Learning area

The curriculum has eight learning areas: English, the arts, health and physical education, learning languages, mathematics and statistics, science, social sciences, and technology. Together they provide the basis for a broad, general education for the first four phases of learning (years 0–10) and collectively lay a foundation for specialisation in phase 5 (years 11–13).

Each learning area is knowledge-rich. This knowledge has been carefully chosen to support all students in their schooling pathway and is framed using Understand, Know, and Do:

- Understand – the deep and enduring big ideas and themes that students develop understanding of over the phases
- Know – the meaningful and important content, concepts, and topics at each phase that enrich students' understanding of the big ideas and themes and that students study using the practices
- Do – the practices (skills, strategies, and processes) that bring rigor to learning and support the development of the key competencies.

A progression model provides the structure that sequences the knowledge. It supports all students to develop greater:

- breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, through engaging with increasingly complex and ambiguous contexts
- refinement and sophistication in their use of competencies, practices, strategies, processes, and skills
- ability to connect, transfer, and apply new learning in meaningful contexts
- knowledge and awareness of themselves as learners
- effectiveness when working with others.

Content of the learning areas

Knowledge and progression are reflected in how the learning areas are organised. Each learning area has the following main sections:

Purpose statement and UKD overview

A purpose statement describes the learning area's contribution to the lives of students. It is followed by an overview of Understand, Know, and Do. This gives a view of the big ideas, themes, concepts, topics, and practices that underpin the learning area.

Teachers use the purpose statement and UKD overview to develop an understanding of the learning area, so that they can share its benefits with students.

Learning area structure | Te au koro'ata Ingiriti i roto i tēia tu'anga 'āpi'i

For each learning area, this section outlines its structure and the changes it undergoes over five phases of learning, particularly in the final phase, where students specialise and choose from a range of subjects.

There are five phases of learning, spanning years 0–13. Each phase covers two to three years of schooling, which reflects how most schools organise learning across year levels.

A critical focus for each phase establishes a sustained, strengths-based, focus on the student and their social, emotional, and cognitive learning at this stage of their schooling journey. Each critical focus builds on the phase before and is reflected in the content of the learning area for the phase.

The critical focuses are:

- Phase 1 (years 0–3): Thriving in environments rich in literacy and maths
- Phase 2 (years 4–6): Expanding horizons of knowledge, and collaboration
- Phase 3 (years 7–8): Seeing ourselves in the wider world and advocating with and for others
- Phase 4 (years 9–10): Having a purpose and being empathetic and resilient
- Phase 5 (years 11–13): Navigating pathways and developing agency to help shape the future.

Teachers use the critical focus of each phase in their selection and design of topics and activities.

Teaching guidance | Te au tauturu no te ‘āpi’i’anga

Each learning area also draws from the science of learning and wider education theory to provide a knowledge base and guidance for teachers. Teachers use this to help them make purposeful decisions about how to teach the learning area’s content in ways that are inclusive of all students.

The guidance is organised under three headings:

- Designing a comprehensive teaching and learning programme
- Using assessment to inform teaching
- Planning.

Progress outcomes | Te kōronga tei rauka

In each learning area, there is one comprehensive progress outcome for each phase.

The progress outcomes act as signposts that describe expectations for what students should sufficiently understand, know, and be able to do at key points in the schooling pathway.

The content of each progress outcome is organised using the Understand– Know–Do framework. While the Understand statements repeat across the five phases, students’ depth of understanding increases as their knowledge of the learning area’s content (Know) grows and their use of the practices (Do) develops.

When read alongside the progress outcomes for prior and subsequent phases, the progress outcome for a phase helps teachers maintain an overview of the learning they are building on and the learning they are preparing students for. Progress outcomes are therefore key for planning, along with the more detailed teaching sequences (described below).

Teachers also use the progress outcomes to help them form a comprehensive view of each student's progress, achievement, learning needs, and strengths. Schools can use information from twice-yearly, standardised assessment tools to help develop this view, which can also be used to report to parents.

In forming a view of progress and achievement, teachers should ask themselves:

- **Are students using learning from the progress outcome of the previous phase to make sense of new learning in the current phase?** This demonstrates how well they can connect new learning to what they already know. It generally occurs in the first year of a phase.

- **Are students consolidating the learning expressed in the progress outcome in a wide range of contexts?** This demonstrates how well and confidently they are using their new learning. This generally occurs in the second year of the phase.

- **Are students secure in the learning described in the progress outcome within an increasingly complex range of contexts?** Are they showing greater depth of knowledge, understanding, and application as they use their new learning and prepare for the challenges of the next phase? This generally occurs towards the end of the final year of the phase.

- **Are there gaps in learning that are going to restrict students' ability to make progress in the next phase of their learning?** This is a question teachers should ask across all years of the phase, drawing on the section *Using assessment to inform teaching (page 23)* to consider how to adapt their practices to meet students' learning needs.
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Leaders must have a mechanism and strategies for prioritising and closely monitoring urgent action, when required, to support classroom teaching. Where teaching needs to be targeted and intensified to meet specific needs for finite periods, leaders draw on a breadth of available supports, as required.

Teaching sequences | Te au ʻakapapaʻanga no te ʻāpiʻiʻanga

Each phase has a year-by-year teaching sequence. These sequences support teachers to know what to teach and when and how to teach it as students work towards the progress outcome for the phase. They have been organised to support students to revisit ideas, knowledge, and practices
in ways that deepen their learning and enable them to use it at the next phase.

There are two parts in a teaching sequence: statements of what to teach, and 'teaching considerations' for how to teach:

- the 'what to teach' statements are preceded by the stem 'Informed by prior learning ...', which reminds teachers to use their professional judgment and assessment information when selecting what content to teach
- the teaching considerations help teachers to know 'how to teach' this content in response to students' prior knowledge, strengths, and experiences.

The teaching sequence tables should be viewed both vertically and horizontally. Looking down the columns helps teachers know what to plan for in a year's programme. Looking across the rows at the statements for the same concept in the preceding and following years helps teachers to recognise prior learning that students may come with and to consider how they might extend this year's learning. It also helps teachers to form a more detailed view of their students' progress, and it is a strong support when planning for mixed-level classes.
The approach of the year-by-year teaching sequences changes in phase 5, as the content becomes more discipline-focused.