childhood education will be supportive of individual, group and cooperative learning, encouraging and rewarding, enjoyable and challenging.

The early childhood education curriculum provides guidance for designing and establishing learning environments that are non-threatening, closely linked to the home environment, caring and safe, involving participation of adults in a variety of supportive roles.

The Cook Islands Curriculum acknowledges the considerable overlap between early childhood education and the early years of primary schools. It endorses the need to ensure that the transition to primary school is smooth and not disjunctured in classroom organisation and environment, learning and teaching approaches, and in accommodating differing learning abilities and disabilities.

The Cook Islands Curriculum recognises the critical role that early childhood education has in building foundations for the development of literacy, numeracy and social skills in children. It endorses learning in the first language.

It further acknowledges the vital role of parents and the community in supporting learning and teaching programmes particularly at this early stage of learning.

Assessment

Vāito'anga Kite

Assessment is an integral part of the curriculum. It provides information on the performance and progress of the student, the learning and teaching in the classroom, programme development in the schools, and national educational standards and policy development.

Its primary purpose is to improve students' learning and the quality of learning programmes. It provides information on students' achievement. In this respect, assessment instruments, procedures and practices are important, as are the analysis and interpretation of the results. Validity and reliability standards are to be maintained to improve the quality of assessment information that teachers and students use to improve the learning and teaching programmes.

In addition, assessment provides information for teachers and schools to report on students' progress and achievement to parents and students. Other purposes of assessment include awarding qualifications at senior secondary school level, monitoring national educational standards, and identifying learning needs for more effective utilisation of resources.

A range of assessment procedures and instruments will be utilised based on established classroom practices, while taking account of current local, national and international research and experience.

Every effort will be made to ensure that assessment procedures are fair, having regard for student learning needs, background, location and experiences.

School-based Assessment

Assessment is an important part of the learning and teaching programme. It identifies learning strengths and weaknesses, measures students' progress, and appraises the effectiveness of teaching programmes.

Assessment should provide valid information on clearly identified learning outcomes expected of students. Assessment practices should be fair and contribute positively to student learning. They should form an integral part of the learning (and not conducted exclusively at the end), and provide useful feedback particularly on areas that need improvement in future learning. It is therefore important that assessment practices become positive and encouraging.

The school, as required by the Cook Islands Administration Guidelines, will set realistic achievement standards, establish procedures for collecting valid and reliable assessment data and use this information to monitor achievement against the goals in each of the essential learning areas, with particular emphasis to achievement in literacy and numeracy in Grades 1 to 4 (Year 1 to 4). Teachers and students need to develop shared understandings about what is meant by achievement, what progress means and what constitutes quality work. The assessment information gathered will enable schools to implement early intervention and recovery programmes for students at risk.

School-based assessment will use a range of formal and informal procedures that are known to be effective, in various situations and over a period of time. They include diagnostic surveys, running records used in reading programmes, checkpoints in mathematics programmes, a range of formal and informal tests, observations, interviews, anecdotal records, work samples, portfolios, and self-assessment. National Curriculum Statements provide suggested assessment procedures and assessment examples for classroom use. Additional support materials will be available from the Ministry of Education.

The information from these assessments will enable teachers to build up profiles of individual students' achievements, enabling teachers to monitor students' academic and social progress, and to plan for future learning programmes. The profiles form the basis for feedback to students and parents, and for student records.

For students at secondary schools, assessment will include reporting to national and international bodies associated with the awarding of qualifications.

National Monitoring

Assessment for national monitoring is designed to evaluate overall educational standards and enable comparisons to be made between year groups of students, between regions and between years.

National surveys at key points will help to identify the needs and progress of groups of students as they move through schooling, and so assist teachers, the school management and the Ministry of Education to plan and target resources effectively. The key points will be at school entry (age five), at the start of the middle primary (Grade 4 /Year 4), and at the end of primary school (Grade 6 /Year 6).

At school entry, the assessment will be based on diagnostic procedures for five year olds that will provide information on the learning and social competencies that children bring with them at entry to school. They include personal development, social abilities, language development, and understanding of mathematical concepts. This information will enable teachers and schools to make appropriate decisions about each child's learning programme. In addition, information from assessments at middle and end of primary schooling will inform the school about intervention programmes, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

In secondary schools, results from national certificates and qualifications will provide information about student achievement, student retention, and career pathways.

Records of Student Achievement

A record of a student's achievement in school is a comprehensive and cumulative picture of learning and achievement from year to year, and from school to school. It includes primary school records, results of achievements at secondary school, and information about the student's involvement and participation in school activities.

Primary school records will document the student's progress against broad levels of achievement as set out in the national curriculum statements. It will also record the student's personal and social development.

Secondary school records will include a statement of the student's performance in national examinations and qualifications, a section on personal qualities, and a summary of involvement and participation in school activities.

On leaving school, the student can use the record of achievement for various purposes such as seeking employment or pursuing further education and training.

Assessment for Qualifications

Curriculum and assessment policy for all years of schooling is based on the Cook Islands Curriculum documents, and is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

Assessment at the senior secondary level (Forms 5 to 7; Years 11 to 13) will be standards based. Students will gain credits from assessment against clearly defined learning outcomes in both Unit Standards and Achievement Standards.

Examinations and assessments for the purpose of awarding senior secondary school qualifications will be based on the learning outcomes of the national curriculum statements, and prescriptions of the Cook Islands Ministry of Education (for national qualifications) and the New Zealand Qualification Authority (for international qualifications). The Ministry of Education has the responsibility for disseminating to schools information pertaining to these on behalf of National and International Qualifications Authorities.

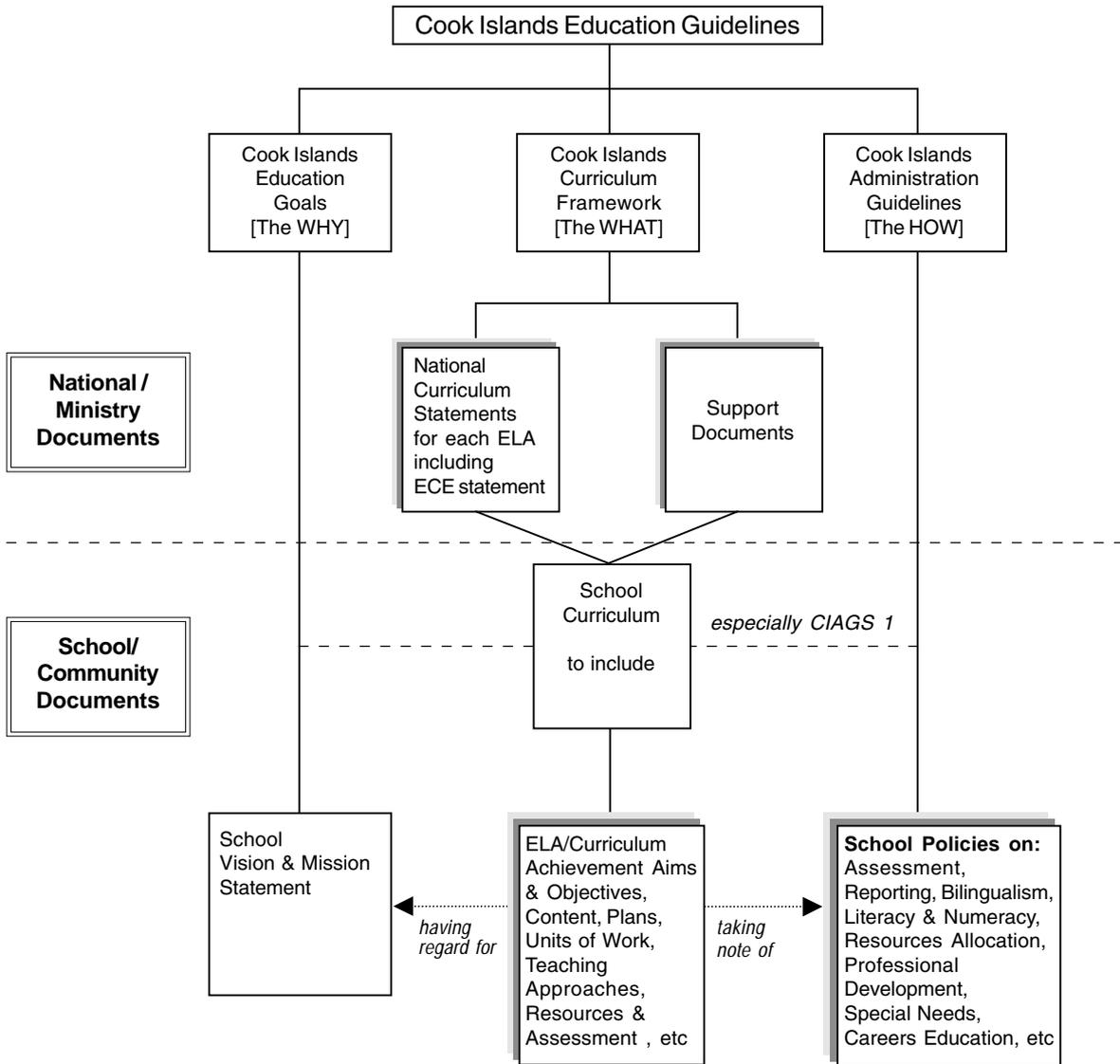
School Organisation

'Aka'noo'anga i te Āpi'i

The Cook Islands Curriculum Framework provides schools and teachers with a structure around which they can build learning and teaching programmes for students. The National Curriculum Statements give further guidance to ensure that students receive a broad and balanced education through programmes that suit their needs and are aimed at achieving the designated learning outcomes.

It is expected that schools will implement the requirements of the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework. They must ensure that the programmes provide the students with the opportunities and experiences to achieve the learning outcomes that are identified and expected for each of the essential learning areas.

Each school is required to plan, develop and implement learning and teaching programmes in accordance with the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework, the National Curriculum Statements including the Early Childhood Education Statement, and in line with the Cook Islands Administration Guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education. The diagram below illustrates this development.



School Organisation

Inclusive Education

'Āpi'i Tā'okota'i

The Cook Islands Curriculum supports the implementation of an inclusive curriculum in all schools, and one that recognises and responds to the diverse backgrounds of students and their educational needs, experiences, and interests.

Students bring a wide variety of backgrounds to their learning in school. Some students have lived on one island only, some have lived on several islands and in other countries; some have been born outside of the Cook Islands; and some have one or both parents from other ethnic groups. Some students speak one, two or more languages and have a range of cultural experiences.

The school through its curriculum content, programmes and teaching approaches will support inclusive education. It will identify and reduce barriers to learning, use inclusive non-discriminatory language, and acknowledge and value the experiences and achievements of girls and boys, men and women. The school curriculum will ensure that students have knowledge and understanding of the culture and heritage of the Cook Islands, and an appreciation of other cultures particularly those that are represented within the school and its community.

The school will provide learning environments that are safe and supportive of students with special needs, different abilities and disabilities. The school will ensure that alternative or modified learning programmes are available for students who may not be able to participate in mainstream classes.

Ministry of Education policies and documents written to support the implementation of National Curriculum Statements will provide suggested strategies that teachers and schools may use to develop an inclusive school curriculum.

Approaches for learning and teaching

Rāvenga nō te tāmou'anga ē te āpi'i'anga

The Cook Islands Curriculum promotes the approaches to learning and teaching that are learner-centred and contribute towards life-long learning. It endorses approaches that make learning enjoyable, meaningful, and successful. It supports interactive and collaborative learning and teaching.

The teachers will develop and use approaches that guide students to greater knowledge and understanding, develop their skills and competencies to live with others, and to work independently and with others, and raise confidence in their heritage, their present and their future.

Where possible and particularly at primary school level, these will include centre of interest, thematic approaches, cooperative learning and cross grouping that reinforce the linkages across essential learning areas. Multi-level teaching will ensure that the differing needs of groups of students are being met.

The school will adopt planning strategies that utilises the strengths and expertise of persons within the school and in the community, demonstrates creative use of time and space, identifies intervention programmes, and strives for the development of quality supporting resources.

School-Home-Community Partnerships

Piri'anga Tā'okota'l o te 'Āpi'i, te Ngutu'are ē te Oire

The Cook Islands Curriculum recognises the shared responsibility of the school and the home in the education of students and the positive impact that such relationships and partnerships can have on parents, teachers and students.

The school is part of the community within which it is located and its learning and teaching programmes ought to reflect the nature and the aspirations of that community and society. In turn, the outcomes of the school programmes should build positive attitudes within the community towards learning, and raise expectations of parents and families. The school will strive to establish and maintain positive relationships with the school community.

All families in the school community will understand that they are the school community and will be involved and included in school activities, and will feel totally comfortable in their school.

The Cook Islands Curriculum acknowledges the breadth and depth of experience and expertise in the school community, and encourages the school to draw on this to support, develop and improve school programmes. This may include:

- consultation on curriculum content selection;
- local knowledge input into resources development;
- literacy and numeracy programmes for the home;
- utilising local experts and resource persons for specific topics or programmes;
- a programme such as The Home Education Programme (THEP) that focuses on homework, and ensuring that students coming to school are rested, fed, clean and ready for learning;
- conducting reviews and evaluations of school projects or activities as requested by the school;
- books in the home project; etc.

As the first teachers, parents will understand that they can set up their children for success in learning.

The school will establish a collaborative network with parents and the community to design education and schooling pathways for students that prepare them to be successful learners.

Monitoring and Evaluation

'Ākarakara'anga ē te Paunu'anga

The Cook Islands Curriculum recognises that our society is characterised by changes in technology, family structures and lifestyles, employment opportunities, economic and political conditions and the expectations and aspirations of students, parents, employers, the community and the government. All these impact on the way the schooling and education systems respond in programmes, policies and priorities.

It is expected that on-going consultations and collaborations will result in revisions and modifications to the Cook Islands Curriculum in order for the system to remain in line with the changing demands, expectations and aspirations of the students, parents, and the community that the schools serve.

The Ministry of Education will advise the schools of the reporting and monitoring procedures for compliance, progress and achievement.

Schools will be expected to conduct internal monitoring and evaluation of their programmes to ensure relevancy, effectiveness, and achievement of outcomes. Schools will provide the Ministry of Education with information on issues arising out of their experience. This will include educational, social and community-related issues.

These issues will be included as part of the consultative process in the review and revision of the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework.

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