



St Theresa's Catholic School Plimmerton

Te Kura Katorika o Hato Terēhia



Our school and local curriculum

The story of our school

Nau mai, haere mai – welcome to our local curriculum.

This is the story of St Theresa’s Catholic School: who we are, where we are, what we do, why and how we deliver quality teaching and learning to our community.

Aotearoa New Zealand has a set of National Curriculum documents known as the *New Zealand Curriculum*. Catholic schools in Aotearoa are also guided by the Religious Education Curriculum *Tō Tātou Whakapono – Our Faith*.

Our local curriculum expresses how we at St Theresa’s, deliver on these two guiding documents.

In these pages, we tell the story of our local curriculum through the metaphor of the special pōhutukawa tree that grows in the heart of our school.





Our pōhutukawa tree

Pōhutukawa trees seem familiar and uniform but have local varieties. In the same way, our local curriculum is unique to us.

Pōhutukawa are resilient and hardy. They thrive in a wide range of environments including precarious locations. In the same way, at St Theresa's we are adaptable and strong.

Pōhutukawa have strong heartwood. They don't grow in a uniform, straight way but are dynamic and put their energy into becoming strong. That's how we like to see ourselves at St Theresa's too.

In Māori culture, pōhutukawa are associated with the spiritual dimensions of life. Matariki, the pōhutukawa star is the one associated with honouring those who have passed in the last year. In the same way, here at St Theresa's we honour the spiritual dimensions of life and honour those from our community who have passed on.

Vision

Learners

Achievement

People

Community

Future

Teaching

Place

Aims

Principles

Values



Founders

————— *Click on each heading to go to the page* —————

Our place

St Theresa's Catholic School is located in Plimmerton, a seaside village 20 minutes north of Wellington.

We express our connection to our place through relationships with our Parish and local iwi, by learning about local stories and histories and through environmental activity including engaging with local waterways and reserves.

[More...](#)



*Like the pōhutukawa tree
in the centre of our school,
everything has a centre
from which it grows.
Our school curriculum
starts with our place.*



Our patron saint and founders

The Catholic Church, as represented by the Pope, Saint Therese and our national and local clergy is at the heart of our local curriculum. Everything we do is within their embrace and with their guidance. Our founder, Mary MacKillop and the wider Josephite order, created the fertile ground in which the seed for our school was planted and our local curriculum is able to flourish.

Our school and parish are named after St Therese of Lisieux in France. She was a Carmelite nun known for doing small things with great love and kindness. She is known as the 'Little Flower', made and loved by God. The qualities St Therese lived by are at the very heart of our local curriculum. We remind ourselves and our children to live by her example. We too can be 'little flowers of God'.



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Like the cross from which our pōhutukawa tree grows, the Catholic Church is at the heart of our school. Our local curriculum grows from it.

Just as our tree could only be planted after the soil had been prepared, the foundations for our local curriculum depend on the groundbreaking work by our patron saint and our school founders.



Our Vision

"To live, learn and love with Jesus, being the best we can be."



*Like the air that surrounds
the pōhutukawa tree,
our vision surrounds us
on every side.*

*It reminds us to reach to
the heavens to find purpose
for everything we do.*

*Our vision is something
we try to live and aspire
to every day.*



Our Principles

Our principles are what we at St Theresa's stand for. We believe these four words guide us as individuals and as a school. They also remind us to reach out and connect beyond our own school to create relationships with other schools, agencies, community organisations and providers.

CREATIVITY

RELATIONSHIPS

EQUITY

BALANCE



Like the roots that support our pōhutukawa tree and help it stand firm, our four principles are the roots of our school and our local curriculum. They are foundational; underpinning everything we do and keeping us grounded in our beliefs.



Our School Values

Our five SPARK values are taught, fostered and lived out every day at our school.

They are underpinned by our Gospel/Josephite values:

SELF-CONTROL

POSITIVITY

AROHA

RESPECT

KINDNESS

They are further enriched by the Māori values of:

MANAAKITANGA

WHANAUNGATANGA



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*Like the five trunks of
the pōhutukawa tree, our
values provide our foundation.
They draw on the principles,
and Gospel values and serve
as a channel through
which all our learning and
development will flow.
Just as a tree trunk
contains rings, our values
tell us a lot about our
history and how we have
changed over time.*



Our Strategic Aims

These three strategic aims flow through our planning, providing direction for everyone at St Theresa's and to ensure all children can thrive. While all aims are equally important, they are prioritised depending on needs.



CURRICULUM

FAITH

CULTURE

*Like the nutrients that
flow through the sap
of the pōhutukawa, reaching
and feeding every flower,
our strategic aims flow
through all our planning,
providing protection
and overall health.*



Our people

St Theresa's has a principal, a three-person leadership team, a team of twelve full-time and part-time teachers and around ten support staff including learning assistants/teacher aides, an administrator, a librarian and our After School Care team. They are supported by a Board of Trustees made up of the Principal, elected parent representatives, appointed proprietor's representatives and a teacher representative. Our people are vital to the success of our school. They bring the principles, values and aims of the school to life and deliver quality teaching and learning programmes to our children.

We pride ourselves on the strong relationships between Board, leadership, staff, students and families/whanau. Many of our people stay for many years.

Teachers at St Theresa's are all highly professional individuals with their own style and their own strengths. Several have leadership roles in Kahui Ako and Networks of Expertise. They are also interdependent; connected and working as a team, continually updating their skills and knowledge through ongoing professional development to ensure St Theresa's Catholic School stays ahead of latest research and practice in education.

[More...](#)

Like the boughs on the pōhutukawa tree, our principal, teachers and support staff are what gives our school curriculum its substance and unique shape. Together they draw on the vision, principles, values and aims to ensure the nutrients reach every blossom and the whole tree thrives. Meanwhile, like the bark of the pōhutukawa tree, our Board of Trustees wraps around to provide structure and support.



Our teaching and learning

At St Theresa's Catholic School we want to foster 21st century skills that prepare our children to become confident, connected, life-long learners. We deliver programmes across all the learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum and the Religious Education Curriculum Tō Tātou Whakapono – Our Faith. Learning area content is explored through whole-school inquiries. Our learning approaches also foster the key competencies, values and principles of the Curriculum.

Our teachers work in PODS, meaning each class has its own space, and teacher, but often combine with other classes for

shared learning. Learners have access to a learning hub with a dedicated librarian. We have identified a set of 'High Impact Practices' for the best quality teaching and learning. Our teachers draw on a range of research-informed approaches and initiatives within the classroom including:

- Dramatic Inquiry
 - Makerspace
 - PB4L (Positive Behaviour for Learning)
 - Lexia (Literacy)
 - Mathletics (Maths)
 - Structured literacy
 - ALiM (Maths)
 - KiVa (bullying prevention)
 - RE Implementation Plan
- Learning also takes place outside the classroom with experiences like:
- Camp
 - Museum trips
 - Theatre trips
 - Bush exploration
 - Sports
 - School Production

Like veins that run through the pōhutukawa, carrying richness to every blossom, our teaching approaches are carefully chosen to feed and nurture every child's body, mind, heart and soul. As the veins of a tree need to continue to expand and grow as the tree changes, so our teaching and learning knowledge grows and expands to fulfil the needs of our children and the expectations of our profession.



Our community

St Theresa's Catholic School serves the suburbs of Whitby, Papakowhai, Pauatahanui, Paremata, Mana, Aotea, Pukerua Bay, Plimmerton and Camborne, providing a Year 1-6 Catholic education.

Our strong relationships with our local community and families are fostered through whānau group, Board of Trustees, parent/teacher initiatives, social events, camps, school Masses and many other occasions.

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We regularly engage with outside agencies as part of providing holistic education. St Theresa's has a tradition of participation in social justice actions to benefit the community (Canned Food Drives, fundraising, helping at St Vincent de Paul shop, visits to retirement homes, etc).



*Like the green leaves
on the pōhutukawa tree,
St Theresa's local community
and its families provide
the distinct shape and
texture of our school.
Like leaves grow close
around the flower buds,
we acknowledge how
whanau/family members
support and nurture the
children we teach.*



Our learners

Our school roll is capped at 212 with learners from Years 1 to 6.

We have an inclusive environment, with learners from a variety of backgrounds and cultures and with a range of needs. We have a close relationship with all local Whanau Manaaki/kindergartens and Early Childhood Centres. Our children go on to a variety of intermediate settings including Catholic schools, local, city and private.

[More...](#)



*Like blossoms on
the pōhutukawa,
we encourage every
child to thrive and bloom
– little flowers of God
like St Therese herself.
We know that not every
flower is identical
– some bloom on different
parts of the tree, and
in their own time.*



Our progress and achievement

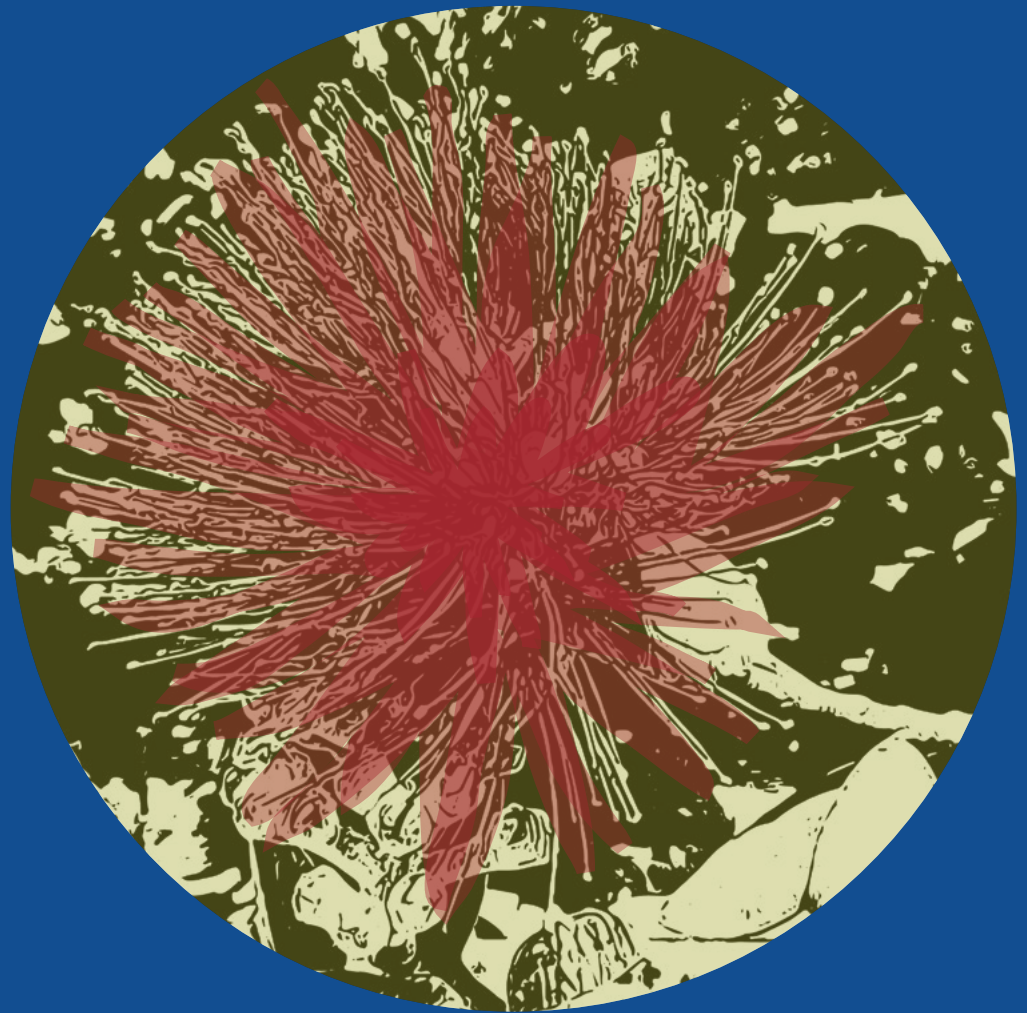
Formal and informal progress and achievement data is gathered in all curriculum learning areas. Seesaw (a digital platform) is used to share student work directly with families/whānau and for real-time reporting throughout the year.

Progress in Reading, Writing and Maths is tracked using the Learning Progression Frameworks (LPFs). Teachers use data to monitor all students and to identify target students for support.



Data in Reading, Writing, and Maths is reported to families/whānau, the Board of Trustees and Ministry of Education, using the Progress and Consistency Tool (PaCT) tool. This allows teachers to make informed judgements on achievement and to plan according to needs. Parent teacher conferences are held regularly and student voices and whānau voices are included alongside teacher judgements when generating data.

*Like each pōhutukawa
flower blossom is
something worth
celebrating, each child
at St Theresa's has
their progress and
achievement celebrated.*



Our future

We hope you enjoyed finding out more about the who, where, what, why and how of St Theresa's Catholic School.

Please get in touch if you have any questions.

A final word from St Theresa's Principal...

"Thanks for reading St Theresa's Local Curriculum Story! Our local curriculum will continue to grow, adapt and change. We at St Theresa's look forward to walking alongside our children, whānau and community on this learning journey; sharing experiences, supporting one another and sharing our many achievements."



*Like our pōhutukawa tree
is ever-changing, our local
curriculum is not fixed
but continues to evolve.*



Local Curriculum team 2023

Viv Aitken – Ministry-accredited PLD facilitator

Anne Johnston – Graphic Designer

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Pauline MacLean – Assistant Principal

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