



Briefing Note: Update on Kōwhiri Whakapae | practice and progress tools

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Date:	30 June 2022	Priority:	Low / Medium / High
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1289174
Drafter:	Ann Pairman	DDI:	04 463 8420
Key Contact:	Jane Ewens	DDI:	04 463 2864
Messaging seen by Communications team:	Yes / No	Round Robin:	Yes / No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is to provide you with an update on Kōwhiri Whakapae | practice and progress tools. This paper explains how Kōwhiri Whakapae contributes to a coherent teaching and learning pathway and provides initial feedback from the trial and future directions.

Summary

- You have asked for an update on Kōwhiri Whakapae | practice and progress tools. This paper provides background on the rationale, purpose, and development of Kōwhiri Whakapae.
- Kōwhiri Whakapae is being designed to help kaiako to notice, recognise and respond to patterns in children's progress. Use of Kōwhiri Whakapae is intended to enrich current formative assessment approaches rather than replace them.
- Tools are planned in three areas: social-emotional learning (SEL), oral language and literacy (OLLit), and maths. Because *Te Whāriki* is an holistic curriculum and is therefore not framed around subject areas, Kōwhiri Whakapae takes an integrated view of infants, toddlers and young children's learning and development.
- Shining a light on children's growing capabilities in these three foundational areas is intended to support coherence across the teaching and learning pathway. Kōwhiri Whakapae and associated resources will help kaiako, teachers, parents and whānau in early learning and schooling to develop a shared understanding of what matters most, and consistent terminology to discuss and share information about children's progress as they transition between early learning and schooling, including through the Records of Learning

- Emerging findings from the trial of the framing and SEL tool suggest that Kōwhiri Whakapae has potential to support significant shifts in kaiako practice, including enriched conversations with colleagues (both early learning and schooling) and children's whānau about learning. However, initial findings also highlight a range of kaiako concerns about the tools including the potential for the tools to be misused (e.g., as checklists), and an unwillingness among some kaiako to make judgements about children's progress to inform practice.
- Findings from the PLD supported trial will inform the future framing and probable design of online tools. We think that moving to online tools can respond to many of the concerns voiced in the trial because they have the potential to be more user-friendly, better able to illustrate appropriate use of the tools and how information from the tools can contribute to current assessment practices and local curriculum design.
- In 2022/23 the Kōwhiri Whakapae project will be funded through Curriculum Progress and Pathways baseline funding and funding for implementation of the Literacy & Communications and Maths Strategy. In July we will provide you with a summary of the final evaluation report from the PLD supported trial, along with our proposed response for your approval.

Proactive Release

- a **agree** that the Ministry of Education release this briefing in full once it has been considered by you.

☒ **Agree** ☐ **Disagree.**

Pauline

Pauline Cleaver
Associate Deputy Secretary
Te Poutāhū | Curriculum Centre

30/06/2022

Jan Tinetti

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education
(School Operations)

02/07/2022

Background

1. The Ministry began work in 2020 to develop a suite of tools to help early learning kaiako strengthen formative assessment and teaching practice within the framework of *Te Whāriki He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa (Te Whāriki)*. This initiative delivers on Action 4.2 of *He taonga te tamaiti – Every child a taonga: Early learning action plan 2019–2029 (ELAP)*. This planned suite of tools has previously been referred to as practice and progress tools (see METIS: 1217730). The working title for the tools is now Kōwhiri Whakapae.
2. We know that high quality early learning depends on tailored teaching practices that respond to evidence-based judgements about children's progress (Siraj et al., 2017). ELAP Action 4.2 responds to concerns that current assessment practices do not always build a clear picture of children's progress over time (ERO, 2016) and that progress in areas of most significance to positive educational and life outcomes for children should not be left to chance.
3. Tools in Kōwhiri Whakapae are planned in three areas: social-emotional learning (SEL), oral language and literacy (OLLit), and maths. These areas incorporate aspects of learning indicated by the government's science advisors as being of most significance to positive educational and life outcomes, including self-regulation, sociability, oral language, literacy and mathematics.
4. The tools are being designed to help kaiako to notice and recognise patterns in children's progress and to respond through effective teacher practices that support children to grow and expand their capabilities (progress). Consistent with formative assessment, the tools are structured to foreground the interdependence of teaching practice and children's progress. In addition, because the learning environment directly impacts on children's learning, kaiako are encouraged to evaluate their own practices prior to making judgements about a child's progress.
5. In early learning, records of learning usually comprise hardcopy or online portfolios containing a mix of narrative assessments, photos, anecdotal examples, artworks and other artefacts collected over time. These portfolios are designed to travel with the child as they transition within an early learning service and to school or kura. Although the information in some portfolios clearly illustrates and builds on a child's progress, many portfolios comprise a collection of largely descriptive assessments. Families choose whether information from portfolios is shared with new entrant teachers during transitions to school or kura however there is potential for children's progress in early learning to form part of the fully functional digital Records of Learning (see METIS: 1286237).
6. The information provided by the tools in Kōwhiri Whakapae is intended to enrich current formative assessment approaches rather than replace them. We expect that enriched assessments will better support (i) educationally powerful conversations between kaiako and whānau, (ii) teaching practices that respond to individual children's progress, (iii) kaiako to recognise when positive learning trajectories are at risk and additional support may be required, including for children with disabilities, and (iv) positive transitions to school that build on a shared understanding of each child's progress in the areas that matter most.
7. The draft progress tools are being shared with School Entry Kete (SEK) and are informing the development of the tools in this kete.
8. The draft framing for Kōwhiri Whakapae together with the draft structure and content of the first tool (social-emotional learning (SEL)) was completed in July 2021. This work

was followed by a professional learning and development (PLD) supported trial. In November 2021 work also began to develop the draft content for the second tool (oral language and literacy (OLLit). Both the evaluation report of the trial and the draft OLLit content are due June 30, 2022.

Strategic context

9. In addition to delivering on Action 4.2 of the ELAP, Kōwhiri Whakapae and associated resources will:
 - a. align with the *National Education Learning Priorities*, particularly Objective 3 Quality teaching and leadership.
 - b. support implementation of the *Literacy & Communication and Maths Strategy* (LCM) from an early learning perspective.
 - c. support the *Action Plan for Pacific Education*.
 - d. contribute to Priority 2 of the *Learning Support Action Plan* (LSAP), and
 - e. support *Ka Hikitia*, *Tau Mai Te Reo* and *Hei Raukura mō te Mokopuna*.

A coherent teaching and learning pathway

10. *Te Whāriki* is a holistic curriculum and is therefore not framed around subject areas. Consistent with *Te Whāriki*, Kōwhiri Whakapae takes an integrated view of infants, toddlers and young children's learning and development and shows how aspects of key learning areas (SEL, OLLit, and maths) are shaped by the principles and connect across the strands and goals of *Te Whāriki* and contribute to multiple learning outcomes. Hence, the tools in Kōwhiri Whakapae do not provide a 1:1 match to learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki*.
11. The learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki* are positioned as capabilities that increase over time, with emphasis on 'learning in progress'. Therefore, the progress tools in Kōwhiri Whakapae focus on trajectories of growing and expanding capabilities (progress). The tools are intended to help kaiako recognise patterns in children's progress and to respond to the expected variability across children respectfully and sensitively in consultation with whānau. Information from the tools should help kaiako to focus on what children can do (current capabilities), possible directions for the growth and expansion of these capabilities (progress), and how they can work with whānau to support this progress.
12. Shining a light on children's growing capabilities in three foundational 'subject areas' (SEL, OLLit, maths) within the broader curriculum framework is intended to support coherence across the teaching and learning pathway and ensure that valued learning in these foundational areas is not left to chance. In particular, Kōwhiri Whakapae and associated resources (such as teaching and learning and whānau guides) will help kaiako, teachers, parents and whānau in early learning and schooling to develop a:
 - a. shared understanding of what matters most in teaching and learning, including cross-curricular conceptual emphases (such as the importance of comprehension and phonological awareness for OLLit, and measuring and classifying as part of maths).
 - b. Shared language for talking about SEL, OLLit, and maths teaching and learning, including consistent terminology to discuss and share information about children's progress in key aspects as they transition between early learning and schooling, including in relation to SEK
13. Some early learning services, schools and kura share assessments and other information from children's portfolios to support positive transitions, with consent from families. There is the potential for this information to be included in the Record of

Learning. In supporting a shared language and understanding around learning areas that can't be left to chance, we expect that kaiako use of Kōwhiri Whakapae will strengthen early learning assessments to better support a coherent teaching and learning transition for children and their whānau.

Kōwhiri Whakapae: Progress update

14. The evaluation report from the PLD supported trial of the framework and SEL tool, and the development of initial content for the OLLit tool, are on track for completion June 30, 2022. The purpose of the PLD supported trial is to evaluate the impact of using the SEL tool on shifts in teaching practice and children's progress, and whether the SEL progressions appropriately describe social and emotional trajectories of learning in different contexts, including cultural contexts. The evaluation will identify whether, and how use of the SEL tool fits with kaiako current assessment practices, and how kaiako and parents/whānau experience and view them.
15. The trial began November 1, 2021 with kaiako from 112 early learning services across face-to-face and on-line PLD options. Kaiako participating in the trial are from a variety of Māori immersion, Pacific, and English medium early learning service types, including services with high numbers of with immigrant families. Services are situated in Tai Tokerau, Tāmaki Makaurau, Pōneke, and Ōtautahi.
16. COVID-19 has significantly impacted the services in the trial and negatively impacted levels of kaiako participation and engagement. Disruption has been minimised by shifting from face-to-face to online media where possible, but between November 1, 2021 and May 27, 2022 the number of services involved dropped from 112 to 87, attendance became a challenge for many services remaining in the trial and aspects of the PLD were delayed. The notion of progress tools is a new concept in early learning, and a draft report on the PLD support notes that participants found the progress tools more challenging to trial than the practice tools. Because participants were encouraged to work with the practice tools first, not all participants got the opportunity within the timeframe of the trial to do justice to the progress tools.

Emerging findings from the trial

17. These emerging findings draw on interim reports provided to the Ministry in April 2022. Emerging findings suggest that the practice and progress tools have potential to support significant shifts in kaiako practice, including enriched conversations with colleagues and children's whānau about learning. Many kaiako reported that information in the tools was well-laid out with a clear progression of ideas and found it easy to hook into the big ideas. Māori and Pacific services particularly appreciated that the tools offered opportunity to include local practices. Some kaiako who were initially hesitant about the tools, especially the progress tool, found them increasingly useful as their understanding grew over time with PLD support. Most kaiako who used both the tools would use them again.
18. However, initial findings also highlight kaiako concerns about the tools. These concerns include the potential for the tools to be misused (e.g., as checklists), an unwillingness among some kaiako to make judgements about children's progress, a perception that the progressions are overly linear, that a focus on development conflicts with sociocultural theory, and the structure of the four books and some of the content is overly complex. In addition, while some kaiako used the information gained from the tools to enrich their narrative assessments, many kaiako misunderstood their purpose and viewed the tools as 'stand-alone' and separate from their current assessment practices.

19. Views about the tools are polarised and the interim reports suggest this polarisation reflects the sector's diversity, including in levels of kaiako qualification and prior experience, and in types of early learning service and philosophies.

Future directions

20. Findings from the PLD supported trial will inform the future framing and probable design of online tools. We think that online tools will respond to many of the concerns voiced in the trial, through their potential to be more user-friendly and better able to illustrate appropriate use of the tools and how information from the tools can contribute to current assessment practices and local curriculum design. An online (and highly visual) approach provides an opportunity to:
- a. illustrate progress as expanding (breadth and depth) as well as forward.
 - b. unpack (including visually) the relationship between growing capabilities in specific areas and broader learning and development (woven).
 - c. help kaiako better understand broad concepts such as intentional teaching and local curriculum design, and how these can be supported by Kōwhiri Whakapae.
 - d. demonstrate ways to use contextualised information from the tools to inform formative assessments.
 - e. help kaiako to integrate practice and progress elements (including the culture, language and identify practice tool).
 - f. easily link to related resources and examples.
21. Resources associated with Kōwhiri Whakapae (teaching and learning and whānau guides) are available in some of the three areas that the suite of tools will cover. For example, teaching and learning guides are available for SEL (*He Māpuna te Tamaiti*) and oral language (*Te Kōrerorero*). The Ministry intends to also develop teaching and learning guides for literacy and maths. A whānau guide is near completion for oral language, and we intend to also develop whānau guides for SEL, literacy and maths.
22. Kōwhiri Whakapae and associated resources are considered fundamental in supporting implementation of the LCM Strategy for early learning. Therefore, we expect further iteration of the content of the SEL and OLLit tools, and the development of the maths tool and associated resources to be supported by the common practice model.

Key Risks and Benefits

23. The notion of identifying, articulating, supporting and mapping children's *progress overtime* is new for many early learning kaiako and this presents challenges to the acceptance and uptake of new tools in this area. Many kaiako lack access to strong mentors or leaders, and uptake and effective use of the tools is likely to be compromised if kaiako work in a services where conditions make it difficult to develop collective understanding. Ongoing trialling and iteration will be needed throughout the development of the tools, and PLD provided to support their eventual roll-out, to ensure that Kōwhiri Whakapae and associated resources are well-received and used appropriately to support teacher practice and children's progress across the pathway.

Next Steps

24. In 2022/23 the Kōwhiri Whakapae project will be funded through Curriculum Progress and Pathways baseline funding and funding for implementation of the LCM Strategy. In July we will provide you with a summary of the final evaluation report from the PLD supported trial, along with our proposed response for your approval.

Other Relevant Information

25. In January 2020, the Ministry briefed the Hon. Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education about our intended approach for this work (METIS: 1217730). Kōwhiri Whakapae is being developed within the framework of *Te Whāriki He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa*. This curriculum pathway includes Māori medium services that operate independently of Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust (TKRNT).
26. The draft framing for Kōwhiri Whakapae together with the draft structure and content of the first tool (social-emotional learning (SEL)) were developed by a project team in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and a sector reference group. The project team comprised researchers and practitioners with expertise in formative assessment, including in kaupapa Māori and Pacific contexts. National and international research evidence informed this collaborative process.