



Biculturalism in a primary classroom refers to the acknowledgment and incorporation of the two main cultural heritages in New Zealand: Māori and Pākehā (European). It involves creating an inclusive learning environment that recognises and values both cultures, promotes cultural understanding, and fosters a sense of identity and belonging for all students, regardless of their cultural background.

Here's what biculturalism looks like in Opunake Primary School

Māori Language and Culture Integration: The school displays Māori words, phrases, and symbols alongside English, reflecting the dual language status of New Zealand. Teachers use basic greetings and phrases in Te Reo Māori, and students are encouraged to use and appreciate the Māori language in daily interactions. Teachers are currently upskilling their language skills.

Cultural Celebrations: The teachers and students recognise and celebrate significant Māori cultural events, such as Matariki /Puanga(Māori New Year) and Waitangi Day (New Zealand's national day). Students learn about the

history and significance of these events through activities, art projects, and presentations. We often share this with whanau.

Māori Stories and Legends: Students engage with Māori myths, legends, and stories, learning about the rich cultural heritage and historical narratives of the Māori people. These stories are used as teaching tools to instill important values and life lessons.

Whakataukī and Proverbs: Teachers share whakataukī (Māori proverbs) that hold valuable lessons and wisdom. Students will discuss the meanings and relevance of these proverbs, gaining insights into the Māori worldview.

Kapa Haka: The students have regular Kapa Haka sessions, where students learn Māori songs, dances, and performances. This not only fosters cultural appreciation but also builds confidence and teamwork skills.

Māori Art and Crafts: Students engage in creating Māori-inspired art and crafts, incorporating traditional patterns and symbols. This promotes an understanding of Māori artistic expression and cultural significance.

Tikanga Māori: The school incorporates aspects of Tikanga Māori (Māori customs and protocols) into daily routines and practices. This includes karakia (prayers) before meals or acknowledging the Māori cultural concept of tapu and noa in certain activities.

Whānau Engagement: The school fosters strong connections with Māori whānau (families) by inviting them to be actively involved in their children's learning journey. Whānau members may be invited to share their cultural knowledge and experiences with the class. The school has our own kaumatua and kui, to guide us.

Inclusive Learning Resources: The classroom has a variety of learning resources that represent Māori culture, history, and achievements. Books,

posters, and educational materials reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of the students.

Respect for Cultural Differences: Students are taught to respect and appreciate cultural differences, promoting a positive and inclusive classroom culture where diversity is embraced.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi): The significance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi is discussed and explored in the classroom. Students learn about the history and principles of the treaty, its relevance to New Zealand's identity, and its ongoing impact.

Teacher Professional Development: Teachers engage in ongoing professional development to enhance their understanding of biculturalism and culturally responsive teaching practices.

Overall, biculturalism in our school creates a rich and meaningful educational experience that nurtures cultural appreciation, empathy, and understanding among students. It fosters a sense of pride in Māori heritage and contributes to a strong national identity that embraces diversity and inclusivity.