

Using the National Standards for Improvement

INTRODUCTION TO THE SELF-REVIEW TOOLS



This set of self-review tools supports teachers, in-school leaders, and boards of trustees to use the National Standards for reading, writing, and mathematics to improve students' learning and achievement within the New Zealand Curriculum. The tools focus on improving outcomes for all students and give particular attention to those at risk of not being able to fully access the New Zealand Curriculum over time. They also support Ka Hikitia's intent of "Māori enjoying education success as Māori" (Ministry of Education, 2009, page 18).

The self-review tools will help teachers, leaders, and boards to identify their professional strengths and learning needs in relation to the National Standards. The tools will also help them to prioritise the support they require to use the standards to improve teaching, learning, and reporting, including reporting to Māori parents and whānau, which may need to differ from the school's established ways of reporting.

Teachers, leaders, and boards may use the tools collaboratively within their schools and with external facilitators as part of their regular self-review processes. The tools will enable them to decide:

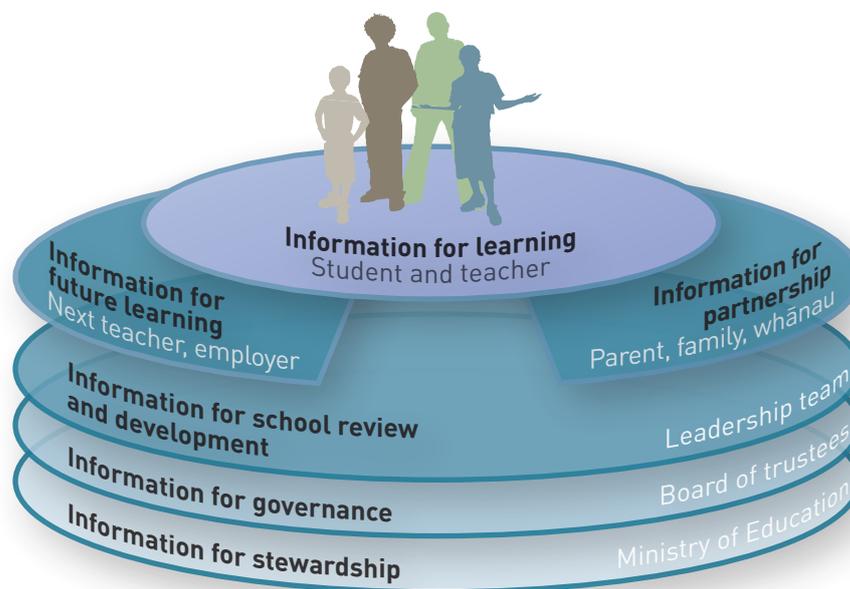
- Where are we at now?
- What does integrated practice look like?
- What are our next steps?

WHAT ARE THE NATIONAL STANDARDS?

The National Standards are reference points or signposts that describe the achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics that will enable students to meet the demands of the New Zealand Curriculum. They provide a nationally consistent means for considering, explaining, and responding to students' progress and achievement in years 1–8. This is especially useful when focusing and reporting on the progress of priority groups of students, such as Māori and Pasifika boys.

HOW WILL THE NATIONAL STANDARDS HELP US TO RESPOND TO INFORMATION ON OUR STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT?

The following diagram shows the different groups of people involved in supporting students' learning and the purposes for which they need assessment information. Judgments about student achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics in relation to the National Standards will provide another important source of information for all these groups, particularly in terms of the pace of progress of students as they move through their first eight years at school.



Source: *The New Zealand Curriculum*, page 40

Schools will set targets for student achievement in relation to the National Standards within their school charters. These targets will vary between schools, but schools must pay particular attention to individuals and groups of students who are at risk of not meeting the standard for their year level.

HOW MIGHT THESE SELF-REVIEW TOOLS LINK WITH CURRENT SELF-REVIEW PROCESSES?

Self-review involves deliberate and ongoing professional and organisational learning. It uses evidence to find out what is working well, so it can be sustained, and to identify and address any school-based conditions, beliefs, and practices that are limiting student learning.

The Education Review Office (2009) describes the self-review process as involving both regular and emergent inquiries that feed into a school's strategic self-review and lead to actions for improvement. During a school's review cycle, a number of regular reviews into learning may occur in particular curriculum areas or in school-wide approaches to, for example, using ICT or managing students' behaviour. An emergent review occurs when there are unplanned issues to examine or new initiatives to integrate into programmes of learning. The National Standards present schools with the need for an initial emergent inquiry focusing on the effective and coherent use of the standards within the implementation of the New Zealand Curriculum. In time, this inquiry will become embedded as a regular review.

To undertake this emergent inquiry, schools and their communities will need to build shared knowledge about how to use the standards as reference points for supporting their students' progress within the New Zealand Curriculum. As part of this, teachers and leaders may need to build their knowledge of the learning progressions for students described in *Literacy Learning Progressions*, *The English Language Learning Progressions*, and the Number Framework from the Numeracy Development Projects. The resulting profiles of student progress will give schools important information about the achievement of all students and highlight those who are not responding as well as others to the learning environment. It is likely that different kinds of instructional approaches will be needed for these students.

As part of such an inquiry, it is vital that schools examine their understandings and enactment of ako:

The concept of ako describes a teaching and learning relationship, where the educator is also learning from the student and where educators' practices are informed by the latest research and are both deliberate and reflective. Ako is grounded in the principle of reciprocity and also recognises that the learner and whānau cannot be separated.

(Ministry of Education, 2009, page 20)

Teachers, leaders, and boards may use the self-review tool on their own, but research shows that inquiry undertaken with others and with a clear focus on student achievement results in much deeper understanding (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, and Fung, 2007).

Similarly, self-review may be undertaken with or without support from an external expert, but working with an "experienced other", such as a PD provider or in-school leader of professional learning, results in deeper learning (Timperley et al., 2007).

WHAT SUPPORT WILL THERE BE TO USE THE SELF-REVIEW TOOLS?

Schools have received the National Standards in reading, writing, and mathematics, along with examples of tasks, texts, and problems that illustrate the standards and their relationship to the New Zealand Curriculum. The print publications on the National Standards also provide some guidance on assessment in relation to the standards. The Assessment Tool Selector and the Assessment Resources Maps on Te Kete Ipurangi¹ describe a range of assessment tools that teachers and schools can use to inform overall teacher judgments in relation to the National Standards. Upcoming materials will provide further support on how to assess student progress and achievement in relation to the standards and on reporting to parents, families, and whānau.

Before using one of the self-review tools, you should become fully familiar with the standards themselves and the support materials for the standards available online at <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/National-Standards>. The self-review tools can then be used to identify your learning needs in relation to the standards and to plan next steps for using them in an integrated way that has a positive impact on students' learning.

There will be a range of available learning opportunities that aim to address your learning needs. All Ministry of Education contracted providers of professional learning in literacy, numeracy, assessment, and school leadership and management will be able to support schools in the implementation of the standards and the use of the self-review tools. The tools will also be included in a national series of workshops on the standards.

HOW ARE THE SELF-REVIEW TOOLS STRUCTURED?

This set of self-review tools includes a tool for teachers, a tool for in-school leaders, and a tool for boards of trustees. A fourth tool is provided to help schools improve their reporting processes.

Each of the tools uses the inquiry and knowledge-building cycle from *Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration* (Timperley et al., 2007) as an organising framework. There are two reasons for using the inquiry cycle in this way. Firstly, the cycle enables each tool to treat self-review as fundamentally about professional learning and capability for improvement in the school. Secondly, the cycle links student achievement to knowledge building for teachers, leaders, and boards, highlighting the importance of placing students and their interests, strengths, and aspirations at the centre of inquiry.

¹ See <http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Effective-use-of-evidence/Assessment-tool-selector> and <http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Effective-use-of-evidence/Assessment-tool-selector/Assessment-resources-maps>.

Recognising that users of the tools will have differing understandings and levels of expertise, each tool describes practice in relation to effective use of the National Standards at three points on a continuum: basic,² developing, and integrated.

HOW ARE SCHOOLS LIKELY TO POSITION THEMSELVES ON THE CONTINUUM?

Over the last few years, many schools have been supported to engage in evidence-informed inquiry, which uses assessment information for improvement purposes. They will, therefore, have built their knowledge of how to:

- develop understandings of learning progressions for students in literacy, ESOL, and mathematics;
- involve students in the assessment of their own learning, which supports metacognition and self-regulation;
- analyse assessment information with a focus on addressing underachievement and on the specific practices needed to do so;
- develop school systems and structures to monitor the effectiveness of any changes made to teaching practices;
- lead the process of change by embedding schooling improvement as core business;
- create opportunities for students to use their cultural knowledge in their learning so that they will be better able to access the New Zealand Curriculum.

These schools will be well positioned to use the National Standards for improvement purposes. Their main focus for professional learning will be on how to fit the National Standards into their existing effective practices. Other schools may position themselves at the basic level of the tools, with the tools providing a pathway for further development.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH LEVEL OF THE TOOL?

The following table provides an overview of the self-review tools by showing the characteristics that underpin the three levels in each tool. (Note that at the integrated level, the term “systematic” is used to indicate sustained inquiry that results in knowledge building and actions for improvement, with a particular focus on those students at each cycle of inquiry who are still underachieving.)

REFERENCES

- Education Review Office (2009). Unpublished materials from ERO self-review workshops for principals. Wellington: Education Review Office.
- Ministry of Education (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium Teaching and Learning in Years 1–13*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Available at <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz>
- Ministry of Education (2009). *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success: The Māori Education Strategy 2008–2012*, updated edition. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Available at <http://kahikitia.minedu.govt.nz/default.htm>
- Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barrar, H., and Fung, I. (2007). *Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration [BES]*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Available at www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/2515

² The National Administration Guidelines have been revised and republished to incorporate requirements in relation to the National Standards. These requirements are implicit in many of the descriptors at the “basic” level of the self-review tools. Schools are required to meet the new requirements from 2010 and to report against them in their annual reports on the 2011 year onwards.

OVERVIEW OF THE THREE LEVELS IN THE SELF-REVIEW TOOLS

	Basic	Developing	Integrated
Use of the National Standards	The approach to using the National Standards may have a narrow focus and not be linked to the New Zealand Curriculum.	The National Standards may be used as reference points to support students to access and progress in the New Zealand Curriculum.	The National Standards are used as reference points to support students to access and progress in all areas of the New Zealand Curriculum.
Teaching and learning	The relationship between teachers' professional practice and its impact on students' learning may not be clear.	Teachers reflect on the impact of their professional practice on students' learning.	The analysis of assessment information considers how systems, processes, and professional practice are impacting on students' learning and supporting students' cultural and learning needs.
Knowledge and understanding	Leaders' and teachers' knowledge and understanding of content, pedagogy, assessment, and learning progressions for students may not lead to valid decisions about where students are in relation to the National Standards.	Leaders and teachers have a basic knowledge and understanding of content, pedagogy, assessment, and learning progressions for students, which they use to make decisions about where students are in relation to the National Standards.	Leaders and teachers have specific, in-depth knowledge and understanding of content, pedagogy, assessment, and learning progressions for students, which inform detailed analyses of students' strengths and needs in relation to the National Standards. Systematic inquiry is linked within and across school levels (for example, classroom assessment information is linked to school-wide goals).
Inquiry and knowledge building	School systems and routines rather than inquiry processes may drive the use of the National Standards.	School systems and routines involve collaborative inquiry and knowledge building by leaders and teachers.	School systems and routines involve collaborative inquiry and knowledge building by the board, leaders, teachers, parents, whānau, and students themselves. Discussions challenge beliefs and practices and systematically focus on the need to address issues related to student achievement.
Using assessment information	Analysis of assessment information considers student progress and achievement in relation to targets for year-level averages and for groups of students.	Analysis of assessment information considers student progress and achievement in relation to differentiated targets for individuals and groups of students. The pace of progress for students is considered, but the next steps may not focus specifically on students at risk.	Analysis of assessment information considers student progress and achievement in relation to differentiated targets for individuals and groups of students. It reflects high expectations of all students by the board, leaders, teachers, parents, whānau, and students themselves. The pace of progress for all students is considered, particularly those who are at risk of not meeting the standards.