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# New Zealand

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## Principles and general objectives of education

Education is at the core of the nation's effort to achieve economic and social progress. In recognition of the fundamental importance of education, the government has defined the following national education goals (as amended in December 2004) for New Zealand:

- The highest standards of achievement, through programmes which enable all students to realise their full potential as individuals, and to develop the values needed to become full members of New Zealand's society.
- Equality of educational opportunity for all New Zealanders, by identifying and removing barriers to achievement.
- Development of the knowledge, understanding and skills needed by New Zealanders to compete successfully in the modern, ever-changing world.
- A sound foundation in the early years for future learning and achievement through programmes which include support for parents in their vital role as their children's first teachers.
- A broad education through a balanced curriculum covering essential learning areas. Priority should be given to the development of high levels of competence (knowledge and skills) in literacy and numeracy, science and technology and physical activity.
- Excellence achieved through the establishment of clear learning objectives, monitoring student performance against those objectives, and programmes to meet individual need.
- Success in their learning for those with special needs by ensuring that they are identified and receive appropriate support.
- Access for students to a nationally and internationally recognised qualifications system to encourage a high level of participation in post-school education in New Zealand.
- Increased participation and success by Maori through the advancement of Maori education initiatives—including education in *Te Reo Maori* (the Maori language)—consistent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (signed in 1840).
- Respect for the diverse ethnic and cultural heritage of New Zealand people, with acknowledgement of the unique place of Maori, and New Zealand's role in the Pacific and as a member of the international community of nations.

Education in New Zealand aims to be highly inclusive, centred around an excellent system that intends to deliver high-quality education to every student regardless of the school they attend or their ethnicity. Strong principles of equity are among the driving forces for education policy and practice. These include high expectations of all students, respecting the Treaty of Waitangi and the bicultural foundations of New Zealand, and valuing cultural diversity and the inclusion of all students. The recent Ministry of Education's Statement of Intent 2011/12–2016/17 reiterates that success in education is an essential contribution to the Government's



overall goals of: (a) economic growth that delivers greater prosperity, security and opportunities for New Zealanders; and (b) developing the skills to enable citizens to reach their full potential and contribute to the economy and society. Education today is much more about new ways of thinking which involve creative and critical approaches to problem-solving and decision-making. Educational success is increasingly about taking what we know and applying that knowledge to new and changing situations. The use of modern technologies is critical to support shifts in teaching and learning practice, and improvements in student achievement. The vision is a world-leading education system that equips all New Zealanders with the knowledge, skills and values to be successful citizens in the twenty-first century. (Ministry of Education, May 2011).

## Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The legal framework for education in New Zealand is the **Education Act, 1989** and its subsequent amendments. The **Education Amendment Act (No. 2), 1998**, enacted on 18 December 1998, amended existing legislation in areas such as enrolment schemes and suspensions.

In May 2006 a new Education Amendment Act was passed in order to support the implementation of some significant policy changes (such as the new early childhood education regulatory regime and the extension of the National Student Number—NSN), making a number of minor changes to enhance administration of the education system and tidy up existing legislation that was out of date or no longer used. The **Education Amendment Act (No 3) 2010** makes provisions for secondary-tertiary programmes, e.g. full-time programmes for a participating student that (a) consist of a secondary component and a tertiary component; and (b) are coordinated by a provider group or a lead provider.

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority and the Teacher Registration Board (the latter replaced by the New Zealand Teachers Council in 2001) were established under the Education Act 1989. The New Zealand Teachers Council was established under the **Education Standards Act 2001**, an amendment to the Education Act 1989.

The new regulatory framework for early childhood education services came into force on 1 December 2008. The **Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008** were subsequently amended on 27 August 2009 and came into force on 25 September 2009. The regulations provide for the licensing of early childhood service providers and the standards for licensed services. The **Education (Playgroups) Regulations 2008** provide for the certification of playgroup service providers and require them to comply with each of the following minimum standards: (a) the curriculum standard; (b) the ratios standard; (c) the premises and facilities standard; (d) the health and safety practices standard; and (e) the management and administration standard. The purpose of the minimum standards is to ensure the health, comfort, care education, and safety of children attending certificated playgroups.



The government's industry training policy is established under the **Industry Training Act 1992**. This act provides for Industry Training Organizations (ITOs) representing industry to be established as the vehicles for organizing industry training. The purpose of the **Industry Training Amendment Act 2002** was to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of the industry training system.

The **Education (Tertiary Reform) Amendment Act 2002** came into force on 1 January 2003. The purpose of this Act is to amend the Education Act 1989 in order to reshape the tertiary education sector, so as to achieve coherence between different parts of the sector and strategic use of resources, by: establishing a Tertiary Education Commission and incorporating Skill New Zealand within it; extending the requirements for charters, and introducing profiles, to steer the tertiary education sector; introducing a new approach to funding for the sector to create consistency and strategic use of resources across the sector as a whole; allowing the New Zealand Qualifications Authority to set conditions on the registration of private training establishments, and on course approvals and accreditations, and providing for the enforcement of those conditions.

The **New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) Act, 1972** defines the main functions of the Council.

The State's expectations of schools and their boards of trustees are outlined through legislation, regulations, guidelines, and curriculum statements. Legislation and regulations establish requirements with which all boards of trustees and managing bodies must comply.

The **National Education Guidelines (NEGs)**, defined under the Education Act 1989, spell out the obligations that schools are required to meet. The NEGs include: the National Education Goals, which are statements of desirable achievements and policy objectives; the National Administration Guidelines, which are directions to boards of trustees relating particularly to management, planning, and reporting; the National Curriculum Statements, which identify knowledge, understanding and skills to be learned; and Foundation Curriculum Policy Statements, which are statements of policy concerning teaching, learning, and assessment.

School boards of trustees are required to develop a **charter** that forms an undertaking by the board to take all reasonable steps to meet the objectives therein. A charter is deemed to include the NEGs and encompass the requirements of the Education Act, 1989, and may include local objectives developed in consultation with the school's community. The guidelines were revised in April 1993 and the first full year of their implementation in schools was 1994.

Schooling is compulsory for New Zealand children between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays, though most begin at the age of 5. The Education Act 1989 provides for free education in state primary and secondary schools between the ages of 5 and 19 years (or to the age of 21 for special education students).



## Administration and management of the education system

The reform of education administration began in 1987, when a government-appointed task force reviewed the management of education in New Zealand. The task force reached the conclusion that the existing system needed major reform if it was to keep pace with the needs of a rapidly changing world. Administration of schools had been under the control of the Department of Education and education boards—a system which had changed little for more than one hundred years. The structure was complex, centralized and provided few opportunities for schools and their communities to have a say in how their schools were run. The recommendations of the task force were developed into a blueprint for change called *Tomorrow's schools*. This policy document formed the basis of the new structure. It has given schools the power to take responsibility for their own management in a partnership with the community through boards of trustees. The new structure came into effect on 1 October 1989.

In October 1989 the Department of Education was dissolved along with tiers of regional and local education structures. The policy functions of the Department were taken over by the new Ministry of Education. Other functions were picked up by other Crown agencies including the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA); the Tertiary Education Commission; the Education Review Office (ERO); and Career Services *Rapuara* (now Careers New Zealand). Skill New Zealand *Pukenga Aotearoa* (known as the Education and Training Support Agency—ETSA during 1990-1998) was a Crown agency focusing on the transition from education and training to work, and on increasing access to training in the workplace. It has been incorporated into the Tertiary Education Commission from January 2003.

The **Ministry of Education** leads the education sector on behalf of the Government, with a large strategic leadership and policy development role, as well as a substantial operational role that includes administering education property, developing guidelines and curriculum statements, allocating funding and paying provider salaries. In 2011 the Ministry has 42 local, district and regional offices across the country. From the point of view of educational administration, the country is divided into four main regions, each with a regional office of the Ministry.

The **New Zealand Qualifications Authority** (NZQA) is a Crown agency which reports directly to the Minister of Education. It has full responsibility for the development and maintenance of a comprehensive, accessible and flexible National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The Authority operates the post-compulsory (upper secondary) school qualification system, the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), and the NQF. It also registers all post-schooling education providers other than universities; oversees the setting of standards for qualifications; assures the quality of provision and the quality of outcomes for learners undertaking qualification study; promotes the recognition of New Zealand qualifications overseas and the recognition of overseas qualifications in New Zealand.

The **Tertiary Education Commission** (TEC) is the government's agency responsible for managing the tertiary education sector that includes the functions and responsibilities of the Transition Tertiary Education Commission, Skill New Zealand and Tertiary Resourcing from the Ministry of Education. The TEC has been established under the provisions of the Education (Tertiary Reform) Amendment Act



of 2002. All forms of post-school education and training come under the TEC's umbrella. These range from full-time academic study, on-job and work-related training right through to tertiary research and development, foundation education, distance education and part-time study offered by universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, *wananga*, private training establishments, foundation education agencies, industry training organizations, and adult and community education providers.

The **Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP)** considers academic matters across the university system. These include inter-university course approval and moderation procedures, advice and comment on academic developments, the encouragement of the coherent and balanced development of curricula and the facilitation of cross-crediting between qualifications. CUAP has consulted with the NZQA to determine criteria for validating and monitoring university qualifications and nominates university representatives to occasional working groups convened by the Authority. Its membership includes a student representative.

The **Education Review Office (ERO)** is a Crown agency responsible for reporting publicly on the quality of education in all schools and early childhood centres. Its overall purpose is to provide regular, independent, evaluative reports for: the Minister of Education; the governing authorities and managers of schools, early childhood centres, and other education organizations; parents and all those in the wider community with an interest in the performance of the education sector and the educational achievement of learners.

**Careers New Zealand** (previously Career Services) offers expert, free advice and support to help New Zealanders make smart, well-informed decisions about their career. It works with businesses, industry and community groups so that people have wider access to the information they need to make successful transitions into learning and work. Careers New Zealand is working in partnership with government agencies, schools, tertiary providers, community organizations, businesses, unions, and influencer groups.

The Ministry of Education, **Special Education (GSE)** is a group within the Ministry of Education, with local offices around the country. GSE provides specialist support to children in early childhood education and to school students with high special education needs. Most children with special education needs attend regular schools. However, a small number are unable to do so, either for a short period of time or longer-term. Schools that cater specifically for children with high special education needs include: special schools, eight residential special schools, and three regional health schools.

The Early Childhood Development Unit was a Crown entity contracted by the Minister of Education to promote and encourage the development and provision of high quality, accessible and culturally appropriate early childhood services for families and children between birth and school age. In 2003 the Minister of Education announced the Government's decision to integrate the functions of Early Childhood Development (ECD) with the Ministry of Education. As of 1 October 2003 all the functions previously carried out by the Unit are now undertaken by the Ministry. This



decision is in line with the Government's vision and goals for early childhood education (ECE) set out in the ten-year strategic plan for ECE released in 2002. The goals of the plan (*Pathways to the Future*) focus on increasing participation; improving the quality of ECE; and encouraging greater collaboration within and across the ECE and wider education sectors.

The **New Zealand Teachers Council** was established under the Education Standards Act 2001 (an amendment to the Education Act 1989) and replaced the Teacher Registration Board (established under the Education Act 1989) on 1 February 2002. It is responsible for setting professional standards for teachers, approving teacher qualifications and for the professional registration of teachers working in early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary and other teaching situations.

The function of the **New Zealand Vice Chancellors Committee (NZVCC) on University Academic Programmes (CUAP)** is to act for the NZVCC and on behalf of the New Zealand community of universities by setting up and applying inter-university course approval, accreditation and moderation procedures. The Committee reviews new qualifications and courses of study at New Zealand Universities, and ensures that the quality of course developments is consonant with high academic standards.

The **New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER)** is a statutory body which aims to improve the quality of education through research, help reduce barriers and expand horizons of education for all New Zealanders, and create educational resources based on sound research.

All schools, whether independent (private) or state schools, must operate under the provisions of the Education Act, 1989. All State and State integrated schools in New Zealand are governed by **boards of trustees** which include elected parent and community volunteers, the school principal and a staff representative. Secondary school boards may also have a student representative. Committees, trustee boards and management boards, on behalf of the owners, control independent schools. The **New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA)** is a membership organization of approximately 2,400 school boards of trustees comprising around 14,500 individual trustees. NZSTA is a not-for-profit incorporated society with charitable trust status. It is the national organization representing school boards of trustees. NZSTA promotes excellence in school governance in New Zealand; provides national/local representation and advocacy on a wide range of matters of importance to boards; delivers comprehensive support services to assist boards in their trusteeship/employer role; and promotes and facilitates ongoing professional development for trustees through education and training.

Boards of trustees establish a charter, which sets out the aims and objectives of the school. All school charters include the National Education Guidelines which contain a statement of goals for education in New Zealand, as well as curriculum and administrative requirements. When boards are developing their charter they are required to consult with their local communities. Boards of trustees are accountable for meeting the objectives in their charter and for managing the funds they receive from the government to run the schools. They are required to present an annual report to their communities and the Ministry of Education.



The role of the **principal** is to manage the day-to-day activities of the school within policies established by the board. A principal is also responsible, in most cases, for assessing staff performance. In order to ensure that the National Education Goals are met, boards of trustees and principals are also required to follow sound governance and management practices involving curriculum, employment, financial and property matters involving schools. Details of these requirements are found in the relevant legislation, appropriate employment contracts and, from time to time, guidelines promulgated by the Ministry of Education. Each board of trustees is also expected to comply with all general legislation concerning requirements such as attendance, the length of the school day, and the length of the school year.

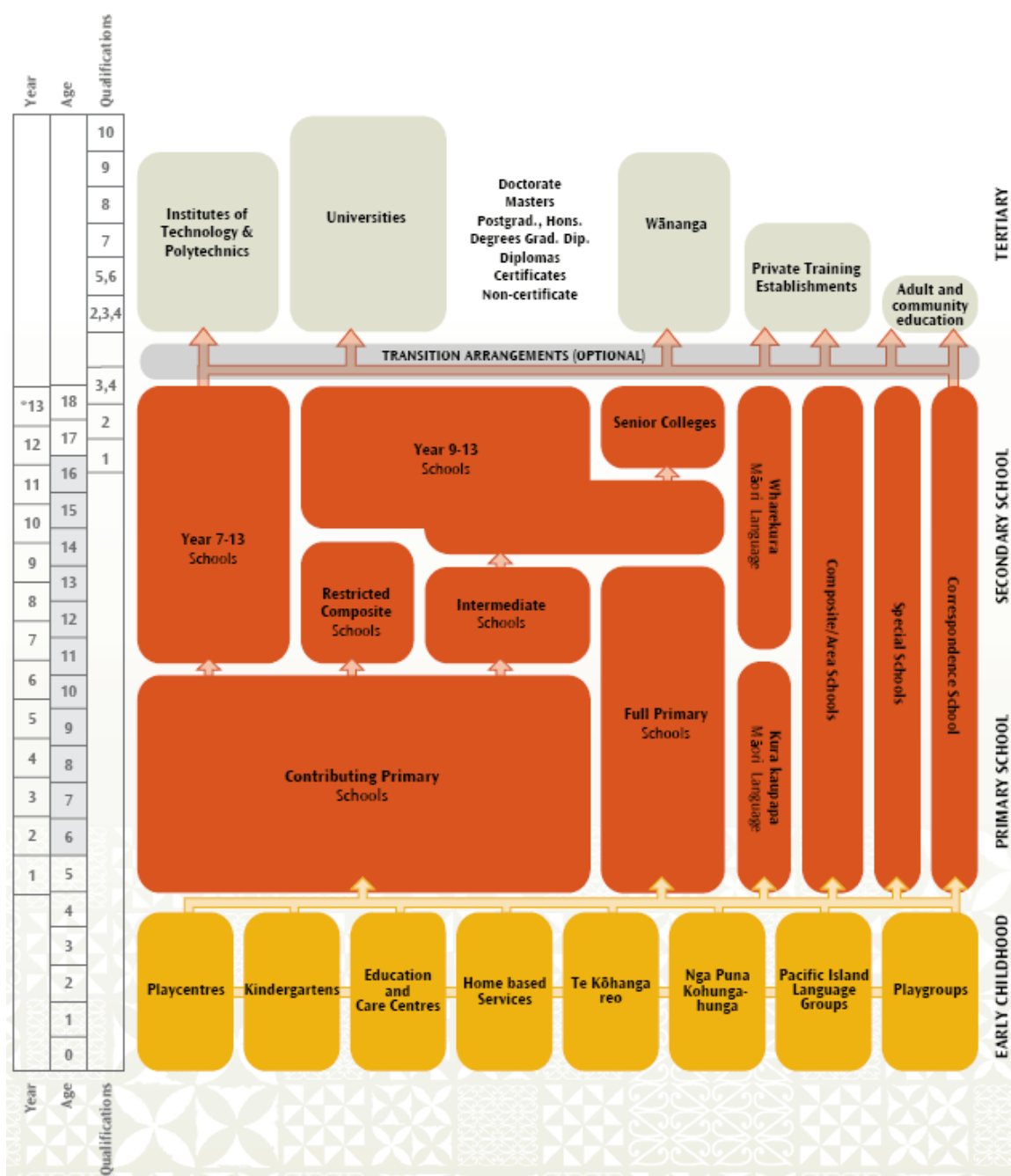
Parents and caregivers have a number of opportunities to be directly involved in the education of their children. They can stand for election to the board of trustees, join the Parent Teacher Association, and help with the activities of the school. Parents and caregivers can expect to receive regular reports on the progress their children are making.

## **Structure and organization of the education system**

Compulsory education in New Zealand is divided into primary, intermediate or middle, and secondary schooling. Until 1995, students were classified as being in: juniors (for the first two years); standards (the next four years); or forms (two years at intermediate level and five years at secondary). This classification system has been replaced with a single system identifying levels according to the number of years of schooling.



## New Zealand: structure of the education system



Source: Ministry of Education, 2009.

### Pre-school education

The term early childhood education (ECE) refers to the non-compulsory provision of education and care for young children and infants before they begin school. ECE is available to children under age 6 (almost all 5-year-olds are in the formal school system) through a wide range of services, such as: kindergartens (which cater to children between the ages of 2 and 5 years); play centres; child care centres; community play groups; *kohanga reo* (“language nests”, institutions for early childhood immersion in Maori language); Pacific Island play groups; and home-based care.



## Primary education

Primary schools are the first level of compulsory schooling. They cater to children from the age of 5 years (Year 0) to the end of their sixth year of schooling (Standard 4). Primary education is compulsory from 6 years of age, although most children usually start formal schooling at the age of 5. A child who starts primary school for the first time between July (when the school roll is counted) and 31 December of a school year and is between 5 and 6 years-old (with most children beginning on their 5th birthday) will be classified in Year 0. Children who begin attending school for the first time between 1 January and before the July roll count will be classified as being in Year 1. After the first year, the year number (year of schooling) of students is increased by one at the start of every school year. It may sometimes be necessary to reset the number at the start of Year 7 (when they move to intermediate level) or Year 9 (when they start secondary school) so that their whereabouts in the system can be correctly identified. If children start school for the first time after the age of 6, they will be given the same year of schooling number as other children of the same age. Children in their seventh and eighth years of schooling (Forms 1 and 2) may either be in a separate intermediate school or part of a primary, secondary or composite/area school.

## Secondary education

Secondary schools usually provide for students from Year 9 (Form 3) until the end of Year 13 (Form 7). Adult students who are returning to school adopt the year of schooling which corresponds to the level of the majority of the subjects they are taking. Area or composite schools, which are usually based in rural areas, combine primary, intermediate and secondary schooling at one location. Under the previous system, middle and senior secondary school students took the following national examinations: School Certificate; Sixth Form Certificate; Higher School Certificate; and University Entrance, Bursaries and Scholarships. The School Certificate examination was taken by most students at the end of three years of secondary education (Year 11 or Form 5, at about the age of 15). The Sixth Form Certificate was internally assessed at the end of Year 12 (Form 6) and awarded on a single-subject basis to students who have satisfactorily completed an approved one-year course in one or more subjects. The Higher School Certificate was awarded to students who had satisfactorily completed five years of full-time secondary schooling beginning at Form 3. University Entrance, Bursaries and Scholarships were the final school qualifications, usually taken in Year 13 (Form 7). The National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) is the new senior secondary school national qualification implemented in all schools since 2002. The NCEA replaced the School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate and University Bursaries. There are three NCEA: Level 1 (Year 11 or fifth form), which replaced the School Certificate in 2002; Level 2 (Year 12 or sixth form), introduced in 2003; and Level 3 (Year 13 or seventh form), which replaced University Bursaries in 2004. A student is awarded a National Certificate when she/he has accumulated sufficient credits by being successfully assessed against National Qualifications Framework standards. NCEA Level 1 is broadly equivalent to the General Certificate of Education (GCE). NCEA Level 3 is equivalent to 'A-Levels' and Australia's Higher School Certificate (HSC).



## Higher education

Tertiary education and training is provided by the system of state tertiary institutions including universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and *wananga*. Distinctions are sometimes made between post-compulsory education, post-school education, vocational education and training, continuing education, higher education, and tertiary education. All are provided by the New Zealand tertiary education system. Post-compulsory education follows compulsory schooling up to the age of 16 and for most students begins in the senior secondary school. Post-school education undertaken after leaving school can include vocational education and training, continuing education, and higher education. Tertiary education is generally understood to mean a level of studies beyond secondary schooling that is broader than higher education traditionally associated with the universities. The distinctions between New Zealand universities and polytechnics are diminishing.

All universities offer bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. Most programmes leading to the bachelor's degree take three years to complete (four years in the case of engineering; five years in the case of architecture and veterinary; six years in the case of medicine). In some faculties a bachelor's honours degree is conferred after an additional year of undergraduate study. A postgraduate diploma usually requires one year of study after the bachelor's degree, while a master's degree usually requires two years' work after a bachelor's degree or one year after an honours degree. Master's degrees traditionally consist of a thesis based on the results of original research, but increasingly master's degrees by papers, or papers plus research, are becoming available. A doctorate normally takes at least three years of full-time study and research. The degree is awarded on the basis of the thesis, requiring original research and an oral examination. In special circumstances, examiners may also require the candidate to take a written examination. Polytechnics provide a diverse range of academic, vocational and professional programmes ranging from National Certificate to degree level. The major qualifications provided by Colleges of Education are a three-year Diploma of Education and a three- to four-year Bachelor of Education degree, awarded jointly with the local university, or by the college itself. In the case of secondary teacher training, a one year, postgraduate diploma is awarded. A Higher Diploma of Teaching and an Advanced Diploma of Teaching are available for practising teachers.

For 2011, primary and intermediate schools are required to be open for instruction for at least 390 half days (or 195 full days) each year and secondary and composite schools for at least 380 half days (190 full days). The school year is normally divided into four terms (previously it was divided into three terms). The change was made after pilot studies showed that students became less tired and were able to concentrate and work better when terms were shorter and holiday breaks more frequent. Students have a six-week summer holiday and three two-week breaks between each of the four terms. A report (Ministry of Education, 1999) recommended that schools should be open for 200 days, and open for instruction for 190 days for Years 1-10 and for 180 days for Years 11-13. Open for instruction should be defined as "instructional time when the focus of learning is the seven essential learning areas, the eight essential skills and the values which underpin them." This definition excludes administrative time, break times and non-instructional activities. Student entitlement to instruction should be 950 hours a year, except for Years 1 and 2. It has



been recommended that hours of instruction be set at a minimum of four hours a day for Years 1 and 2 and a minimum of five hours a day for Years 3-13. The report also observed that “an entitlement to 950 hours of instruction is greater than at present according to the information provided by primary schools in the statistical survey data. This time allocation would be the same as it is at present for secondary schools if it were not eroded by administrative and non-instructional tasks.”

The academic year extends from late February or early March to November. The long summer vacation is from mid-November to mid-February. Auckland, Lincoln and Otago universities operate a two-semester system, with intakes into both semesters in some programmes. This provides for twelve to thirteen weeks of teaching in the first half-year, followed by examinations and study break from early June to early July, then twelve to thirteen further weeks of teaching, followed again by several weeks of examinations. Each semester is itself in two parts, separated by a study break of one or two weeks. There is a restricted number of courses during the summer.

## The educational process

The previous curriculum, implemented from 1992 onwards, was the first outcomes-focused curriculum implemented in the country, e.g. a curriculum setting out what students are expected to know and to be able to do. Since it was launched, there has been no slowing of the pace of social change. Population has become increasingly diverse, technologies are more sophisticated, and the demands of the workplace are more complex. For this reason, a review of the curriculum was undertaken in the years 2000–2002. Following this review, it was agreed that the national curriculum should be revised. A widely representative reference group oversaw a development process that included trials in schools, collaborative working parties, online discussions, and an inquiry into relevant national and international research. This process led to the publication of *The New Zealand Curriculum: Draft for Consultation 2006*, submitted to consultation in November 2006. The Ministry of Education received more than 10,000 submissions in response. These were collated and analyzed and were taken into consideration. (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Pre-2007 versions of the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) covering years 1-13 made reference to seven ‘essential learning areas’ (eight areas in the draft revised curriculum of 2006, e.g. English; learning languages; mathematics and statistics; science; technology; social sciences; the arts; health and physical education), as well as eight groupings of ‘essential skills’: communication skills; numeracy skills; information skills; problem-solving skills; self-management and competitive skills; social and co-operative skills; physical skills; and work and study skills. (Ministry of Education, 2006). As part of the revision process, the attitudes, skills and values of the national curriculum have also been reviewed. A framework of key competencies has been proposed, outlining what is needed by everyone for a good life and well-functioning society. These key competencies integrate essential skills, knowledge, attitudes and values. (Ministry of Education, 2004 and 2006).

From the perspective of NZC 2007, curriculum design and review is a continuous, cyclic process. It involves making decisions about how to give effect to the national curriculum in ways that best address the particular needs, interests, and

circumstances of the school's students and community. Curriculum change should build on existing good practice and aim to maximize the use of local resources and opportunities. Curriculum is designed and interpreted in a three-stage process: as the national curriculum, the school curriculum, and the classroom curriculum. The national curriculum provides the framework and common direction for schools, regardless of type, size, or location. It gives schools the scope, flexibility, and authority they need to design and shape their curriculum so that teaching and learning is meaningful and beneficial to their particular communities of students. In turn, the design of each school's curriculum should allow teachers the scope to make interpretations in response to the particular needs, interests, and talents of individuals and groups of students in their classes. All New Zealand students, regardless of where they are situated, should experience a rich and balanced education that embraces the intent of the national curriculum. The principles should underpin and guide the design, practice, and evaluation of curriculum at every stage. The values, key competencies, and learning areas provide the basis for teaching and learning across schools and within schools. This learning will contribute to the realization of a vision of young people who will be confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners.

In the NZC 2007 the principles, or foundations of curriculum decision making, embody beliefs about what is important and desirable in school curriculum, nationally and locally. They should underpin all school decision making. These principles put students at the centre of teaching and learning, asserting that they should experience a curriculum that engages and challenges them, is forward-looking and inclusive, and affirms New Zealand's unique identity. All curricula should be consistent with the following eight statements:

- High expectations: The curriculum supports and empowers all students to learn and achieve personal excellence, regardless of their individual circumstances.
- Treaty of Waitangi: The curriculum acknowledges the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa New Zealand. All students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of *te reo Maori me ona tikanga*.
- Cultural diversity: The curriculum reflects New Zealand's cultural diversity and values the histories and traditions of all its people.
- Inclusion: The curriculum is non-sexist, non-racist, and non-discriminatory; it ensures that students' identities, languages, abilities, and talents are recognised and affirmed and that their learning needs are addressed.
- Learning to learn: The curriculum encourages all students to reflect on their own learning processes and to learn how to learn.
- Community engagement: The curriculum has meaning for students, connects with their wider lives, and engages the support of their families, *whanau*, and communities.
- Coherence: The curriculum offers all students a broad education that makes links within and across learning areas, provides for coherent transitions, and opens up pathways to further learning.



- Future focus: The curriculum encourages students to look to the future by exploring such significant future-focused issues as sustainability, citizenship, enterprise, and globalisation. (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Every decision relating to curriculum and every interaction that takes place in a school reflects the values of the individuals involved and the collective values of the institution. Among others, students will be encouraged to value: excellence, by aiming high and by persevering in the face of difficulties; innovation, inquiry, and curiosity, by thinking critically, creatively, and reflectively; diversity, as found in our different cultures, languages, and heritages; equity, through fairness and social justice; community and participation for the common good; ecological sustainability, which includes care for the environment; integrity, which involves being honest, responsible, and accountable and acting ethically; and to respect themselves, others, and human rights. The specific ways in which these values find expression in an individual school will be guided by dialogue between the school and its community. They should be evident in the school's philosophy, structures, curriculum, classrooms, and relationships. When the school community has developed strongly held and clearly articulated values, those values are likely to be expressed in everyday actions and interactions within the school.

The NZC 2007 identifies five key competencies: thinking; using language, symbols, and texts; managing self; relating to others; participating and contributing. More complex than skills, the competencies draw also on knowledge, attitudes, and values in ways that lead to action. They are not separate or stand-alone. They are the key to learning in every learning area. The development of the competencies is both an end in itself (a goal) and the means by which other ends are achieved. Successful learners make use of the competencies in combination with all the other resources available to them. These include personal goals, other people, community knowledge and values, cultural tools (language, symbols, and texts), and the knowledge and skills found in different learning areas. As they develop the competencies, successful learners are also motivated to use them, recognizing when and how to do so and why. The competencies continue to develop over time, shaped by interactions with people, places, ideas, and things. Students need to be challenged and supported to develop them in contexts that are increasingly wide-ranging and complex. The curriculum for early childhood education (*Te Whariki: He Whariki Matauranga mo nga Mokopuna o Aotearoa*), based on four principles (empowerment, holistic development, family and community, and relationships), includes five curriculum strands intended to provide a foundation for lifelong learning: exploration; communication; well-being; contribution; and belonging. These strands correspond to the key competencies above. (*Ibid.*).

Te reo Maori and New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) are official languages of New Zealand, on the basis of The Maori Language Act of 1987 and the New Zealand Sign Language Act of 2006. English, the medium for teaching and learning in most schools, is a de facto official language by virtue of its widespread use. For these reasons, these three languages have special mention in the NZC 2007. All three may be studied as first or additional languages. They may also be the medium of instruction across all learning areas.



The NZC 2007 makes reference to eight learning areas: English, the arts, health and physical education, learning languages, mathematics and statistics, science, social sciences, and technology. The learning associated with each area is part of a broad, general education and lays a foundation for later specialization. Like the key competencies, this learning is both end and means: valuable in itself and valuable for the pathways it opens to other learning. While the learning areas are presented as distinct, this should not limit the ways in which schools structure the learning experiences offered to students. All learning should make use of the natural connections that exist between learning areas and that link learning areas to the values and key competencies.

English is structured around two interconnected strands, each encompassing the oral, written, and visual forms of the language. The strands differentiate between the modes in which students are primarily: (i) making meaning of ideas or information they receive (listening, reading, and viewing); (ii) creating meaning for themselves or others (speaking, writing, and presenting). The arts learning area comprises four disciplines: dance, drama, music–sound arts, and visual arts. Each discipline is structured around four interrelated strands: understanding the arts in context; developing practical knowledge in the arts; developing ideas in the arts; and communicating and interpreting in the arts. Over the course of years 1–8, students will learn in all four disciplines. Over the course of years 9–10, they will learn in at least two. Students in years 11–13 may specialize in one or more of the disciplines or undertake study in multimedia and other new technologies.

Health and physical education encompasses three different but related subjects: health education, physical education, and home economics. It is organized around four strands: (i) personal health and physical development; (ii) movement concepts and motor skills; (iii) relationships with other people; and (iv) healthy communities and environments. Seven key areas of learning are covered, e.g. mental health, sexuality education, food and nutrition, body care and physical safety, physical activity, sport studies, and outdoor education. All seven areas are to be included in teaching and learning programmes at both primary and secondary levels. It is expected that schools will consult with their communities when developing health and sexuality education programmes.

Communication is the core strand of the learning languages area. This strand is supported by two further strands, which are directed specifically at developing the linguistic and cultural awareness needed for communicative competence. The achievement objectives of the mathematics and statistics area are presented in three strands: number and algebra; geometry and measurement; and statistics. The fundamental aims of science education are expressed as a series of achievement aims, grouped by strand. The achievement objectives at each level are derived from the aims and are similarly grouped by strand. The ‘nature of science’ strand is the overarching, unifying strand. Through it, students learn what science is and how scientists work. They develop the skills, attitudes, and values to build a foundation for understanding the world. The ‘living world’ strand is about living things and how they interact with each other and the environment. The ‘planet Earth and beyond’ strand is about the interconnecting systems and processes of the Earth, the other parts of the solar system, and the universe beyond. The ‘physical world’ strand provides explanations for a wide range of physical phenomena. The ‘material world’ strand



involves the study of matter and the changes it undergoes; in their study of chemistry, students develop understandings of the composition and properties of matter, the changes it undergoes, and the energy involved. The core strand (nature of science), is required learning for all students up to year 10. The other strands provide contexts for learning. Over the course of years 1–10, science programmes should include learning in all four context strands. Students in years 11–13 are able to specialize in one or more science disciplines, depending on the choices offered in their schools. The achievement objectives in the context strands provide for strand-based specializations, but a wider range of programmes is possible; for example, schools may offer programmes in biochemistry, education for sustainability, agriculture, horticulture, human biology, or electronics.

The social sciences learning area is about how societies work and how people can participate as critical, active, informed, and responsible citizens. Contexts are drawn from the past, present, and future and from places within and beyond New Zealand. Four conceptual strands are considered: identity, culture, and organization; place and environment; continuity and change; and the economic world. Separate social science disciplines are offered in the senior secondary school. Achievement objectives are provided for social studies, economics, geography, and history, but the range of possible social science disciplines that schools can offer is much broader, including, for example, classical studies, media studies, sociology, psychology, and legal studies.

The learning area technology comprises three strands: technological practice, technological knowledge, and nature of technology. Teaching and learning programmes will integrate all three, though a particular unit of work may focus on just one or two. Knowledge and skills are learned in context. By offering a variety of contexts, teachers help their students to recognize links and develop generic understandings. Students should be encouraged to access relevant knowledge and skills from other learning areas. In years 11–13, students work with fewer contexts in greater depth. This requires them to continue to draw fully on learning from other disciplines. For example, students working with materials and/or food technology will need to refer to chemistry, and students working on an architectural project will find that an understanding of art history is invaluable. Some schools may offer courses such as electronics and horticulture as technology specializations. Learning for senior students opens up pathways that can lead to technology-related careers. Students may access the workplace learning opportunities available in a range of industries or move on to further specialized tertiary study. (*Ibid.*).

While there is no formula that will guarantee learning for every student in every context, there is extensive, well-documented evidence about the kinds of teaching approaches that consistently have a positive impact on student learning. This evidence tells us that students learn best when teachers: create a supportive learning environment; encourage reflective thought and action; enhance the relevance of new learning; facilitate shared learning; make connections to prior learning and experience; provide sufficient opportunities to learn; and inquire into the teaching–learning relationship. Since any teaching strategy works differently in different contexts for different students, effective pedagogy requires that teachers inquire into the impact of their teaching on their students. Information and communication technology (ICT) has a major impact on the world in which young people live.





Similarly, e-learning (that is, learning supported by or facilitated by ICT) has considerable potential to support the teaching approaches. Schools should explore not only how ICT can supplement traditional ways of teaching but also how it can open up new and different ways of learning.

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve students' learning and teachers' teaching as both student and teacher respond to the information that it provides. With this in mind, schools need to consider how they will gather, analyze, and use assessment information so that it is effective in meeting this purpose. Assessment for the purpose of improving student learning is best understood as an ongoing process that arises out of the interaction between teaching and learning. Effective assessment: benefits and involves students; supports teaching and learning goals; is planned and communicated; is suited to purpose; and is valid and fair. Assessment is integral to the teaching inquiry process because it is the basis for both the focusing inquiry and the learning inquiry. Schools need to know what impact their programmes are having on student learning. An important way of getting this information is by collecting and analyzing school-wide assessment data. Schools can then use this information as the basis for changes to policies or programmes or changes to teaching practices as well as for reporting to the board of trustees, parents, and the Ministry of Education. Assessment information may also be used to compare the relative achievement of different groups of students or to compare the achievement of the school's students against national standards.

The NZC provides the basis for the ongoing development of achievement standards and unit standards registered on the National Qualifications Framework, which are designed to lead to the award of qualifications in years 11–13. These include the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) and other national certificates that schools may choose to offer. The NZC, together with the Qualifications Framework, gives schools the flexibility to design and deliver programmes that will engage all students and offer them appropriate learning pathways. The flexibility of the qualifications system also allows schools to keep assessment to levels that are manageable and reasonable for both students and teachers. Not all aspects of the curriculum need to be formally assessed, and excessive high-stakes assessment in years 11–13 is to be avoided.

The NZC, which sets the direction for teaching and learning in English-medium schools, and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, the curriculum for Maori-medium settings, became mandatory at the beginning of 2010. During 2008–2010 the Ministry of Education actively provided support to schools to understand and implement the new curricula, and to use them to develop their own school-specific curricula in association with their communities. (Ministry of Education, 2010).

Each board of trustees, through the principal and staff, is required to develop and implement a curriculum for students in years 1–13: (a) that is underpinned by and consistent with the principles set out in the NZC; (b) in which the values set out in the NZC are encouraged and modelled and are explored by students; and (c) that supports students to develop the key competencies set out in the NZC. Each board of trustees is required to provide all students in years 1–10 with effectively taught programmes of learning in the learning areas identified in the NZC. All schools with students in years 7–10 should be working towards offering students opportunities for learning a second



or subsequent language. Teaching programmes for students in years 11–13 should be based, in the first instance, on the appropriate national curriculum statements. Each board of trustees is required: to gather information that is sufficiently comprehensive to enable evaluation of student progress and achievement; to identify students and groups of students who are not achieving, who are at risk of not achieving, or who have special needs and to identify aspects of the curriculum that require particular attention; in consultation with the school's Maori community, to develop and make known its plans and targets for improving the achievement of Maori students. Each board of trustees, through the principal and staff, is required to implement its curriculum in accordance with the priorities set out in the National Education Goals and the National Administration Guidelines. (Ministry of Education, 2007).

National Standards aim to lift achievement in literacy and numeracy by helping teachers, students and families be clear about what students should achieve and by when. The Ministry of Education consulted on National Standards with parents, families/*whanau* and the education sector during May-July 2009. The views expressed have been useful in finalizing the National Standards, which came into effect in 2010 for English-medium schools with pupils in years 1 to 8. The National Standards will help by setting clear expectations for the reading, writing, and mathematics knowledge and skills students need to achieve at each level of the curriculum. While working on improving reading, writing, and mathematics it is important to also focus on increasing students' capacity to learn. The key competencies in the NZC are designed to help students develop a positive disposition towards learning, as well as the ability to think critically, manage themselves, set goals, overcome obstacles and work with others. These will impact on how successful students are in literacy and numeracy and in ongoing learning.

The standards will provide teachers with clear learning goals and information about students' progress. Teachers will use this evidence to help make decisions to support student learning. Literacy and numeracy teaching is effective when it is taught in engaging contexts that connect to students' lives. Teachers will be able to draw on the learning areas to provide these contexts for teaching literacy and numeracy. They will also be able to clearly identify the literacy and numeracy demands of the learning areas and plan to assist students to achieve. This information will contribute to raising achievement standards in reading, writing, and mathematics and across the curriculum as a whole. The NZC provides direction and opportunity for schools to develop their own school curriculum to meet the learning needs of their students. The National Standards will provide schools with valuable evidence to more fully understand those learning needs and to make decisions about curriculum planning, implementation and review. This ongoing curriculum planning and review will ensure achievement in literacy and numeracy and across the curriculum is improved.

### **Pre-primary education**

Most early childhood services in New Zealand have evolved from individual and community initiatives, resulting in a diverse system of early childhood education (ECE) with a high degree of autonomy. There are two main types of service, teacher-led and parent-led. In teacher-led services 50% of the adults who educate and care for children must be qualified and registered as ECE teachers. Teacher-led services include kindergartens, education and care services. In home-based services all the



coordinators must be qualified and registered. All early childhood centres wishing to receive government funding must be licensed and chartered. Licensing ensure that basic standards of quality are maintained. A charter sets out a centre's objectives and practices. Chartered groups receive funding in the form of a bulk grant.

Kindergartens accept children between 2 and 5 years old and can have set morning and afternoon sessions for different age groups. Some offer all-day or flexible sessions for a wider age range of children. Kindergartens are non-profit, community-based services managed by a Kindergarten Association and they work closely with children's families/*whanau*. Education and care services run all-day sessions, or flexible-hour programmes for children from birth to school age. Some services cater for specific age ranges, e.g. under 2 years. They may be privately owned, owned and operated by a community group, or operated within an organization for employees with young children. Some have a particular language and cultural base, others have a specific set of beliefs about teaching and learning, e.g. Rudolph Steiner and Montessori services. Home-based education and care service is provided for groups of up to four 0-5 year olds at a time, in either the educator's home or the children's. Each educator must belong to a home-based service and is supported by a coordinator who is a registered ECE teacher.

Parent-led services are where parents and family or caregivers educate and care for their children. Play centres and *kohanga reo* are two types of licensed, parent-led services. Play groups are a type of certificated, parent-led ECE service. *Nga Kohanga Reo* cater for children from birth to school age in a Maori language and *tikanga* Maori environment. Parents and *whanau* manage and operate the *kohanga reo*, with the support and guidance of the *Te Kohanga Reo* National Trust. Play centres are collectively supervised and managed by parents for children from birth to school age. They have strong focus on parent education as well as children's learning. Play centres are supported by Play centre Associations around the country. Play groups are run by parents and cater for groups of children from birth to school age and their parents. Typically they meet for one to five sessions each week to provide play, social and learning opportunities for children. Play groups can be certificated and may be less formal than other kinds of ECE services. *Pasifika* play groups focus on developing and maintaining Pasifika languages and cultures. *Puna ko hungahunga* are play groups that are run with a Maori language and *tikanga* Maori focus (although some learning may be in both English and Maori).

The ten-year strategic plan for ECE, *Pathways to the Future*, was released in 2002 after extensive consultation with the ECE sector. It has three main goals: increasing accessibility and participation in quality ECE services; improving the quality of ECE services; and promoting collaborative relationships. To support the ECE plan, a new funding and regulatory system has been developed in the sector. One key feature of the new approach is that, beginning in July 2007, all 3- and 4-year-olds (and 5-year-olds with a transition-to-school plan) are eligible for 20 hours free ECE per week in ECE centres. In January 2009 the Minister of Education renamed the Free ECE 20 hours early childhood education programme as 20 Hours ECE. All 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds enrolled at an ECE service that offers 20 Hours ECE can get up to six hours per day, up to 20 hours per week of early childhood education where no fee can be charged for those hours. 20 Hours ECE starts when a child turns 3 and finishes



when they are enrolled in, and attending, school. From 1 July 2010 all licensed teacher-led ECE services, *kohanga reo* and play centres can offer 20 Hours ECE.

As mentioned, the curriculum for early childhood education (*Te Whariki: He Whariki Matauranga mo nga Mokopuna o Aotearoa*), provides children with a foundation for ongoing learning. It is based on four principles (empowerment, holistic development, family and community, and relationships), and includes five curriculum strands: exploration; communication; well-being; contribution; and belonging. Together, they provide a foundation for lifelong learning. These strands correspond to the key competencies identified in the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC).

According to the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008, the ‘curriculum standard: general’ is the standard that requires every licensed service provider to:

- plan, implement, and evaluate a curriculum that is designed to enhance children’s learning and development through the provision of learning experiences and that is consistent with any curriculum framework prescribed by the Minister that applies to the service; and that: (i) responds to the learning interests, strengths, and capabilities of enrolled children; (ii) provides a positive learning environment for those children; (iii) reflects an understanding of learning and development that is consistent with current research, theory, and practices in early childhood education; (iv) encourages children to be confident in their own culture and develop an understanding, and respect for, other cultures; (v) acknowledges and reflects the unique place of Maori as *tangata whenua*; and (vi) respects and acknowledges the aspirations of parents, family, and *whanau*;
- make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the service provider collaborates with the parents and, where appropriate, the family or whanau of the enrolled children in relation to the learning and development of, and decision making about, those children; and
- obtain information and guidance from agencies with expertise in early childhood learning and development, to the extent necessary, to (i) support the learning and development of enrolled children; and (ii) work effectively with parents and, where appropriate, family or whanau.

Assessing children’s learning at ECE level does not involve tests or formal assignments. Instead the service records child’s progress as a series of photos, learning stories and samples of work. Parents will see and talk about their child’s progress with the teachers regularly to help them plan child’s learning. When children leave the service parents receive their learning record. Most children start school on or shortly after their fifth birthday although school is not compulsory until they are 6.

In 2002, there were 3,488 licensed early childhood services, including: 606 kindergartens; 492 play centres; 1,612 education and child care services; 194 chartered home-based services; 38 casual education and child care centres; 545 *kohanga reo* and the Correspondence School. The number of children enrolled was 156,187.



As at 1 July 2009 there were 210,437 enrolments in licensed (180,910) and licence-exempt (29,527) early childhood education services; of these, 36,118 enrolments (17%) were identified as Maori and 11,060 (5%) identified as Pasifika. There were 4,890 early childhood education services and 18,397 teaching staff at teacher-led licensed services; of these, 1,548 (8%) were identified as Maori teachers and 1,539 (8%) as Pasifika teachers. Early intervention services are comprehensive services provided to children who have been identified in their early years as having special education needs. The services provided are specific to the needs of the individual child, with the overall aim of enabling the child to participate in early childhood education and preparing them to transition into school. In 2009/10, early intervention services were provided to 12,342 children. Of those, 2,607 (21.1%) were Maori children and 751 (6.1%) were Pasifika children. Overall participation rates, measured by the percentage of year 1 students in schools who participated in early childhood education before starting school, remain high. In 2009, the percentage of year 1 students who had attended early childhood education immediately before starting school was 93.9%. For Maori children, the rate of prior participation increased to 89.3% in 2009 and for Pasifika children, the rate is 84%. While there have been increases in overall participation and for each of the population groups, Maori children and Pasifika children are still less likely to attend early childhood education before starting school. The average number of hours children are participating in early childhood education in licensed services is increasing. In 2009, children participated for an average of 19.5 hours per week, up from 18.9 hours in 2008. The proportion of early childhood education teachers who are registered has grown over time: in 2009, 64% of teachers were registered. (Ministry of Education, 2010).

According to more recent figures made available by the Ministry of Education, on 31 March 2011 there were around 211,000 enrolments in over 5,100 early childhood education services, employing 19,800 teachers.

## Primary education

Primary education covers the first six years of compulsory schooling. The final two years of the primary course, years 7 and 8 (or Forms 1 and 2), may be taken at: a full primary school (which generally caters for students aged between 0-8, although some only go up to year 6—contributing schools); an intermediate school (providing education for year 7 and 8 students); an area school (which accepts students from year 1 to 13); or a years 7-13 (Forms 1-7) school—depending on where the child lives. On completing year 8 (Form 2), a pupil normally enters year 9 (Form 3) of a secondary school, or alternatively, year 9 (Form 3) in an area or years 7-13 (Forms 1-7) school. Composite/area schools, which are usually based in rural areas, combine primary, intermediate and secondary schooling at one location. A composite school (like an area school) provides both primary and secondary education, but depending on its classification may not provide the full range of year levels to year 13. Schooling is free from age 5 and attendance at a registered school is compulsory for all New Zealand citizens and residents aged from 6 to 16 years. While most students attend state-funded schools, there are a number of other choices for parents and students.

State schools are co-educational at primary and intermediate level, but some offer single-sex education at the secondary level. Some offer special programmes for



adult students or run community education classes. There are growing links between schools, universities, polytechnics and other tertiary and early childhood education providers. Integrated schools are schools which were previously private and have now been integrated into the state system. They follow the state curriculum requirements but incorporate their own special character (generally a philosophical or religious belief) into the school programme. Integrated schools receive the same government funding for each student as the state schools, but the buildings and land are privately owned. So, they meet the costs of property development from attendance dues. They also receive government funding for their maintenance costs.

*Te kura kaupapa Maori* are state schools where the teaching is in te reo Maori and is based on Maori culture and values. These schools follow the curriculum for Maori-medium teaching, learning and assessment, *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*. A key goal of *kura kaupapa* is to produce students who are equally skilled in communicating in both Maori and English. *Kura kaupapa* generally provide education for students from years 1 to 8 or years 1 to 13. *Wharekura* are schools that cater for students above year 8. Some *wharekura* cater for years 1 to 10, some are years 1 to 13 and some are years 9 to 13.

Independent (or private) schools are governed by their own independent boards but are required to meet certain standards in order to be registered. Independent schools may be either co-educational or single-sex. They charge fees, but also receive some funding from the government. Boarding schools may either be independent or part of a state-funded school. Both systems charge boarding fees.

The Correspondence School is a national school, funded by the Ministry of Education, which provides courses for early childhood, primary, secondary and adult students. Full-time students are enrolled for a variety of reasons, including distance from other schools, a wide range of special needs, medical and psychological problems, or other special reasons. In some circumstances, the school provides courses for students in other New Zealand primary and secondary schools. It also educates the children of New Zealand citizens overseas, where suitable schooling is not available, and offers valuable second-chance education to adult students who wish to improve their qualifications.

Home-based schooling is available for parents who want to educate their children at home, provided they maintain a standard of education equivalent to that of a registered school. They need to get approval to do so from the Ministry of Education and are given an annual grant to help with the cost of learning materials. Home-schooling parents may purchase teaching services from The Correspondence School, if they wish. Home-schooling is growing, but still involves less than 1% of total school enrolments. On 1 July 2010 there were 6,782 home-schooled students recorded on the Ministry of Education's homeschooling database.

Five-year-olds who start school begin as a year 0 or year 1 (formerly Primer 1 or J1) and progress each year to year 13 (formerly Form 7). Most children in years 0-8 are aged between 5 and 12 years. Children enrolled in a primary school can attend either a contributing primary school (years 0-6) or a full primary school (years 0-8). Children attending a contributing primary school will generally move on to an



intermediate school (years 7-8). There are also schools known as middle schools (or junior high schools/junior colleges) that cater for years 7-10 students.

In years 1-8, pupils work in a wide variety of learning situations. They are usually based in one classroom (which may be open-plan space, housing two or more classes) but may join with other classes for some activities; they normally have one main classroom teacher for the whole school day. In the classroom, group activities help children learn to share and work cooperatively. At other times they will work alone on projects. Class sizes vary, but are generally smaller in the junior school level (years 1-3). Class size is determined by the school, within guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education. For years 1-8 pupils, the school day usually begins at about 9:00 and finishes at about 15:00 with breaks (intervals) mid-morning, lunch time and mid-afternoon.

Within the state school system there is provision for children's individual learning styles and room for different philosophies of education. Some schools develop programmes with a strong focus on particular interests of the children and others work in a more formal, structured style. While each State integrated school has its own special character, other State schools also offer choices for parents. In some areas schools offer Maori medium education; in some, Montessori or other programmes are offered. The variety available means that parents may wish to visit several schools before making a choice about the preferred one for their children.

The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* form the national curriculum. These set the direction for teaching and learning in Aotearoa New Zealand schools and provide guidance for schools to develop a curriculum that meets the learning needs of their students. The NZC applies to all English-medium state schools (including integrated schools). *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* applies to teaching in Maori-medium settings. The aspiration is to develop successful learners, who will grow as competent and confident learners, effective communicators in the Maori world, healthy of mind, body and soul and secure in their identity, and sense of belonging. They will have the skills and knowledge to participate in and contribute to Maori society and the wider world.

As mentioned, there are eight learning areas in the NZC, e.g. English, the arts, health and physical education, learning languages, mathematics and statistics, science, social sciences, and technology. The key competencies which sit alongside these are designed to encourage enjoyment of learning, the ability to think critically, manage self, set goals overcome obstacles and get along with others—the attributes they need to succeed as adults. Within each curriculum area, students progress through eight levels. Each level represents a learning stage in that subject. Most years 1-8 pupils will be learning between levels 1-5. There are nine learning areas in *Te Maurautanga o Aotearoa*, e.g. mathematics, science, technology, social sciences, the arts, health and well-being, *Te Reo Maori* (Maori language and literature), English language, and learning languages.

The learning areas ensure a broad general education, and lay a foundation for later specialization. The level at which each child is learning will vary by age and curriculum subject. Children will progress to the next level in a particular subject



when they have mastered most of the skills, knowledge and understanding required at their current learning stage.

In recent years, the overall approach to assessing progress and achievement has changed considerably. There has been a shift away from giving a simple mark or a grade, to an approach called assessment for learning. This involves teachers setting learning goals with students, students evaluating their own progress then teachers giving them feedback on how they are doing and what they need to do next. Most schools in New Zealand now use this type of assessment because it is effective in raising students' achievement whatever their level of ability. From 2010, English-medium schools with years 1-8 pupils will be using the National Standards to assess and report on each child's progress and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Children's progress and achievement in relation to National Standards will not be based on a single test. They will be assessed in a number of ways including what the teacher sees in the classroom and how they rate their own progress, as well as results from formal assessments.

National Standards and *Nga Whanaketanga Rumaki Maori* describe the literacy and numeracy knowledge, skills and understanding needed by years 1-8 students if they are to fully access, and meet the demands of, the NZC or *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* across all learning areas. Like the curriculum achievement objectives from which they are derived, National Standards and *Nga Whanaketanga Rumaki Maori* provide descriptions of expected achievement. However, unlike the achievement standards, they specifically and definitively link to a period of time (after one, two, or three years at school) or year level (end of year 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8). They provide reference points of expected achievement which can be used nationwide to consider progress and achievement. They describe what students should be aiming for, or beyond, as they move through years 1-8 of their schooling.

Schools are expected to report to parents on the progress of their children. Usually schools give written reports, and parents can also meet teachers to talk about their children. Parents are entitled to ask for a meeting with their child's teachers.

In June 2010, the Education Review Office released a report investigating how well schools included students with high special education needs. The evaluation reports that approximately half of the 229 schools in the study demonstrated inclusive practice, including: having ethical standards and leadership that built the culture of an inclusive school; having well-organized systems, effective teamwork and constructive relationships that identified and supported the inclusion of students with high needs; using innovative and flexible practices that managed the complex and unique challenges relating to including students with high needs. A further 30% of schools had some inclusive practices. Systems, teaching, attitudes or approaches at each of these schools meant that, in some significant ways, students with high needs were not fully included in the academic, extracurricular or social life of the school. The remaining 20% of schools were found to have few inclusive practices. The report recommended that the Ministry: build school-wide capability to ensure teaching is effective for all students by extending whole-of-school professional development programmes that are proven to be successful review how well principal training and support foster leadership for inclusive schools consider, as part of the special education review, how effective mainstream schools, special schools, Group Special





Education (Ministry of Education) and Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs) can work together to improve the level of inclusion in New Zealand schools. (Ministry of Education, 2010).

In 2009 there were 2,581 schools with 760,859 students; of these, 166,998 (22%) students identified as Maori and 73,081 (10%) as Pasifika. A total of 151,314 students were participating in Maori language education (19.9% of the student population), 28,171 students were participating in Maori-medium education, and 1,465 in Pasifika-medium education. Approximately 19,000 students received individualized special education support in schools. There were 51,974 teaching staff in schools (teaching staff numbers include principals, senior and middle management, teachers, resource teachers, community education teachers, guidance counsellors and therapists); of these, 4,943 (10%) were registered teachers who identified as Maori and 1,310 (3%) were registered teachers who identified as Pasifika. (Ministry of Education, 2010).

According to recent figures made available by the Ministry of Education, on 31 March 2011 there were about 764,000 students in 2,030 primary schools and 330 secondary schools, employing 52,000 teachers.

## Secondary education

Students commence secondary education (years 9-13 or Forms 3-7) at approximately 13 years of age. Typically, in Year 9 students move on from primary/intermediate (unless they are attending a composite school or middle school) to secondary education schools (also known as high school or college), which are state, integrated or private, and which offer a wide range of subjects. Schools are able to set their own curriculum objectives within the national guidelines set by the Ministry of Education. Some secondary schools are able to provide on-site boarding facilities.

Middle schools accept students from years 7-10. Although most secondary schools accept students from years 9-13, some cater for years 7-13. Most secondary schools are state schools established and funded by the government through the Ministry of Education. These schools are broadly similar in type and facilities. Most of them are co-educational, but about 10% are single-sex schools, some also have boarding facilities. There are a small number of private (independent) secondary schools outside of the state system. These schools are generally affiliated to religious organizations. Students at independent schools follow the official curriculum in subject areas for public examinations. A number of these private schools have become integrated with the state system and are known as state integrated schools. These schools receive government funding, but they have kept their special philosophical or religious features (e.g. Catholic schools teach Catholic doctrine). Many of the private and integrated schools are single-sex. As mentioned, there are also area/composite schools, mainly in rural areas, which teach at both primary and secondary level.

Most secondary schools have a longer school day than primary/intermediate schools. Students often start at 8:40 am and end at 3:20 pm. The day normally starts in a form, home or *whanau* class with a roll call and daily notices. Students then break into subject classes, moving to different classrooms and different teachers for each subject. In larger schools, teachers teach only their specialist subject(s) and teach



hundreds of students each week. Lessons (called periods) can be 50 minutes to an hour long, and in an average day students will have five or six periods. Each school has a different timetable system. Schools change their timetable each term and some schools have several different timetables which they rotate weekly throughout the year.

Until year 10 all students have opportunities to achieve to the best of their abilities across the breadth and depth of the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) within all learning areas – including values and key competencies. This lays a foundation for living and for further learning. Students' learning progress is closely linked to their ongoing development of literacy and numeracy skills. In Years 11 to 13, students can choose which subjects they want to study for the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). Taking a wide variety of subjects will help keep their options open as plans often change as teens' interests and abilities develop. A key time when students need help is when they are choosing the subjects they want to study in year 11. In most schools this happens midway through year 10. This is when they need to start looking into the qualifications they will need when they leave school and move on to work or tertiary study. Tertiary courses have differing requirements so students need to make sure they keep their options open as long as possible, especially if they are not sure what they want to do. In addition to the traditional subject areas, many schools offer courses that lead to trades or vocations such as travel and tourism, engineering and hospitality. These courses may be assessed by unit standards and credited to the NCEA.

In years 9 and 10 teachers use a range of methods to assess student progress depending on what is most appropriate for their students. PATs (Progressive Achievement Tests) are used to assess reading vocabulary and comprehension, listening comprehension and mathematical ability. Computer tools used to assess reading, writing and mathematical ability. STAR (Supplementary Tests of Achievement in Reading) are used to assess word recognition, sentence comprehension, paragraph comprehension, vocabulary and reading different writing styles. Schools also use a range of teacher-developed tests.

Under the previous system, middle and senior secondary school students used to take the following national examinations: School Certificate; Sixth Form Certificate; Higher School Certificate; and University Entrance, Bursaries and Scholarships. The School Certificate examination was taken by most students at the end of three years of secondary education (Year 11 or Form 5, at about the age of 15). The Sixth Form Certificate was internally assessed at the end of Year 12 (Form 6) and awarded on a single-subject basis to students who had satisfactorily completed an approved course of one year in one or more subjects. The Higher School Certificate was awarded to students who have satisfactorily completed five years of full-time secondary schooling beginning at Form 3. University Entrance, Bursaries and Scholarships were the final school qualifications, usually taken in Year 13 (Form 7). The National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) is the new senior secondary school national qualification being implemented in all schools since 2002. The NCEA replaced the School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate and University Bursaries. There are three NCEA: Level 1 (Year 11 or fifth form), which replaced the School Certificate in 2002; Level 2 (Year 12 or sixth form), introduced in 2003; and Level 3 (Year 13 or seventh form), which replaced University Bursaries in 2004. A



student is awarded a National Certificate when she/he has accumulated sufficient credits by being successfully assessed against National Qualifications Framework standards. NCEA Level 1 is broadly equivalent to the General Certificate of Education (GCE). NCEA Level 3 is equivalent to 'A-Levels' and Australia's Higher School Certificate (HSC).

The NCEA system gives a more accurate picture of a student's achievement, because any student who demonstrates the required skills and knowledge to the level of a particular standard, achieves NCEA credits. Each student receives a School Results Summary that presents all standards taken throughout their school years, and the results for each. Students study a variety of subjects offered by their school. These subjects will have a range of standards that will be used to assess students' progress. The standard describes what the student needs to know or what they must be able to achieve. Each standard is worth credits and students must gain a minimum number of credits to achieve each NCEA level (1, 2 or 3). NCEA credits are earned through a mixture of internal and external assessment. Internal assessment takes place at school in several ways. For example through projects, tests set by teachers or practical work. External assessment is done once a year, through national exams held in late November/December.

There are two types of standards that contribute to NCEA: achievement standards and unit standards. All schools have their own curriculum that outlines their teaching and learning programme. The school's curriculum is based on the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and achievement standards align to this. Achievement standards can be earned with achieved, merit or excellence, depending on how well the student performs. Unit standards aren't usually related directly to the NZC and tend to be used more in workplace-related subjects, such as hospitality, tourism and engineering. Most unit standards are assessed as either achieved or not achieved.

To gain NCEA level 1, a student must achieve 80 credits at level 1 or higher. Eight of these credits must be from numeracy standards and eight other credits must be from literacy standards. These can be assessed in English or *te reo Maori*. NCEA level 2 requires a minimum of 60 credits at level 2 or above and 20 credits at any other level. Credits can be used for more than one qualification; so some NCEA level 1 credits can count towards NCEA level 2. At level 2 there are no specific literacy or numeracy requirements. For NCEA level 3 a student will need to achieve 80 credits, of which 60 must be at level 3 or above, and 20 at level 2 or above. At level 3 there are no specific literacy or numeracy requirements. NCEA certificates can be endorsed with 'merit' or 'excellence', if the student meets the requirements for these. A student needs 50 credits at merit level (or higher) to earn an NCEA with merit, or at least 50 credits at excellence level to achieve an NCEA with excellence.

The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) brings together senior secondary education, industry training and tertiary education under one system. It is coordinated and administered by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). The NZQF contains a comprehensive list of all quality assured qualifications in New Zealand. Established on 1 July 2010, NZQF replaced the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications (also known as KiwiQuals) and the National Qualifications Framework. All qualifications on the Register and the National Qualifications Framework have been placed on the NZQF. The NZQF groups



together qualifications that place similar demands on learners. It has ten levels of qualification. Within any one level, qualifications can cover a wide mix of subjects, and take different amounts of time to complete. Each level is based on the complexity of learning, with level 1 the least complex and level 10 the most. Each level has a designated credit value and qualification type.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) begins at school and with schools' bridging arrangements with tertiary providers. Tertiary TVET is offered at 20 Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics, *wananga*, private training establishments, and in the workplace. Some programmes are also available in government training establishments and several universities. At the upper secondary school level students may begin to specialize in vocational learning or may integrate some vocational courses into a more general programme. This is facilitated by: (a) the qualifications system in which students gain credits against standards registered on the NZQF towards a range of nationally and internationally recognized qualifications; students can accumulate credits in school and in a range of other learning settings; and (b) funding to allow students to take a course beyond the range of the traditional school curriculum while remaining enrolled at school. These programmes allow students to begin work related learning, for example with a polytechnic provider. Secondary-Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) enables schools to purchase tertiary course provision for students. (Ministry of Education, 2009).

### Assessing learning achievement nationwide

The Education Review Office (ERO) was established in 1989 to investigate and report on education in New Zealand schools and early childhood centres. In order to raise the level and quality of both governmental and public information about education in the country, the Office publishes a wide variety of reports on the performance of schools and early childhood services. The starting point for these reports, and the general analytical perspective adopted by the Office, is the student—the young person whose educational needs and expectations society intends to answer and inform. Since July 1990, the Office has reviewed all New Zealand schools and early childhood services at least once, and reported publicly on their performance. Reports on individual institutions have been written for both the governing body of the institution and the responsible Minister. In 1994 the Office initiated the publication of a series of studies of the overall performance of schools and early childhood services, focusing these reports on current educational issues of interest to the government and the general public. The content of these studies is derived from the aggregated findings of review activities carried out by the Office.

The primary responsibility for the quality of education delivered rests with the organization that provides those services. However, quality assurance processes are in place to ensure government and individuals are investing time and money in quality education and training. Quality assurance focuses on the quality of learning outcomes recognized through qualifications as a whole. It also examines the systems and processes that support delivery of quality by providers. The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) is a comprehensive list of all quality assured qualifications in New Zealand. This includes NCEA (National Certificates of Educational Achievement) which are the national qualifications for senior secondary school students. Quality assurance bodies are responsible for approving qualifications



in New Zealand and for the quality that underpins the delivery of those qualifications. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) approves all qualifications outside of universities. This includes national qualifications delivered by schools, institutes of technology and polytechnics, private training establishments, wananga and government training establishments, as well as all degrees outside universities. The Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) of the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (branded as Universities New Zealand) approves all university qualifications. Only those tertiary qualifications and providers that are quality assured by a quality assurance body can receive government financial assistance.

The National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) aims to obtain a broad picture of the achievement and other educational outcomes of representative samples of students in New Zealand schools at years 4 and 8. Each year, over a four-year period, different areas related to the curriculum are assessed.

OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) studies (2000, 2003 and 2006) show New Zealand's 15-year-old students perform well above the international mean in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy (also problem solving in 2003). Of the 57 countries participating in PISA 2006, only two countries performed better than New Zealand (Finland and Hong Kong), eight countries were similar, and the other 46 countries were significantly lower.

Literacy and numeracy skill levels for New Zealand students are currently measured through international studies such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). In PIRLS 2005/06, New Zealand year 5 students scored highly on average, compared with students in the other countries who took part. The spread of achievement in New Zealand was large in comparison with other high-achieving countries. TIMSS measures achievement of numeracy skills and knowledge at years 5 and 9. New Zealand year 5 students' mathematics performance was similar to the level achieved in 2002. In TIMSS 2006, scores for European/Pakeha students were significantly higher than for Maori students and Pasifika students.

The percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above has continued to increase for most groups including Maori students and Pasifika students. The overall percentage for all students in 2009 was 73%. The percentage for Maori students was 53.1% in 2009, up from 50.5% in 2008. The percentage for Pasifika students was 65.5%, up from 62.9% in 2008.

In 2009 the overall percentage for all students gaining university entrance standard was 45.8%; 51.7% of European/Pakeha students gained the standard compared with 22.6% of Maori students, 27.8% of Pasifika students and 67.8% of Asian students.

## Teaching staff

Prior to 1990, colleges of education and universities trained teachers. Since then there has been increasing diversity in the providers of teacher education.

In 1997, there were sixteen directly-funded providers of pre-service teacher education. The traditional providers are the colleges of education in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, and two universities where the colleges have amalgamated with the local university (Waikato and Massey). The newer providers are polytechnics or institutes of technology and private training establishments. One provider is a *whare wananga*. The University of Auckland also began providing courses in 1997, under contract to the Ministry of Education. Broadly speaking, teacher education qualifications fall into four broad categories: three-year diplomas of teaching; three-year bachelor's of education (teaching) or similar; four-year conjoint degrees; and one-year graduate diplomas of teaching. Most teacher education in New Zealand takes place in the faculties of education in universities. Teacher education courses are approved and quality-assured by the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC).

The NZTC, created in 2002, has the responsibility to approve initial teacher education (ITE) programmes and to set standards for graduates from the programmes. All teachers in New Zealand schools, *kura* and state kindergartens, by law, must be registered teachers with a current practising certificate. Teacher-led early childhood education services other than kindergartens are required to have qualified and registered teachers as a major proportion of their total teaching team.

ITE is a programme of study towards a teaching qualification at level 7 on the NZQA Register of Quality Assured Qualifications which will enable to teach in New Zealand early childhood education (ECE) services, schools (primary, intermediate and secondary) or *kura* (Maori-medium or immersion). There are a range of ITE approved programmes: undergraduate degrees of 3 or 4 years length; undergraduate diplomas of 3 years length; graduate diplomas of one year's length (for those with a suitable qualification at level 7 or above). ITE programmes comprise a mix of curriculum, learning and pedagogical theory, professional studies, practicum experiences, and cultural studies. To be eligible for teacher registration prospective teachers must have completed an ITE programme approved by the New Zealand Teachers Council. There are 127 approved programmes of ITE.

The benchmark qualification for qualified early childhood teachers is a Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) or an equivalent Level 7 qualification approved by the New Zealand Teachers Council for registration. The programme usually lasts three years, but this can vary depending on previous study and whether it is full-time or part-time. Study is usually expected to be completed within a maximum of six years. A Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) is a one to two-year programme of study for graduates or people who already have a Diploma of Teaching (Primary).



The usual course of training for prospective primary teachers is a period of three years at a teacher training provider (leading to a Bachelor of Education, Primary Teaching), followed by two years of satisfactory teaching in a state primary school. Approximately 80% of primary teacher trainees undertake university degree study. Both four-year and three-year degree options are available and conjoint programmes are offered at all institutions. In addition, there are now compressed courses available that take account of prior learning, expanded courses which allow for the completion of degrees, bilingual courses, and opportunities for specialization in areas such as music, science and special needs.

Graduates and those with other approved advanced qualifications who wish to train as secondary teachers can enter into a one-year programme (full-time) leading to a Graduate Diploma in Secondary Teaching/Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Secondary). A Bachelor of Physical Education (Secondary) is a four-year degree that provides an in-depth study in the field of physical education. The Bachelor of Teaching – Conjoint Degrees Years 1–8, 7–10 and 11–13 is a four-year, full-time, conjoint degree programme involving study for a Bachelor of Teaching alongside a subject specialist degree. Pathways are available that lead to teaching at years 1–8, 7–10 or 11–13. The two degrees are structured so that students learn about subject and curriculum content at the same time as learning how to teach. The Bachelor of Education (Technology) is a four-year degree programme which offers technology pathways to prepare secondary technology teachers.

The New Zealand Teachers Council's Graduating Teacher Standards are about ensuring that teacher graduates are of a consistent quality. The standards were developed in response to a call from the teaching profession for more certainty in the quality of all graduates from all ITE programmes. The Council developed the standards in cooperation with, and with the support of, a wide range of representatives from the education community. The Graduating Teacher Standards: Aotearoa New Zealand of 2007 includes seven standards:

- Professional knowledge: graduating teachers know what to teach (standard 1); know about learners and how they learn (standard 2); and understand how contextual factors influence teaching and learning (standard 3).
- Professional practice: graduating teachers use professional knowledge to plan for a safe, high quality teaching and learning environment (standard 4); and use evidence to promote learning (standard 5).
- Professional values and relationships: graduating teachers develop positive relationships with learners and the members of learning communities (standard 6); and are committed members of the profession (standard 7).

The first years of teaching are a critical period for all new teachers. It is during this period that teachers refine and consolidate their teaching skills and knowledge to enable them to meet the standards of full registration. There are three categories of registration: (a) provisional registration, which covers beginning teachers who have graduated from a pre-service teacher education programme; (b) registration subject to confirmation, for teachers who have been registered in the past but have been out of teaching for some time, or those who have qualified as a teacher in another country, or who do not have sufficient recent teaching experience in New Zealand to hold full registration; (c) full registration for those who have successfully completed a period



of induction (a satisfactory recent teaching service, e.g. being employed in a teaching position for at least two years, equivalent of eight terms) and have proven that they meet the specified teaching service requirements.

In the first year of full employment in the teaching service, trained beginning teachers, teachers re-entering teaching who have participated in a retraining programme, and overseas trained teachers, may have no more than twenty hours of classroom teaching responsibilities during the normal school hours each week. The time allowances are to be used for advice and guidance from a fully registered teacher. In the second year, prior to full registration, the amount of advice and guidance depends on the individual needs of the beginning teacher. At the end of the induction period, principals are required to assess their beginning teachers and make a recommendation to the NZ Teachers Council on whether full registration is warranted. In practice, it appears that almost all teachers are recommended for full registration. In times of teacher shortage, retention of teaching staff is critical for schools, so the incentive to recommend full registration, even for those who have not performed well as teachers, is strong.

Teacher registration was introduced in 1990 and made compulsory in state kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in 1996, in early childhood centres in varying stages from 2005 and for *Kura Kaupapa* Maori from 2006. Teacher registration certifies that a teacher is satisfactorily trained, qualified and suitable to be a teacher and provides the assurance to future employers, parents and the public that the requirements for registration have been met. When an application for registration is approved, a teacher is issued with a practising certificate. This practising certificate is valid for three years from the date of issue, and enables the holder to be legally employed in a teaching position within the general education system of New Zealand. A current practising certificate is mandatory for those employed in teaching positions in primary schools, secondary schools, free kindergartens and in increasing percentages in early childhood education services.

Teacher pay is the base salary plus allowances for things like management duties or specific roles. Principal pay is based on the school roll, the number of teachers at the school, and a sector specific leadership payment. According to the Labour Cost Index, between June 2001 and June 2010, wages and salaries increased by: 36.1% in the overall education sector (primary, secondary and tertiary); 23.9% in the wider public sector; and 25.3% in the private sector. The base salary scale is the same for teachers in all kindergartens and state and state integrated schools. The starting base salary is NZ\$30,000 for untrained teachers. Less than 3% of the teaching workforce is on this salary. Around two-thirds of teachers are on the maximum base salary for their salary group. Teachers move up the salary scale by annual increment, moving to a higher step on the scale when their board is satisfied that they meet the professional standard. Many teachers receive an allowance in addition to their base salary. Allowances are made up of units, which recognize teachers' leadership and professional responsibilities; management allowances; role-related allowances; and incentive allowances. Secondary teachers get ten weeks paid term breaks a year, and primary teachers get nine weeks paid term breaks a year. These breaks exclude the days during term break (up to 10 days per year) that boards can request that teachers attend school for administrative or professional development purposes. Teachers can also apply for: up to one term's unpaid 'refreshment leave'; ten weeks paid sabbatical





leave; paid study leave awards and study support grants; paid or unpaid leave for events such as cultural activities, international sports tours, outward bound courses, and accident or illness of a family member.

Professional development and support for teachers and principals is provided through central contracts and through funding in the operations grant. Professional learning and development programmes for teachers are being redesigned to focus on improving cultural responsiveness and the use of assessment data to improve teacher practice. Ongoing quality assurance in all teaching is managed with: professional development programmes for each individual; performance monitoring and appraisal; selected programmes of study leave and sabbaticals; and various scholarships and fellowships. (Ministry of Education, 2009 and 2011).

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## Web resources

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*For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>*