

Ngaa Kookiri Ako

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Whakapapa of Te Huarahi o Taawhiao

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Across our kura there are some hard won lessons we have learnt and some key decisions we have made that allows us to consistently deliver quality learning experiences that speak to our vision for learning (which are founded in the Nature of Learning document.)

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Whakapapa of Te Huarahi o Taawhiao (Leamington)

Creating Futures together

Our current school mantra is "Creating Futures Together - Kia aro ngaatahi ki anamata."

- This phrase places at the forefront of our thinking our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi to work in partnership, protection and participation with parents, children and teachers all working together.
- It recognizes the wisdom and aspirations that only parents hold for their children, and hold those things as closely as our own pedagogical practices.
- It recognizes that our whole reason for being together is to create futures for those we work with to change the world.
- It recognizes that this generation of children will be forced to solve issues that generations have been talking about since the 1950s. This was the point where the industrial revolution tipped the earths ecological system sufficiently so that the planet was no longer able to repair itself. Unless we do something about this, the space ship we find ourselves on will eventually require us to find or build another one!

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Our ways of thinking - what we hire and fire on

- Kids first - traditionally schools were set up as places where adults felt comfortable and children had to fit into the system. Whole class teaching worked well for adults, but not that well for the diversity of children. In everything we do, we put children first asking "what would we do if we were putting children first?"
- Be genuine - the person you are at home is the person we want the children and your colleagues to experience each day. Being one person at home, and another at school is not what we are about. We are OK with quirky!
- We want people with crazy ideas to have the courage to try and transform those ideas into learning experiences for the children they work with to bring a sparkle to their eyes.
- We want children to know their learning goals, what success consists of, what they need to focus on, and what to do when they have achieved their goal.
- We encourage our people to fail awesomely! Be ambitious for our kids, try crazy things, fall over, get up, and go again. Our way of thinking is that if we keep getting things right on the first attempt, we have not set our sights high enough. This is not to be confused with lack of preparation or commitment to excellence, rather it is recognizing that smashing through glass ceilings comes with set backs.
- We don't come to a job, we come to a calling.
- 1% gains every day. We are always looking for ways to make things slightly better. The culmination of lots of little gains, stacked relentlessly upon each other is how pyramids are built.
- When we reflect on an issue that did not go to plan we each put our hand up and take responsibility for what we could personally have done to have altered the course of events. As we sit around a table each of us are saying "I could have..." This allows us to interrogate issues, breathing in the oxygen of feedback without looking to blame.
- At Leamington we grow and go. If people don't grow, they go. The message is that going is inevitable, but growing is our collective responsibility for the children and colleagues we work with.

By surrounding ourselves with people whose heart beat resonates with these values we are able to create futures together.

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The Nature of Learning

The Nature of Learning document, published by the OECD is a foundational document for our school. The 7 principals of learning shaped, and continues to shape our approach to how we do school.

The document outlines three different approaches to learning on a continuum. The key takeaway is not that one approach is superior to the other, but rather that each have their place, and the balance varies from child to child, learning area to learning area, and even time of the year.

Guided Learning: the teachers take the main relevant decisions about the goals of learning, learning strategies, and how to measure outcomes, while taking care of feedback, judgements and rewards.

Action Learning: the learners play a much more active role in determining the objectives of the learning than in guided learning; there is a strong element of learner self-organisation and self-planning.

Experiential Learning: this is not controlled by teachers and there are no predetermined objectives. What is learned is determined by context, learners' motivations, the others with whom they come in contact, discoveries made, etc. It is a by-product of the activities in which people are involved.

Spectrum

Guided Learning	Action Learning	Experiential Learning
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Other key takeaways from the document are below.

How People Learn:

Today, the dominant concept is *socio-constructivist* - in which learning is understood to be importantly shaped by *the context it is situated and is actively constructed through social negotiation with others*. On this understanding learning environments should be where:

- Constructive, self-regulated learning is fostered
- The learning is sensitive to context
- It will often be collaborative

Gate Keepers of Learning: Emotions and Motivations

Emotions are the primary *gatekeeper* to learning

Motivation ensures that students acquire knowledge and skills in a meaningful way

Quality vs quantity:

Modern cognitive science confirms that the *quality of knowledge and understanding* is of utmost importance rather than just how much knowledge is acquired.

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The 8 Basics of Motivation

Students are more motivated to engage in learning when:

- 1 they perceive stable links between specific actions and achievement
 - 2 they feel competent to do what is expected of them
 - 3 they value the subject and have a clear sense of purpose
 - 4 they perceive the environment as favourable for learning, and
 - 5 they experience positive emotions towards learning activities.
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- 6 Students direct their attention away from learning when they experience negative emotions.
 - 8 Students free up cognitive resources for learning when they are able to influence the intensity, duration and expression of their emotions.
 - 7 Students are more persistent in learning when they can manage their resources and deal with obstacles efficiently.

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The 7 Principles of Learning

Learners at the centre	The learning environment recognises the learner as its core participants, encourages their active engagement and develops into an understanding of their own activity as learners.
The social nature of learning	The learning environment is founded on the social of learning and actively encourages well-organised cooperative learning
Emotions are integral for learning	The learning professionals with the learning environment are highly attuned to the learners motivations and the key role of emotions in achievement
Recognising individual differences	The learning environment is acutely sensitive to the individual differences among the learners in it, including their prior knowledge
Stretching all students	The learning environment devises programmes that demand hard work and challenge from all but without excessive overload
Assessment for learning	The learning environment operates with clarity of expectations using assessment strategies consistent with these expectations; there is a strong emphasis on formative feedback to support learning
Building horizontal connections	The learning environment strongly promotes horizontal connectedness' across areas of knowledge and subjects as well as to the community and the wider world.

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Keyabilities

Combining the 7 principles of learning, and using our COG's and Virtues, we aim to develop the skills to be;

Problem Identifiers and Solvers	Children who can identify problems, be creative with coming up with solutions and have the confidence, skills and tenacity to turn ideas into reality.
Communicators	Children who can share ideas and connect with others being accurate, succinct, creative and engaging in every environment they find themselves.
Social Entrepreneurs	Children who have a mindset to want to make our world a better place, who both see opportunities to make a difference and have the determination to do something about it.
VUCA Navigators	Children who are comfortable and confident to solve problems that have no obvious solution, who can work through challenges that throw them lots of unforeseen curve balls.
	<p>Complexity Characteristics: The situation has many interconnected parts and variables. Some information is available or can be predicted, but the volume or nature of it can be overwhelming to process. Example: You are doing business in many countries, all with unique regulatory environments, tariffs, and cultural values. Approach: Restructure, bring on or develop specialists, and build up resources adequate to address the complexity.</p> <p>Volatility Characteristics: The challenge is unexpected or unstable and may be of unknown duration, but it's not necessarily hard to understand; knowledge about it is often available. Example: Prices fluctuate after a natural disaster takes a supplier off-line. Approach: Build in slack and devote resources to preparedness—for instance, stockpile inventory or overbuy talent. These steps are typically expensive; your investment should match the risk.</p> <p>Ambiguity Characteristics: Causal relationships are completely unclear. No precedents exist; you face "unknown unknowns." Example: You decide to move into immature or emerging markets or to launch products outside your core competencies. Approach: Experiment. Understanding cause and effect requires generating hypotheses and testing them. Design your experiments so that lessons learned can be broadly applied.</p> <p>Uncertainty Characteristics: Despite a lack of other information, the event's basic cause and effect are known. Change is possible but not a given. Example: A competitor's pending product launch muddies the future of the business and the market. Approach: Invest in information—collect, interpret, and share it. This works best in conjunction with structural changes, such as adding information analysis networks, that can reduce ongoing uncertainty.</p>
Risk Takers	Children who have the confidence and courage to try things that may not come easily, where they will have to fall over a few times before they experience success.
Global Citizens	Children who recognise they are part of an interconnected world with people who have many different values and ways of life, but all share a responsibility to look after our planet for future generations.
Emotionally Intelligent	Children who understand and can regulate their own emotions, recognise emotions in others and know how to work with a wide range of people in an inclusive and responsive way.

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Our Recent History

Leamington is a community whose demographics and story have evolved over a number of years. The area we are in is known as Pukekura (Red Hill) which is the under the shadow of Maungatautari. Specifically, the piece of land we are on is known as te hurarahi o nga Kiingi - the pathway of Kings as this was the walkway that the Rangatira of Aotearoa used to get out to Karapiro for discussions during and after the formation of the Kiingitanga. We have adopted the name Te Hurarahi o Taawhiao as specifically, this is the pathway that Kiingi Taawhiao used as he moved between places. The image of this place being a place where kings walk before making a difference in our world is a wonderful metaphor of what we are about.

Leamington for many years was a Decile 2 school, often thought of as the poor side of Cambridge. Over the last 30 years state housing has been purchased by first home buyers, families, and more recently new housing areas have been established.

The demographics of our school remain largely NZ European, with 20% identifying as Maaori. South African, United Kingdom, Indian, Asian groups make up approximately 20% of our community.

Since 2010 the school has experienced continual roll growth. Leamington had traditionally been a school with a maximum roll of 370 children. In 2020, we became a school of over 600 children for the first time. Along with this has come the building of over 10 new classrooms.

Since 2012 we have also seen the influence of mobile technology and MLE/ILE/FLE/QLE.

IPads changed the way we saw the potential of mobile of devices due to instant on functionality and all day battery. From the use of this technology we changed our Technologically capable COG to our 6 Cs. Our main thrust of using technology is to compliment (to capture, shape, refine, extend, express and challenge) thinking.

We have also spent several years exploring the benefits of Co-teaching. As a school we spent considerable time and money exploring the educational, social and emotional benefits of a co-teaching space. For a number of years every space across our school was a co-teaching space as well as having regular visitors coming to see how we functioned.

Through this process we were hearing the voice of our community that some saw a co-teaching space as their preferred format to support the diverse social, emotional, academic and cultural needs of their children. At the same time some were expressing concerns that their children were not as settled as they were within a single teacher space. From this we asked ourselves three questions;

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1. If we genuinely want to work in partnership with our community under the terms of Te Tiriti, could we ignore the calls of our community for single teacher spaces under the "war cry" of 21st century education?
2. Were the children in a single teacher (or co-teaching) space receiving an inferior experience, and if they were not, what entitled us to disregard the aspirations of parents for how their children would receive an education?
3. Were we being negligent having children in a single (or co-teacher) space?

The answer to all of these questions was no.

As a result we now exploit the size of our school to give families and children options. Each year we survey our community to seek their preferences for how we put our school together. Each year we hear from families that 20% strongly want their child/ren in a co-teaching or single teacher space, while the remaining 60% indicate comfort in having the school make the decision. Some want one child in one type of space, and another child in a different type of space. This can change with age also.

As a result we put our school together each year based on this data, with some years seeing more of one type of space than another. We also recognize that teaching pairings are important. When the pairing works well, it works exceptionally well. However, when it does not work well, the impacts on the children and teachers are felt. Because of this, our preference is to respond to the voice of our teachers about who they might work with, or not!

Several recent threads of thinking are guiding our development currently.

Culturally responsive practice is a significant area where we are placing focus. Making manifest within our school the aspirations of our Maaori community to ensure that the things Maaori would look for that reflect Maaori reo, tikanga, whakapapa and wirua are noticeable in visual and auditory ways.

There are several documents that are guiding our practice to ensure we are doing our part to contribute to Te Mana o Maatauranga (the Waikato Tainui Education plan.) While we will be active in ensuring all children see their cultural values and traditions valued and visible within our school, we recognize the work of Ranginui Walker who makes clear that it is Maaori that have to set the path and priorities for Maaori to emerge from the noose of colonisation, with non-Maaori being essential to support that work and use their cultural influence to reshape, normalize and give mana to changing hearts and minds. We do this by ensuring that we model through reo, the spaces around our school, the stories we teach of local history and traditions we have as a school our collective and individual

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aspirations that Maaori to achieve success as Maaori (being able to be equally comfortable and successful in the classroom and the Marae, in assembly and kapahaka, in the sports team and the Whaanau.)

Cognitive Development - we are spending a lot of time adjusting our practice to respond to the developmental needs of the children we work with. We focus on teaching children, not curriculum. As such, our focus is on recognizing the cognitive development needs of children and altering our programs to reflect these shifts. Play in our school is one example of this due to the developmental needs this fulfills. There are critical ways of thinking, being intentional about planning for and interacting within play that inform our practice.

A key learning from across our last few years is to ensure our orbits remain in their place, to ensure the most important thing remains in the center and other things revolve around it. For instance,

- our focus with cognitively responsive practice is to respond to the developmental needs of our children; it is not play. Play is one of the things that orbits cognitively responsive practice, alongside Project Based Learning, literacy development, teaching emotional skills to support different age groups etc.
- The use of technology orbits engaging children in authentic and challenging contexts. Tools like apps, google classroom orbits technology, which in turn orbits authentic and challenging contexts.

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Our COGS and Virtues

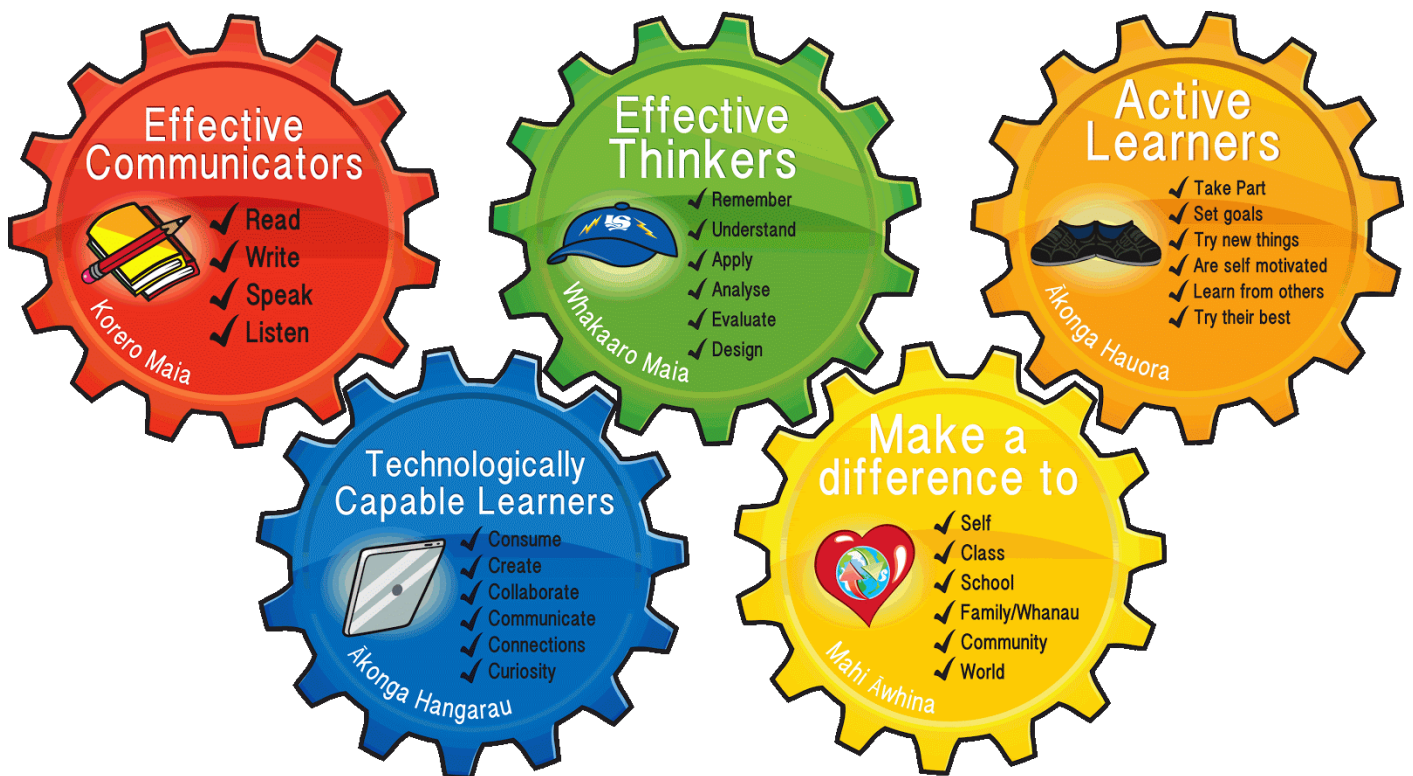
Our COGs (Core Goals for every learner) and Virtues were developed over a number of years with our school community. They are our answer to the key competencies.

We use our COGs and Virtues in every part of our school; from our language of praise, our language of learning, our language of challenge, awards, goal setting, redirection etc.

The language of our COGs and Virtues is also aimed to be in both child speak and image to make it as accessible as possible for our youngest learners, while also providing challenge for our most advanced children.

We are continually finding ways of bringing our COGs and Virtues into more and more parts of our school. As a good rule of thumb, if we think we are going completely overboard with the language with the children in the class each day, we know we are still a way off using it enough!

We need to be deliberate to intentionally develop our CORE goals in our students.



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Effective Communicators are able to



<p>Contribute to and interact effectively with a range of people and texts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to understand written / verbal / visual / non verbal messages and instructions • learn from others collaborate with others, articulate own ideas clearly - written / verbal / visual • express / explain ideas, experiences, knowledge in different scenarios • respond to, negotiate and challenge others and own ideas appropriately • cooperate with others • justify • compromise • interpret • ask questions • Aware of how words and actions affect others • Make connections with others
<p>An active listener is sensitive to others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognize different points of view follow instructions • seek to understand others ideas clarify • seek to learn from others

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Effective thinkers are able to

Examples include, but are not limited to...



- actively use, seek and create knowledge and understanding
- strive to understand
- strive for accuracy be critiquing
- be analytical, be creative,
- create new ideas inquire
- Synthesize information
- ask questions for clarification apply what has been learnt
- reflective of own learning and actions can work collaboratively
- be Resourceful Be resilient
- be flexible
- have strategies for when faced with challenges make choices based on reason and reflection recall and remember important information
- use a range of graphic organizers to achieve higher levels of thinking

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Active Learners are able to

Examples include, but are not limited to...



- actively use, seek and create knowledge and understanding strive to understand
- strive for accuracy be critiquing
- be analytical, be creative,
- create new ideas inquire
- Synthesize information
- ask questions for clarification apply what has been learnt
- reflective of own learning and actions can work collaboratively
- be Resourceful Be resilient
- be flexible
- have strategies for when faced with challenges make choices based on reason and reflection recall and remember important information
- use a range of graphic organizers to achieve higher levels of thinking

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Technologically Capable is being able to

Examples include, but are not limited to...



- Consume
- Collaborate
- Communicate
- Create
- Community Minded
- Use ICT to assist / enhance learning / message
- Competent user of language, symbols and texts
- Strategies for meeting technology challenges
- Use new technology
- Use existing technology confidently
- Overcome barriers of distance and time
- Use a range of tools / software together to complete a task
- Source information via different media

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Make a difference is being able to

Examples include, but are not limited to...



- Contribute appropriately as a group member
- create opportunities for others
- have a sense of belonging
- be actively involved and have a positive influence in different communities, school, family, local, national, international
- be aware of own actions, present and future have implications for the future and how these make a difference in every community they are involved in (sustainability)