

## **THEMATIC PROBE. Primary Education: an International Perspective**

### **Country Description: New Zealand**

This country description was compiled from the *INCA* Archive ([www.inca.org.uk](http://www.inca.org.uk)). Additional comments were received from Ms Mary Chamberlain of the Ministry of Education in New Zealand.

#### **1. Organisation of school phases-**

##### ***How are the early years and primary phases organised? (3-5yrs? 5-11yrs?)***

Education is compulsory in New Zealand for all children from their sixth until their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. However, most five-year-olds start school on or shortly after their fifth birthday.

Prior to commencing primary education, most children receive some form of pre-compulsory early years education at least at the ages of three and/or four.

##### ***What are the points of transfer between phases?***

Compulsory education is generally divided into primary, middle or intermediate, and secondary schooling. Primary schools are the first level of schooling, catering for children from age five to age 11 (Year 0 to Year 6). Middle schools cater for children in Years 7 to 9 or Years 7 to 10 of compulsory education (aged 11+ to 14/15 years) and secondary schools for students in Years 9 or 10 to Year 13 (aged 13+ to 17/18). In some areas of the country where middle schools do not exist, children in Years 7 and 8 may remain in primary school and proceed to secondary education in Year 9, or may proceed to secondary school in Year 7. In other areas of the country, particularly in rural areas, composite schools combine primary, intermediate and secondary education in one location. Composite schools are, however, in the minority.

The three most common patterns for schooling (in decreasing order of student numbers) are:

- Approximately six years in primary school; two years in intermediate school; and up to five years in secondary school.
- Approximately eight years in primary school; and up to five years in secondary school.
- Approximately six years in primary school and up to seven years in a secondary school that includes Years 7 and 8, as well as Years 9 to 13.

See the tables which follow.

Year group	Age range	(Also known as)	Provided in
Year 0	5	Junior/new entrants	Primary schools or composite schools
Year 1	5-6	Junior 1	Primary schools or composite schools
Year 2	6-7	Junior 2	Primary schools or composite schools
Year 3	7-8	Standard 1 (or Junior 3)	Primary schools or composite schools
Year 4	8-9	Standard 2	Primary schools or composite schools
Year 5	9-10	Standard 3	Primary schools or composite schools
Year 6	10-11	Standard 4	Primary schools or composite schools
Year 7	11-12	Form 1	Middle/intermediate schools or composite schools. In areas where neither of these forms exist, provision may be in primary schools or secondary schools
Year 8	12-13	Form 2	Middle/intermediate schools or composite schools. In areas where neither of these forms exist, provision may be in primary schools or secondary schools
Year 9	13-14	Form 3	Middle/intermediate or secondary schools (or composite schools)
Year 10	14-15	Form 4	Secondary schools or composite schools
Year 11	15-16	Form 5	Secondary schools or composite schools
Year 12	16-17	Form 6	Secondary schools or composite schools
Year 13	17-18	Form 7	Secondary schools or composite schools

Early years	Primary education	Middle school education (intermediate level education)	Secondary education
3-5+	5+*-11	11+/-13/14	13/14+17/18
3-5+	5+-13	-----	13+-17/18
3-5+	5+-11	-----	11+-17/18
3-5+	Composite schools 5+ - 17/18		

\* Although education does not become compulsory until the age of six, most five-year-olds start school on or shortly after their fifth birthday.

## 2. Locus of control

***What degree of control over curriculum content and other aspects of primary schools exists at the national, regional, local and/or school level?***

### Ministry

The role of the Ministry of Education is to "provide policy advice to the Government, help to implement education policy, and ensure that education resources are used

efficiently and fairly". It is also responsible for developing the specification for the curriculum (curriculum statements), allocating resources and monitoring effectiveness.

### Boards of trustees

All state and private schools must operate under the provisions of the Education Act of 1989. All state primary schools are governed by boards of trustees, which include elected parent and community volunteers, the school principal and a staff representative. Trustees are elected by parents of children enrolled at the school. Boards of trustees have considerable autonomy and work to develop, in each school, a written charter of aims, purposes and objectives of the school, validated by the Minister of Education. In its governance role, the board of trustees is primarily responsible, through the charter, and in consultation with the principal, staff and school community for:

- setting goals and objectives for the school which reflect the aspirations of the school and the local community, and policies for their implementation;
- establishing school policies to monitor and evaluate their results; and
- regularly reviewing the policies.

Boards of trustees are accountable for meeting the objectives set in their charter and for managing the funds they receive from the Government to run the school. They are required to take all reasonable steps to achieve, meet and follow the *National Education Guidelines*. These give direction to schools in a number of areas. They contain a set of desired government outcomes for education - the *National Education Goals*, and a set of administrative requirements for schools - the *National Administration Guidelines*. The performance of boards of trustees is regularly monitored through accountability reviews carried out by an agency of the Ministry - the Education Review Office (ERO). (The ERO has an audit function; recently its role has been extended to include the provision of advice.)

Prior to 1989, administration of schools was more centralised. Regional teams of school inspectors operated under the direction and leadership of the national Department of Education. They worked closely with regional Education Boards to control key decisions for each school, including the selection of the principal and teachers in primary schools; the provision and maintenance of buildings and other resources; and professional development programmes for school personnel. The inspectors monitored the work of principals and teachers; gave guidance and assistance; and guided career development opportunities and control of teacher movement between schools and positions of responsibility within schools. The current system devolves most of these responsibilities to individual boards of trustees with school principals having a more crucial role.

### Curriculum

The New Zealand Curriculum is the official policy for teaching, learning and assessment for all children in all New Zealand schools. The Ministry of Education facilitates an ongoing development and review process to develop national curricula that set the direction for learning for New Zealand schools.

For each essential learning area (see below), a National Curriculum Statement identifies the achievement objectives that all children should aim for. These objectives form the basis of teachers' assessment plans and records of individual children's progress. Each school then uses the National Curriculum Statements to develop its own school curriculum and plan its classroom programmes. It is the responsibility of school boards of trustees to ensure that schools satisfy the requirements and expectations of these Statements and implement the curriculum.

***Are there any shifts in the distribution of control between these different levels? (Is it possible to assign percentages to each level, to reflect circumstances in each country?)***

While the National Curriculum sets the direction for schools, each school uses the National Curriculum Statements to develop its own school curriculum and plan its classroom programmes. Schools have the flexibility to develop school-based curricula that meet the needs of their children and their communities. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

***At what intervals is the curriculum reviewed? (eg are there established review cycles?)***

Major reform of the New Zealand curriculum took place in the early 1990s. The introduction of National Curriculum Statements for all key subject areas and all phases of education began in 1991 with the publication of the draft Statement *Mathematics in the New Zealand Curriculum*. By late 2001, Statements for all seven essential learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum (see below) had been completed and were in place. At that time, the Ministry of Education began a 'stocktake' of the whole post-1991 curriculum reform process. This stocktake, which paid particular attention to concerns regarding curriculum overload and manageability, is now complete and a process has been put in place for the ongoing monitoring, review and development of the National Curriculum. For further information, see the Curriculum Stocktake website at [http://www.tki.org.nz/r/stocktake/index\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/stocktake/index_e.php)

Prior to 1991, comprehensive reviews of the curriculum had taken place in the 1940s, 1970s and 1980s. In addition, individual syllabuses were also reviewed from time to time.

### **3. Curriculum content**

***What does the statutory curriculum consist of?***

Essential learning areas

There are currently seven essential learning areas in the New Zealand Curriculum:

- language and languages;
- mathematics;

- science;
- technology;
- social sciences;
- the arts; and
- health and physical well-being.

Following the curriculum stocktake of 2001 and 2002 (see above), the language and languages essential learning area will be separated into two essential learning areas beginning in 2003. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

### **Religious education**

Religious education is not included in the statutory curriculum of state schools. That is, state schools are secular. However, those religious denominations which run their own schools and have integrated into the state sector - so-called 'integrated schools', are permitted to provide religious instruction.

<p><b><i>What other aspects of the curriculum/teaching in schools are statutory? Are time allocations for subjects statutory?</i></b></p>
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### **Essential skills**

In addition to the essential learning areas, the New Zealand Curriculum also specifies eight groupings of essential skills to be developed by all children across the whole curriculum throughout the years of schooling. These categories encompass other important groups of skills such as creative skills, valuing skills and practical life skills. The current eight groupings of essential skills are:

- communication skills;
- numeracy skills;
- information skills;
- problem-solving skills;
- self-management and competitive skills;
- social and cooperative skills;
- physical skills; and
- work and study skills.

All the essential skills are important if children are to achieve their potential and to participate fully in society, including the world of work.

As a result of the recent curriculum stocktake, five new groupings of essential skills are currently being proposed to replace the above eight in the revised New Zealand Curriculum. The new skills are:

- creative and innovative thinking;
- participation and contribution;
- relating to others;
- reflecting on learning and the development of self knowledge; and
- making meaning.

(Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

The suggested new skill areas relate more closely to New Zealand's early childhood curriculum (*Te Whariki*). The skills will not be developed in isolation. They will be developed through the essential learning areas and in different contexts across the curriculum. It is intended that the curriculum should challenge all children to succeed to the best of their ability. Individual children will therefore develop the essential skills to different degrees and at different rates. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

### Attitudes and values

In addition, attitudes and values are also essential components of the New Zealand Curriculum. These are identified as the values that underpin New Zealand society and which should be reflected in the teaching of the curriculum. They are:

- honesty;
- reliability;
- respect for others;
- respect for the law;
- tolerance;
- fairness;
- caring or compassion; and
- non-sexism and non racism.

As a result of the stocktake the values that underpin the New Zealand curriculum will be redeveloped through consultative processes during 2003. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

### Maori language

By law, Maori language has to be provided to children/parents who request it. Demand may therefore mean that this subject is offered from the beginning of primary education.

### Optional subjects

Schools may also provide optional subjects. Some of the essential learning areas are broken down into individual subjects, such as specific languages or specific sciences, and offered as optional subjects.

### Time allocation

There is no statutory time allocation for New Zealand primary schools. Boards of trustees have the flexibility to plan programmes to meet their particular needs, provided that, whatever way programmes are organised, they provide children with the opportunity to learn the knowledge, skills and understanding described in all the essential learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum. Schools are also expected to provide children with a balanced and broad curriculum.

***Are there statutory timings for the length of the school day/week?***

Primary schools are required to be open for at least 394 half-days each year (and secondary schools for at least 380 half-days). The school year is divided into four terms, commencing at the end of January. There are three, two-week breaks between the terms and a six-week summer holiday which begins around mid December. (Prior to 1996 when this four-term year was introduced, there were three terms in the school year in New Zealand. Four terms were introduced after pilot studies showed that children were less tired and able to concentrate and work better when terms were shorter and holiday breaks more frequent.)

Children usually attend school on five days, Monday to Friday, and the school day generally begins at about 9:00 am and ends at 3:00 pm, with breaks mid-morning, at lunchtime and mid-afternoon. Consequently, the teaching time in class consists of around five hours daily.

***What changes have there been to the statutory/non-statutory elements of the curriculum?***

***What government/other initiatives have been introduced? What has been their impact?***

**National literacy and numeracy strategy**

A national literacy and numeracy strategy for children in Years 1 to 8 of compulsory education, aged five/six onwards, has been in place since 1999. As part of the initiative, additional funding has been provided in support of the programmes which make up the strategy; materials have been provided by the Ministry of Education to assist teachers in supporting classroom literacy and numeracy programmes; and money has been provided to ensure that the campaign has a strong impact in the community (via television and radio advertising, booklets for parents etc).

In accordance with this strategy, the *National Administration Guidelines* (see above) were modified in 1999 to reflect the recommendation that, although the requirement for schools to provide a broad curriculum should continue, schools providing the early years of compulsory education should focus on achievement in literacy and numeracy.

Results from the *National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP)* assessments of reading comprehension of children in Year 4 and Year 8 (aged eight/nine and 12/13 years respectively) in 2000 show that:

- For Year 4 children, there was a very substantial improvement in oral reading results during the period 1996 to 2000. During the same period, a less significant level of improvement was evident for Year 8 children. While the proportion of children reading poorly has decreased considerably, there are still those who cause concern, particularly in low decile schools.
- There are differences in achievement between girls and boys; Maori and non-Maori children; Pasifika and non-Pasifika children; and between high and low decile schools.

- Maori children in mainstream schools show a similar rate of improvement to all Year 4 children, but the average achievement of Maori children is still lower than that which is expected (and required).
  - Modest gains in number, algebra and statistics are also evident.
- (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

(Further information on *NEMP* assessment can be found in section 5. below.)

### Information and communications technology

The Government has developed a national strategy for information and communications technology (ICT). This aims to:

- provide support to schools in the development of effective ICT programmes within all curriculum areas;
- provide professional development for teachers in ICT; and
- provide some technical support to schools in this area.

The first ICT Strategy for Schools was released in 1998. The goals of this strategy were to build infrastructure, school capability and ICT programmes. It was followed, in July 2001, by a discussion document (a draft strategy for 2002 to 2004) and then, in June 2002, by the new strategy *Digital Horizons: Learning through ICT*. This strategy focuses on the challenge of integrating ICT more fully into curriculum practice by supporting new ways of teaching and learning.

### Environmental education

The Government has also released an environmental education strategy, which includes the publication of environmental education guidelines for schools. These guidelines are not mandatory, but demonstrate how the objectives of the various National Curriculum Statements (particularly social studies, science, and technology) can be implemented through environmental contexts. At the same time, the guidelines promote the need for children to learn more about the environment and for everyone to take an active role in the protection and enhancement of it.

***What other trends are emerging in curriculum development? (eg new subjects/areas of learning being introduced)***

### Foreign language teaching

There is a growing trend for primary schools to offer the choice of learning languages other than English or Maori to children aged 10 onwards. Japanese is the most popular of these languages followed by French, German, Spanish and Pacific Islands languages. Latin Chinese and Korean are also offered in a few schools.

***What other levers may be having an impact on curriculum content? (eg international studies: PIRLS, IEA, PISA, TIMSS)***

One of the reasons identified for New Zealand's underachievement in the *Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)* was a weakness in early numeracy development. As a result, in 1999, the national literacy and numeracy strategy was launched (see above).

Results from international studies were also taken into account during the curriculum stocktake of 2001 and 2002. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

Other levers having an impact on the direction of the National Curriculum include:

- greater recognition of social connectedness;
- the need to acknowledge the uniqueness of indigenous culture, language and traditions;
- recognition of the importance of balancing the social outcomes of education with a focus on academic achievement;
- wider consultation with Maori on their aspirations of education;
- research links to particular pedagogies that are likely to improve student outcomes;
- the continuing diversification of New Zealand society; and
- the increasingly availability of the Internet and the importance of teaching digital literacy. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

#### **4. Organisation of the curriculum**

***What are the common features of curriculum organisation in the primary phase? (single subjects? planning subjects as 'topics'?)***

Schools may organise their programmes in a number of ways. Primary schools in New Zealand adopt a number of approaches including organising their programmes around subjects, using an integrated approach based on authentic questions or using topic or thematic approaches. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

***How are subjects labelled?***

The compulsory areas of the New Zealand Curriculum are known as the 'essential learning areas'.

These are currently:

- language and languages (which is to be divided into two separate essential learning areas beginning in 2003);
- mathematics;
- science;

- technology;
- social sciences;
- the arts; and
- health and physical well-being.

In some cases, the essential learning areas are further broken down into subjects, such as social studies, history, geography and economics, which are all contributory subjects in the social sciences essential learning area. . (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

***What examples are there of 'areas' rather than subjects?***

***What examples are there of clusters of subjects (eg Humanities, made up of geography and history) being brought together?***

Many of the essential learning areas are subject areas or clusters rather than individual subjects - language and languages, social sciences, the arts, and health and physical well-being. The arts, for example, includes the individual disciplines of dance, drama, music and the visual arts.

In addition, the essential learning areas are interrelated. Many activities which children engage in draw on more than one learning area. For example, a study of sound may focus primarily on science, but may also contribute to the child's development in the arts, technology and mathematics. In planning programmes, schools usually make use of the connections between the learning areas.

***What are the common features of timetabling? (eg weekly lessons in each subject, English and mathematics taught daily)***

Whilst there are no regulations about timetabling or the amount of time schools must allocate to each subject, English and Mathematics are taught daily in most primary schools. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

## **5. Assessment**

***What is the purpose, nature and scale of assessment? (eg end of phase assessment, statutory, published test results, optional, national, local, timed tests, teacher-assessment)***

New Zealand has had a National Assessment Strategy since 1999. The strategy reflects a shift in emphasis towards assessment for learning. It embeds assessment within the dynamic of teaching and learning, whilst simultaneously focusing on the conditions and processes within the school that support and sustain teaching and learning, as this is critical to successful school improvement. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

Assessment in New Zealand is carried out for a number of purposes. The primary purpose of school-based assessment is to improve children's learning and the quality

of teaching programmes. Other purposes of assessment at the primary level include providing feedback to parents, monitoring overall national educational standards and identifying learning needs so that resources can be effectively targeted.

### Ongoing school-based assessment

For each essential learning area, a National Curriculum Statement identifies the achievement objectives that all children should aim for. These objectives form the basis of teachers' school-based assessment plans and records of individual progress.

The achievement objectives in the National Curriculum Statements are developed at eight levels for each subject; level six representing average performance for a 14-year-old. The eight levels roughly equate to one level for every two years of schooling up to Year 10, aged 14 to 15 years, then one level for each year for Years 11 to 13.

School-based assessment is an integral and continuous part of the teaching process. There is currently a strong national focus on formative assessment and improving the quality of the feedback and interactions that occur between teachers and learners. A national professional development programme supports this focus. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

Teachers are expected to base their school-based assessments upon observations of children undertaking normal classroom tasks. Classroom assessment data is collected on the performance of each child in a variety of ways including paper and pencil tests; through the assessment of processes, such as practical work in science and technology, oral work in languages, self and peer assessment, and using portfolios; and by direct observation in relation to specific criteria.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education provides a number of assessment tools for teachers. These include: Assessment Resource Banks (ARBs), Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning (asTTle), and National Exemplars. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

Each of these assessment tools is intended to provide externally referenced assessment information that will assist teachers to make valid, reliable, and nationally consistent judgements about the work and progress of their students. At classroom level these tools enable teachers to diagnose how their students are performing, give feedback to them about progress, and enable teachers and children to set goals for learning. At school level, information may be aggregated and used to evaluate teaching programmes and inform strategic planning. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

### **Assessment Resource Banks**

Assessment Resource Banks are an on-line collection of assessment materials. Resources are available for mathematics, science and English. They are designed to assess achievement based on learning programmes that reflect National Curriculum levels two to five (see above). (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

Each resource includes:

- an assessment task;
- a scoring guide; and
- information about how the resource relates to each National Curriculum Statement, through classification by strand, curriculum level and achievement objective. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

Resources are categorised according to the type of response required, for example, short or longer response. Examples are available at

<http://arb.nzcer.org.nz/nzcer3/Nzcer.HTM>

(Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

Assessment Resource Banks aim to:

- provide schools with an expanding range of assessment resources that are designed to assess achievement within learning strands and levels of National Curriculum Statements;
- enable schools to choose curriculum-referenced material in a range of assessment styles to validly assess their teaching programmes and the progress of individual children;
- provide assessment tasks and items that may be combined to form tests for class or school-wide use, or customised sets for formative and diagnostic assessment;
- provide reliable assessments that have been developed, trialled and validated in New Zealand; and
- provide schools with performance data and diagnostic information based on an analysis of children's responses. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

#### **asTTle (Assessment Tools for Teaching and learning)**

asTTle provides tools for the assessment of literacy and numeracy for children in Years 5 to 10 (aged nine to 15 years) in English and in Maori (curriculum levels two to six). The tools are supplied on CD-ROM, the first of which, for Years 5 to 7, was published in February 2003. Tests for Years 8 to 10 will be available from the beginning of 2005. Further information is available at

[http://www.tki.org.nz/r/asttle/index\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/asttle/index_e.php). (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

The asTTle tools aim to:

- allow a range of 40-minute tests to be assembled by teachers (electronically), which can be used at any time during the year, and which are related specifically to individual classroom programmes;
- electronically generate results that provide useful feedback on the achievement of individual children and on future learning needs in literacy and numeracy;
- provide dependable assessments – that is, assessments that are reliable and valid, through standard-setting reflecting a representative sample of New Zealand students; and
- provide automated/interactive information about the achievement of individual children and/or groups of children in relation to national standards, normative

information, and to an underlying achievement continuum in each curriculum area. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

### **National Exemplars**

Exemplars are examples of children's work that are annotated in order to illustrate learning, achievement and quality in relation to curriculum levels. They help answer the question: What do we mean by quality work? and are being developed in all essential learning areas in English and in Maori (levels one to five) of the curriculum. The National Exemplars are available via the Internet at [http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/index\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/index_e.php) (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

The National Exemplars aim to:

- provide teachers and children with annotated examples of work that show progression in selected areas of each curriculum;
- provide reference points to help teachers and children make decisions about the quality of individual learning, achievement, and progress;
- highlight features of learning that teachers need to watch for, collect information about, and act on, to support progress in learning; and
- provide information to assist teachers and children in understanding the next steps in teaching and learning. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

### **School entry assessment**

There is voluntary assessment of school entrants based on the systematic use of diagnostic procedures for five-year-olds. The purposes of this assessment are:

- to provide reliable information for teachers about an individual child's skills and understandings when he or she enters school;
- to help schools decide how best to support their new entrant children and evaluate their programmes in the light of children's needs; and
- to enable the Ministry of Education to build up a database from which to identify differing patterns in children's skills and understandings (in selected areas) on entry to school, and thereby contribute to national policy development and allocation of resources.

The procedures provide teachers with information on the entry characteristics of children with regard to their language development, their understanding of mathematical concepts, their health, and their personal and social development.

The school entry assessment tasks have been designed for use as soon as practicable after a child has settled into the classroom environment. This is usually within four to six weeks of the first day of school.

School entry assessment first took place on a voluntary basis in 1997, and includes three performance-based tasks, which are specifically designed to provide a sound structure for systematic observation of the knowledge and skill a child has in aspects of literacy, oral language and number. The tasks involve concepts about print - to

assess emergent literacy, a shopping game to assess numeracy, and a story retelling task to assess the use of oral language.

Teachers are provided with an assessment kit by the Ministry of Education. This includes a teachers' guide and a video designed to provide on-going in-school support. The kit is available in English and Maori for teachers of children in Maori language immersion education. It is intended that, once teachers are familiar with the school entry assessment tasks, each should take between 10 and 15 minutes to complete.

School entry assessment is carried out by class teachers. Schools use a variety of arrangements that allow time for a teacher to work alone with a child. Some boards of trustees have included time to release teachers for assessment as a part of their school management and have a regular 'reliever' who releases teachers throughout the school for this purpose. In some schools, senior staff release teachers to assess children. Other schools rely on informal arrangements between colleagues, which allow teachers to withdraw a child; for example, one teacher may take responsibility for two classes during large group activities.

The records of a child's school entry assessment are part of the teacher's professional observations and are available to the teacher and the school. Only a summary of the raw scores, not identifying the child or teacher is available to the Ministry of Education.

Schools using school entry assessment are asked to record the subtotals of each task used in the assessment for a national database. (The tasks are standardised and have been trialled to ensure they provide accurate and reliable baseline data.) The data derived from these results is intended to enable the Ministry of Education to analyse differing needs in different areas, thereby contributing to policy development and resource allocation at a national level. This data is not intended to be used to monitor teacher or student performance.

The information obtained from school entry assessment is aggregated and analysed according to a variety of factors, by region or school size for example. The Ministry of Education presents information about the characteristics of their new entrant group to each school on an annual basis.

Many teachers discuss the results of school entry assessment with parents and caregivers and the information can provide a starting point to consider how parents might reinforce particular skills.

### ***NEMP* assessment**

Under the *National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP)*, national education standards are monitored on a four-year rolling cycle by the annual assessment of a three per cent sample of children in primary Year 4, aged eight to nine years, and Year 8, aged 12 to 13 - the primary to secondary transition period. The cycle covers all the essential learning areas and essential skills of the New Zealand Curriculum. The first assessment for *NEMP* took place in 1995.

The sample children are assessed by two visiting experienced teachers who, during one week, assess 12 children, each taking part in four one-hour assessment sessions. These teachers are seconded from schools for a week of training, followed by five weeks administering the tasks in the selected schools.

Key findings of each year's assessment are published and used to inform the evaluation of the current curriculum and its implementation. In 1995 and 1999, the knowledge, skills and attitudes of children in Years 4 and 8 were assessed in science; information skills - graphs, tables, maps, charts and diagrams; and art. In 1996 and 2000, the focus was on the areas of music; technology; and language: reading and speaking. In 1997 and 2001, mathematics: numeracy skills; social studies; and information skills - library and research were assessed and, in 1998 and 2002, the areas for assessment were language: writing, listening and viewing; and health and physical education.

The purpose of *NEMP* assessment is to produce a broad picture of the achievements of representative samples of New Zealand school children at successive points in time so that:

- trends in educational performance can be identified and reported;
- information is available to assist policy makers, curriculum specialists and educators with their planning; and
- the public can know about trends in educational achievement.

The *NEMP* website is accessible at <http://nemp.otago.ac.nz/>.

### Reporting of results

Apart from formal written reports, often made two or three times a year, information about individual achievement is conveyed in various ways, for example, through interviews, parental involvement in the school and classroom, home visits, parent education sessions, open days, volunteer tutoring or resource development, telephone conversations, homework diaries and books, portfolios, library assistance, curriculum outlines, school assemblies and performances, and newsletters. It is considered important to use less formal means to convey information, such as the results of assessment, when appropriate.

The primary school records system is based on the assessment of an individual child's level of achievement (what the child knows and can do), their achievement in relation to national standards, and their rate of progress. The child's progress is assessed against the sets of learning objectives in National Curriculum Statements, which identify broad levels of achievement in knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes. The system also records children's personal and social development.

### Progression

As New Zealand operates a programme of social promotion, that is, children normally progress from one class to the next and from one phase to the next without restriction or selection, children do not generally repeat any part of their education, nor are they excluded from continuing their education.

***How far is the curriculum driven by assessments? (eg evidence of teacher preparation for testing, 'booster' or 'catch-up' classes in schools)***

School programmes are informed by analysis of aggregated assessment information at school level. There is no compulsory national testing in primary schools. There is no evidence of preparation for testing or catch up classes. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

## **6. Teaching profession/training**

***What changes can be identified in initial teacher training programmes?***

The Ministry of Education does not have control over programme delivery of initial teacher education. Programme approval is the joint responsibility of the Teachers' Council and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) (or the delegated authority). Providers must demonstrate that programmes will prepare student teachers for provisional registration, which means they need to be competent in four areas - professional knowledge (this includes knowledge of current curricula), professional practice, professional relationships and professional leadership. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

A number of initial teacher education providers have been, and are, leaders in curriculum design and implementation. It is therefore likely, especially in these instances, that programmes will have changed in response to new initiatives. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

***What kinds of continuing professional development/on-going training are provided?***

### **Curriculum**

When new National Curriculum Statements for the essential learning areas are introduced, teacher development programmes are provided at national and local levels. For example, the draft of the *Health and Physical Education National Curriculum Statement* was published in early 1998 and teacher development programmes were offered throughout the country when the final document was released in 1999.

Funds are allocated for professional development associated with the publication of any new curriculum or associated initiative, such as information and communications technology. Most programmes are school-based (on-site) and involve all the teachers (at least at primary level) and are more than a one-off, one-day course. For programmes that are not school-based, at least one teacher in every school (and usually more than one) would have the opportunity to participate in courses designed to support curriculum implementation.

## Assessment

Similarly, a series of professional development programmes for assessment has been available to schools since 1994/95. The programmes are delivered under contract to the Ministry of Education and their purpose is to provide schools with assistance in school-based assessment. Initially these programmes were intended to help ensure that the policies of the participating schools were consistent with the policy directions in *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework*, and the requirements of the *National Education Guidelines*.

The assessment professional development programme focuses for 2003 are:

- Improved teacher knowledge and skills:
  - in goal-setting with children and judging the next learning steps;
  - in providing quality prompting, including feedback, questioning, and supporting active reflection in order to narrow the gap between what is known and what is desired to be known;
  - in explicitly teaching children the skills for peer and self assessment; and
  - in involving parents/caregivers as partners in their children's learning.
- Building communities of professional practice and improving school-wide practices in:
  - collating, analysing and using assessment information to provide feedback (and feed-forward) to all those involved in supporting learning;
  - using aggregated assessment information to inform strategic planning; and
  - ensuring that aggregated assessment information flows back to support learning and teaching. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

## Government initiatives

Additionally, continuing professional development for teachers is a key component of the national literacy and numeracy strategy, which was launched in New Zealand in 1999.

### ***To what degree are teachers'/schools' planning subject to scrutiny?***

No information is available via the *INCA* Archive.

### ***To what degree are teachers using electronic formats to plan?***

Many teachers use electronic formats for curriculum planning. The Government has supplied laptops to school principals and there are a range of materials available on the Ministry's online learning centre, Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) <http://www.tki.org.nz/>. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

## 7. Pedagogy

***Which teaching approaches are dominant or developing a higher profile, and which are receding? (eg collaborative work, whole-class instruction)***

Emerging pedagogical themes in primary schools and classrooms include student ownership and control of learning, shared goal-setting, metacognition, motivation, scaffolding, providing effective conditions for learning (classroom and school) and the relevance of the learning to the child's real world. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

At primary level, children work in a wide variety of learning situations. They are usually based in one classroom, but may join with other classes for some activities. In the classroom, group activities help children to learn to share and work cooperatively. At other times, they work alone on projects.

***What is the impact of ICT in teaching practice? (eg use of electronic whiteboards, intranets, managed learning environments/local grids)***

There is significant use of a wide range of ICT hardware and software. Many schools use some form of Intranet and there is a growing move towards managed learning environments. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

***To what degree are teaching approaches focusing on developing thinking skills, creativity and building on children's learning styles?***

In New Zealand, teaching approaches emphasise flexibility, innovation, creativity and risk taking. Group work and peer discussion are seen as vital components of successful teaching to enhance children's cognitive and metacognitive thinking skills. The development of social interaction through group work and discussion is typically not seen as an end in itself, but as a medium for promoting children's conceptual development. Learners typically reflect on and discuss their understandings of concepts as they are developing them. Metacognitive thinking is promoted by structuring the classroom so that thinking strategies can be learned in conjunction with the development of conceptual understandings. (Mary Chamberlain, New Zealand Ministry of Education.)

## 8. Resourcing

***How far are resources to support teaching made available via government/central/local agencies?***

***How far, and in which subjects, are resources statutory/ recommended/ subsidised? (eg textbooks, courses, lesson plans for teachers, web-based materials)***

## Textbooks

The New Zealand approach is not a textbook-based curriculum. Consequently, books are not approved by the State.

The Government is, however, involved in textbook production in a limited way. Learning Media, a crown-owned company, publishes a range of resources that are provided free to schools. The resources provided are mainly aimed at primary age children and include school journals, a *Ready to Read* series of instructional readers, and a range of other publications. The actual use of the texts is not mandatory and how and when they are used is decided by schools/teachers. The Learning Media website is accessible at <http://www.learningmedia.co.nz/>.

A number of commercial publishers produce texts that can be used in schools and these are commonly purchased for use in secondary schools, but very rarely in primary education. Primary schools do, however, buy significant amounts of reading materials from commercial publishers to supplement Learning Media material.

Textbooks are usually loaned to children and only paid for by children (or their parents) if lost.

Parents providing their children with Ministry of Education-approved home-based schooling are given an annual grant to help with the cost of learning materials.

## Online resources

The Ministry of Education has an online resource centre. The *Online Learning Centre* (<http://www.tki.org.nz>) is a bilingual portal for New Zealand's schools, which offers access to curriculum-related materials from state and commercial sources.

New Zealand has also recently launched a National Exemplars Trial. This is an exemplification website resource for teachers to view "authentic samples of children's work annotated to illustrate learning, achievement and quality in relation to the levels described in the relevant New Zealand National Curriculum Statement". The website url is <http://www.tki.org.nz/e/assessment/>.

In support of the literacy and numeracy strategy for children in Years 1 to 8 of compulsory education in New Zealand (see above), a literacy and numeracy website has been set up. This is accessible via <http://www.tki.org.nz/e/literacy>. In addition, materials for teachers - to support classroom literacy and numeracy programmes introduced as part of the strategy - are provided by central government (via the Ministry of Education).

## Resources for school entry assessment

Teachers are provided with an assessment kit by the Ministry of Education. This includes a teachers' guide and a video designed to provide on-going in-school support. The kit is available in English and Maori for teachers of children in Maori language immersion education.

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