Evaluation of the Community Liaison Role (CLR) Trial

Interim report

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Executive summary

This report presents interim findings of an evaluation of the Community Liaison Role (CLR) Trial. The CLR Trial is allocating fiscal and staffing allowances to kura, to recognise and support the work kaiako currently do in community liaison and relieve their workload. The desired impact of the CLRs is to support the wellbeing, retention and achievements of ākonga Māori and Pasifika students, support community and family involvement and cultural engagement, and provide opportunities for kaiako to develop their cultural leadership skills within the wider school community.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness and impact of the CLR Trial on achievement, wellbeing and retention of ākonga Māori and Pasifika students. It will also provide insights about kaiako wellbeing, workload and activities undertaken to support ākonga Māori and Pasifika students at kura.

This report is being providing at the half way point of the evaluation, offering early insights into how the CLR Trial is being implemented in kura, and emerging evidence of its effectiveness.

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach. The qualitative methods included a kōrero with kaiako in community liaison role, tumuaki, and ākonga at kura who have received the CLR allocation and allowances, as well as an experience diary which was completed periodically by CLR kaiako. Quantitative methods included surveys of CLR kaiako on their activities, workload and wellbeing, and a baselines self-assessment of where kura are sitting against an engagement framework.

Key findings

KEQ1: How well has the CLR has been implemented in kura?

The interim evaluation of the CLR in kura found varied implementation approaches, tailored to meet the specific needs of each school. Some kura allocated allowances to individual kaiako, while others pooled resources for specific programmes. In some kura, CLR kaiako have scheduled weekly time for community liaison work, whereas other are offered flexible days to use as required. Kura have typically integrated CLRs into existing support structures, enhancing cultural engagement, and support for ākonga. However, some tumuaki noted challenges implementing the CLR Trial, citing timetable constraints and insufficient FTTE allocations.

Survey data confirmed that Tairāwhiti kaiako reported higher average CLR hours (an average of 2.2 hours per week) than those in other regions (who averaged 1.6 hours per week).

Early indications suggest that the CLR is flexible enough to meet the diverse needs of kura, allowing them to tailor activities to their unique cultural contexts and priorities. This adaptability has enabled kura to strengthen cultural initiatives, formalise pastoral care systems, and create pathways for kaiako cultural leadership that reflect local community needs.

CLR kaiako are engaging in a variety of activities to support ākonga Māori and Pasifika students, with mentoring, tracking student progress, and supporting cultural initiatives being

the most common. The CLR time allowance has enabled kaiako to focus more on individual ākonga needs, providing personalised support and fostering stronger relationships with ākonga and whānau. CLR kaiako also play a crucial role in educating non-Māori staff about tikanga Māori and effective teaching strategies for ākonga Māori. For Pasifika students, mentoring and tracking progress are similarly prevalent, with additional efforts directed towards supporting Pasifika performing arts, such as Polyfest. These activities require substantial effort from teachers but have proven effective in engaging students.

Interim findings indicate that, in most kura, CLR kaiako are not undertaking new activities after receiving the allowance. Many kaiako reported that they have long been involved in supporting ākonga, whānau, and communities, and do not view the CLR as introducing new responsibilities. Instead, the allowance has enabled them to expand or dedicate more time to existing activities. For example, some kura have integrated CLR funding into established programmes, such as learning mentor initiatives, rather than creating new positions. This has allowed kaiako to enhance their efforts in areas like kapa haka, resulting in increased student participation and engagement.

The CLR allowance has provided important recognition for the mahi that kaiako were already doing. This formal acknowledgment has legitimised their expertise and increased the visibility of their work. Kaiako expressed that this recognition bestows mana on their community engagement efforts, empowering them to advocate for, and implement changes that benefit, ākonga Māori and Pasifika students.

Most CLR kaiako report receiving good support from the senior leadership team at their kura, with many feeling that their community liaison mahi is well-supported. Regular check-ins with senior leadership and the provision of practical assistance, such as funding and classroom release time, are common support mechanisms. However, kaiako in some kura faced resistance to initiatives like developing dedicated spaces for teaching te reo Māori, and others struggle with inadequate funding and classroom release time.

Interim findings suggest that CLR kaiako are supporting ākonga education experiences by providing culturally responsive support systems. Ākonga appreciate that kaiako focus on them as individuals and recognise the impact of home life on school performance. This holistic approach fosters cultural safety and personal validation. Kaiako noted that the CLR allocation has enabled them to enhance student engagement through cultural events, which in turn supports broader educational engagement.

There have been substantial efforts by kaiako across different kura to strengthen relationships with whānau, hapū, iwi, and Pasifika communities. Whānau engagement has been a priority, with kaiako focusing on understanding the broader family context behind student absences and participation. Whānau are engaged in kura through direct communication, participation in cultural activities, hui, and wānanga to foster a supportive environment. Kaiako highlighted the importance regularly meeting with whānau to collaboratively plan for student engagement.

Engagement with hapū and iwi varies significantly between kura. Some report increased mana whenua presence and trust, with kaiako acting as representatives to liaise with Māori organisations and local rūnanga. However, other kura identified gaps in strategic iwi relationships, indicating a need for more intentional engagement approaches. Similarly, engagement with Pasifika communities has been inconsistent.

KEQ 2: How effective has the trial been in achieving its intended outcomes?

The interim findings show that CLR kaiako have a demanding workload. They reported spending about 12 hours per week on community liaison mahi, despite being formally allocated an average of 1.6 hours in most regions and 2.2 hours in Tairāwhiti. This highlights the significant time commitment required for holistic support activities, including mentoring, whānau engagement, and providing pastoral care.

CLR kaiako responsibilities often extend beyond kura hours, into evenings and weekends. Despite the heavy workload, many kaiako find fulfilment in their community liaison work, recognising its positive impact on ākonga and community relationships. For many kaiako, these responsibilities have been a longstanding part of their teaching role, and formalising the CLR has provided valuable recognition.

Kaiako wellbeing is a critical aspect of the CLR. Survey results indicate that the majority of kaiako find their work stressful 'sometimes' or 'often,' with little change over time, and little difference between kaiako in Tairāwhiti and other regions. Balancing the demands of the role with personal life is challenging. The recognition of their extra mahi and the autonomy to plan and execute initiatives have positively impacted kaiako wellbeing. The welcoming attitude of colleagues towards cultural initiatives and the tangible changes in the kura environment further enhance their sense of wellbeing. However, the risk of burnout remains, highlighting the need for appropriate support from kura leadership.

The CLR trial has also enhanced kaiako feelings of being valued through formal recognition, financial acknowledgment, and increased visibility of their cultural work. Appreciative comments from ākonga and whānau further reinforce the importance of their contributions. Despite the modest financial recognition, the allocated time and formal acknowledgment of their efforts significantly impact kaiako feeling valued and supported.

The interim findings on ākonga sense of belonging and wellbeing suggest that while it is too early to draw definitive conclusions, there are positive early indications from qualitative data. Students at one kura reported feeling that the school environment had become more inviting due to increased cultural activities and the supportive presence of their kaiako. These activities have helped ākonga feel more connected and valued, enhancing their sense of belonging and wellbeing. Kaiako also observed that cultural initiatives have boosted students' self-esteem and sense of identity, contributing to a stronger sense of community within the kura.

Regarding attendance and retention, the evaluation has not yet identified systematic improvements, but qualitative data reveals numerous reports of more regular attendance and improvements in academic performance. Kaiako attributed these gains to enhanced communication with families and targeted support for students facing attendance challenges. The emphasis on cultural initiatives has also made school more relevant and engaging for students, motivating them to attend regularly.

Kaiako noted subtle but meaningful shifts in student attitudes, highlighting the importance of relationship-building. Having dedicated time for liaison work helps kaiako identify hidden factors affecting student participation, allowing for early intervention and support. Personalised

approaches involving whānau and community connections have positively impacted student engagement and participation.

1   The Community Liaison Role Trial

As part of the secondary teachers' collective agreement settlement, the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) and the Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) committed to collaboratively undertake a trial of Community Liaison Roles (CLRs).

1.1   Purpose of the CLR Trial

The purpose of the CLR Trial is to evaluate the impact of allocating fiscal and staffing allowances to those schools and kura with CLRs. This allocation recognises and supports the work kaiako currently do in community liaison and relieves their workload with the staffing allowance. This is important, given liaison mahi has too often placed additional workload on the kaiako taking it on, with impacts on wellbeing. As outlined by the Ministry, the desired impact of the CLRs is to:

- support the wellbeing, retention, and achievements of Māori and Pasifika students in secondary schools
- support community and family involvement, and cultural engagement
- provide opportunities for teachers to develop their cultural leadership skills within the wider school community.

1.2   The Community Liaison Role

The intent of the CLR is to contribute to raising student achievement, wellbeing, and retention for Māori and Pasifika students in secondary schools by supporting community and family involvement, as well as cultural engagement. This role also expands on career opportunities, which allow teachers to use and develop their leadership skills within the wider school community. The aims of the role are to:

- broaden the range of career options available to teachers to assist with the recruitment of graduates and promote the retention of experienced teachers
- recognise the importance and desirability of supporting community and cultural integration in secondary schools
- support Māori and Pasifika engagement with schools to enable those communities to support their children within the school system to maximise their educational success
- support the growth of culturally inclusive practices for Māori and Pasifika students.

The functions of the role are to:

- retain a teaching component
- support activities within the school which are culturally important to the Māori and Pasifika communities served by the school
- support Māori and Pasifika students in their interactions with external agencies

- support Māori and Pasifika parents in their interactions with the school and external education agencies

- liaise with iwi and Pasifika community groups on matters relating to the school and its Māori and Pasifika students

- support non-Māori/Pasifika teachers in working with Māori and Pasifika students and in developing understanding of Tikanga Māori and Pasifika cultures.

The trial started formally in Term 2 2024 and will run until January 2026.

1.3   CLR trial allocations

The Ministry funded the CLR Trial for 335 roles across 66 schools and kura. Each role has been allocated at 0.04 Full-Time Teacher Equivalent (FTTE) and $1,000 per annum. Each kura has been allocated CLRs based on the number of ākonga Māori and Pasifika.

Two different formulae were used in the allocation of allowances. Kura located in Tairāwhiti have received a higher allocation than kura in Te Tai Tokerau, Wellington, Otago/Southland, and Waikato (see section 3.1.1 for more details). This enables a comparison of the impacts of the CLR trial across the different formula. Community liaison allowances are funded through kaiako salaries and were made available from January 2024.

2   The evaluation

The Ministry and the PPTA commissioned *Allen + Clarke* and *Mana Pounamu* to evaluate the CLR Trial.

2.1   Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness and impact of the CLR Trial on achievement, wellbeing, and retention of ākonga Māori and Pasifika students. It also provides insights about kaiako wellbeing, workload, and activities undertaken to support ākonga Māori and Pasifika students at kura.

2.2   Key evaluation questions

The evaluation will answer overarching KEQs that assess the implementation of the CLR and its effectiveness in achieving its intended outcomes. These overarching KEQs are supported by investigative questions that explore what differences the allowances made, for whom and in what context. The KEQs and investigative questions are provided in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1: KEQs – CLR implementation

Implementation evaluation KEQ: How well has the CLR has been implemented in schools/kura?
Investigative questions:

For kaiako /teachers	• What, if anything, are CLR kaiako doing differently after receiving the allowance? • To what extent is the work CLR kaiako are doing valued and supported by the school?
For kura /schools	• What selection criteria did the principals use in allocating the allowances? • To what extent has the CLR been implemented in a way that meets the specific needs of the school/kura (and its kaiako, ākonga, whānau, and community)?
About ākonga /students	• To what extent have ākonga noticed changes in the support they receive? • To what extent does the support provided align with ākonga needs?
For whānau /community	• To what extent have whānau/community noticed changes in their support from and engagement with the school? • To what extent does the support and engagement align with whānau/community needs?

Table 2: KEQs – CLR implementation

Effectiveness evaluation KEQs: How effective has the trial been in achieving its intended outcomes? How did outcomes vary given the different formulae used in the allocation of allowances?	
Investigative questions:	
For kaiako /teachers	• To what extent has the allowance changed CLR kaiako workload? • To what extent has their sense of wellbeing and being valued changed?

For kura /schools	• To what extent are CLRs influencing improvements for ākonga Māori and Pasifika students in the school?
	   o At senior management level?
	   o With colleagues?
	   o With the taught curriculum?
	   o With the learnt curriculum both inside and outside the classroom?

For ākonga /students	• To what extent have ākonga/students' sense of belonging and wellbeing changed? • To what extent has attendance/retention changed? • To what extent has their level of participation and success in class/school changed?
For whānau /community	• To what extent has whānau and community engagement with the school/kura changed?

2.3 Evaluation methods

This report presents emerging findings based on data generated for the evaluation from March 2024 to April 2025. Details of the data collection methods that have informed the emerging findings are discussed overleaf.

2.3.1   Online surveys of CLR kaiako

The evaluation has included three online surveys of kaiako that have been allocated the CLR allowances. The surveys were distributed at three key points:

- Survey 1 was conducted in Term 1 of 2024. This survey collected data on the activities kaiako engage in as part of the CLR, and the frequency and time spent on these activities. This survey received 87 responses.

- Survey 2 was conducted in Term 3 of 2024. This survey collected data on kaiako workload related to community liaison mahi, measures of kaiako wellbeing, and the extent to which kaiako feel supported, valued, and recognised. Wellbeing in Term 1 of 2024 were also retrospectively asked of kaiako. Those that had not completed survey 1 were also invited to provide details of the activities that they engage in as part of the CLR. This survey received 97 responses.

- Survey 3 was conducted in Term 1 of 2025. This repeated the questions related to kaiako workload, wellbeing, and extent to which kaiako feel supported, valued, and recognised, to enable the evaluation to measure any changes. This survey received 85 responses.

The surveys were distributed via email. Where the email addresses of CLR kaiako were available, the surveys were sent directly to these participants. Where the evaluation team did not have the individual email addresses, the survey was sent to the tumuaki or key contact for the kura with a request that it be distributed to CLR kaiako.

2.3.2   Kōrero with kaiako, tumuaki, ākonga, and whānau

The evaluation included qualitative interviews with 52 participants. This included kōrero with ten kaiako from kura across the motu, conducted by Ministry kaimahi in Term 2 2024. These interviews were conducted online and sought perspective on the impact of community liaison mahi on workload and wellbeing, priority areas for their CLR mahi, changes kaiako had observed in ākonga Māori and Pasifika students, their engagement with whānau/iwi/hapū/community, and the support they are providing to their colleagues.

A second round of qualitative engagement occurred in Term 1 2025. This involved site visits to four kura; two in Tairāwhiti and two in Porirua. Two evaluators attended each site visit and interviewed a range of people involved in the CLR Trial at each kura. In total, the interview sample included 17 kaiako, four tumuaki or tumuaki tuarua, and 21 ākonga. These interviews explored:

- how the CLR had been implemented and adapted to the specific context of the kura

- how CLR kaiako are being supported

- any shifts in kaiako workload and wellbeing, ākonga wellbeing, retention and achievements, and engagement with whānau and the community.

2.3.3 Experience diaries

At the end of each term, kaiako participating in the CLR Trial were sent an online form to document reflections, activities, barriers, and insights about their community liaison mahi over the previous term. The experience diary were administered via Qualtrics, and were delivered in Term 2 2024, Term 4 2024, and Term 1 2025.[1]

2.3.4 Baseline assessment of engagement

As part of the CLR Trial, *an* Engagement Framework was developed to demonstrate ways kura are working to address inequitable ākonga outcomes and are supporting the kaiako who are engaging with the community to support this. The Framework includes six overarching themes related to kura engagement mahi. Twenty eight kura provided a self-assessment of where they are currently sitting against each theme area. The results are reported in section 5. This forms a baseline, which will be measured again at the end of the CLR Trial to determine whether there have been any shifts in practice.

The Engagement Framework was also used as a discussion point with tumuaki and kaiako during the site visit kōrero, to seek more in depth data on where their kura is currently sitting on the continuum, what changes they are making (or intending to make), and the effectiveness of engagement initiatives they have implemented.

2.3.5 Data analysis

Survey data were cleaned to remove outliers, "straight line" responders (i.e. where participants select the same response for every question), and respondents who stated that they did not undertake community liaison work.

The evaluation team undertook descriptive analysis of the quantitative survey responses using Microsoft Excel. The analysis is presented as straight counts where the sample size was small (e.g., for the Engagement Framework), percentages for ordinal responses (e.g., rating scales), and means and 95% confidence intervals for continuous measures (e.g., hours allocated for community liaison mahi). On key variables, specifically hours allocated to the role and wellbeing measures, the analysis compared results for Tairāwhiti (which received an additional CLR allowance allocation) with other regions. The data are presented as tables and charts. Open text responses were coded against the key evaluation questions and analysed to identify emerging themes in relation to each question.

The qualitative data from the interviews and experience diaries was deductively coded against the KEQs to identify themes and sub-themes, using the constant comparative method.[2] The raw data was coded using an open coding approach to sort the data into broad thematic categories. As the evaluation team coded the transcripts and responses, each new piece of

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[1] It was agreed that experience diaries would not be delivered in Term 2 2024 as CLR kaiako had just completed the survey, and it was important not to overburden these kaiako.
[2] Constantinou, C. S., Georgiou, M., & Perdikogianni, M. (2017). A comparative method for themes saturation (CoMeTS) in qualitative interviews. *Qualitative Research*, 17(5), 571-588. **https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794116686650**

data was compared to the previously coded data, looking for similarities and differences between the experiences of each participant group. The evaluation team then reviewed the viability of each theme, until agreement was reached on the key insights.

The results of the qualitative data analysis were then triangulated against and compared to the quantitative data. This enabled the team to identify emerging themes for each of the KEQs and investigative questions.

2.4   Limitations

The findings presented in this report are interim findings only. The evaluation includes further cycles of data collection and a final report, with more detailed findings and overall evaluative judgements. This will be provided in April 2026.

The use of online surveys has some limitations. The survey may not have reached all CLR kaiako, especially whose email addresses had changed or for whom an email address was not recorded. This means that our survey sample may not be representative of the views of all CLR kaiako

The evaluation relies heavily on self-reported data from participants, which can be vulnerable to biases such as social desirability bias. The findings from the qualitative interviews and the surveys provide data only on the perspectives of those that participated in the evaluation.

3 CLR implementation: interim findings

The emerging findings in this section contribute to addressing the implementation evaluation KEQ: How well has the CLR has been implemented in schools/kura?

3.1 Implementation of the CLR in kura

> **This section provides interim findings in relation to the following investigative questions:**
> - **What selection criteria did the principals use in allocating the allowances?**
> - **To what extent has the CLR been implemented in a way that meets the specific needs of the school/kura (and its kaiako, ākonga, whānau, and community)?**

3.1.1 Allocation of the CLR allowance

Kura participating in the CLR trial are allocated 0.04 FTTE per CLR, with the total allocated based on the number of ākonga Māori and Pasifika students. Each kura has been allocated CLRs based on the number of ākonga Māori and Pasifika. The roles can be distributed according to the needs of each school/kura.

Two different formulae were used in the allocation of allowances, with kura in Tairāwhiti receiving additional allowance to enable a comparison of trial outcomes.

Allocation of CLR allowances in Tairāwhiti

In Tairāwhiti, CLR allowances were calculated using the formula 2 + (sum of Māori and Pasifika rolls/75) plus additional 'top-ups'. In applying this formula, kura in this region have received around three times the CLR allocation of schools with similar Māori and Pasifika student populations in the other regions.

Each participating kura in Tairāwhiti received between five and 17 allocations (with three kura receiving an allocation of 17 allowances). The evaluation team visited two kura in Tairāwhiti and explored how the roles had been allocated in these kura.

Kura 1 received an allocation of 17 CLR allowances. This equates to 0.68FTTE or 27.2 available hours per week. This kura applied the CLR allocation to its management level by creating three specialised dean roles: Kura Dean, Rangatahi Dean, and Pasifika Dean. These roles were assigned to staff members as additional responsibilities to complement their regular teaching duties, with each kaiako having approximately 9 hours per week allocated to this role.

The school implemented these roles to create a bridge between ākonga and the school's established support systems. The Deans operate alongside the existing Student Support team, which includes kaiako and the guidance counsellor. The Deans fulfill numerous responsibilities, including conducting home visits and interventions for students with attendance or behaviour challenges, organising Tū Whānau evenings with kai to engage whānau; offering culturally responsive pastoral support; providing pūtea (financial support) for

students in need; supporting cultural activities; and hosting pōwhiri for new whānau and students.

Kura 2 received an allocation of 9 CLR allowances. This equates to 0.36FTTE or 14.4 hours per week. This kura integrated their CLR funding into an existing mentoring programme. The CLR allocation supported seven mentors (four working with years 7 to 10 and three supporting years 11 to 13) plus two kaiako with specialised expertise in te ao Māori teaching methodologies. Because the role was spread across nine kaiako, each individual kaiako has 1.5 to 2 hours per week to dedicate to this mahi. The tumuaki discussed how this implementation approach was intended to reinforce and enhance proven mentoring structures rather than establishing new roles or systems to deliver community liaison activities.

Allocation of CLR allowances in Te Tai Tokerau, Wellington, Otago/Southland, and Waikato

In these regions, CLR allowances were calculated using the formula 2 + (sum of Māori and Pasifika rolls/115). Individual kura received between three and eight allocations. The evaluation team visited two kura in Porirua, Wellington and explored how the roles had been allocated in these kura.

Kura 3 received an allocation of 6 CLR allowances, which equates to 0.24FTTE or 9.6 hours per week. The kura distributed their CLR allocation across six kaiako – three focused on supporting Māori ākonga (one with a specific focus on te reo Māori professional development for staff), three supporting Pasifika ākonga. Each kaiako had approximately 1.5 hours per week for these activities.

Rather than creating new positions or responsibilities, this kura chose to formally recognise and support cultural work already occurring within the kura.

> *"We settled on acknowledging what people were already doing, instead of creating something new." (Tumuaki)*

This approach directed resources on supporting cultural performances, particularly Polyfest and kapa haka competitions, which are integral to school identity but require significant time and energy to organise, which could now be recognised through the CLR allowance.

Kura 4 was eligible for an allocation of five CLR allowances, but did not participate in the CLR Trial in its first year, despite initial interest. The primary obstacle was a perceived misalignment between the timing of when the CLR Trial was announced and the school's established planning cycle. With staffing allocations already finalised, the tumuaki stated that it was not possible to adjust staffing allocations that had already been finalised.

The tumuaki also considered that the modest size of the allocated FTTE (0.04 per position) created additional barriers. School leadership found this allocation insufficient to create meaningful timetable flexibility. This challenge was particularly acute given the school's limited staffing capacity:

> *"In our situation, we don't have that massive staff. It's a great offering, but is it almost disadvantaging us further, as we have to drop one staff member out to allow the CLR FTTE to happen." (Tumuaki)*

The logistics of releasing teachers within the school day proved especially problematic. Even redistributing small amounts of teaching time created significant disruptions across their tightly-staffed timetable. The kura identified a need for implementation guidance specific to smaller schools, seeking examples of how the CLR has been delivered in similar kura.

Survey findings on weekly CLR time allocation

The survey asked kaiako in CL roles how many hours per week they had been allocated for their community liaison mahi. The results, displayed as a 'dot plot' in Figure 1: compares the number of hours that kaiako in Tairāwhiti reported being allocation to the CLR, compared to kaiako from other areas. Each dot represents an individual's reported hours, while red markers indicate the mean and standard deviation for each group.

The findings show that Tairāwhiti kaiako report a higher mean CLR allocation of 2.2 hours per week, compared to kaiako in other regions who report a mean CLR allocation of 1.6 hours per week.

The standard deviation (represented by the error bars) is larger in the Tairāwhiti group, indicating greater variability in how CLR hours are distributed among individuals. The not Tairāwhiti respondent group does includes several individuals with higher CLR hours, but the majority are clustered around the mean.

Figure 1: CLR kaiako mean and standard deviation of reported weekly hours on CL mahi in Tairāwhiti and other regions
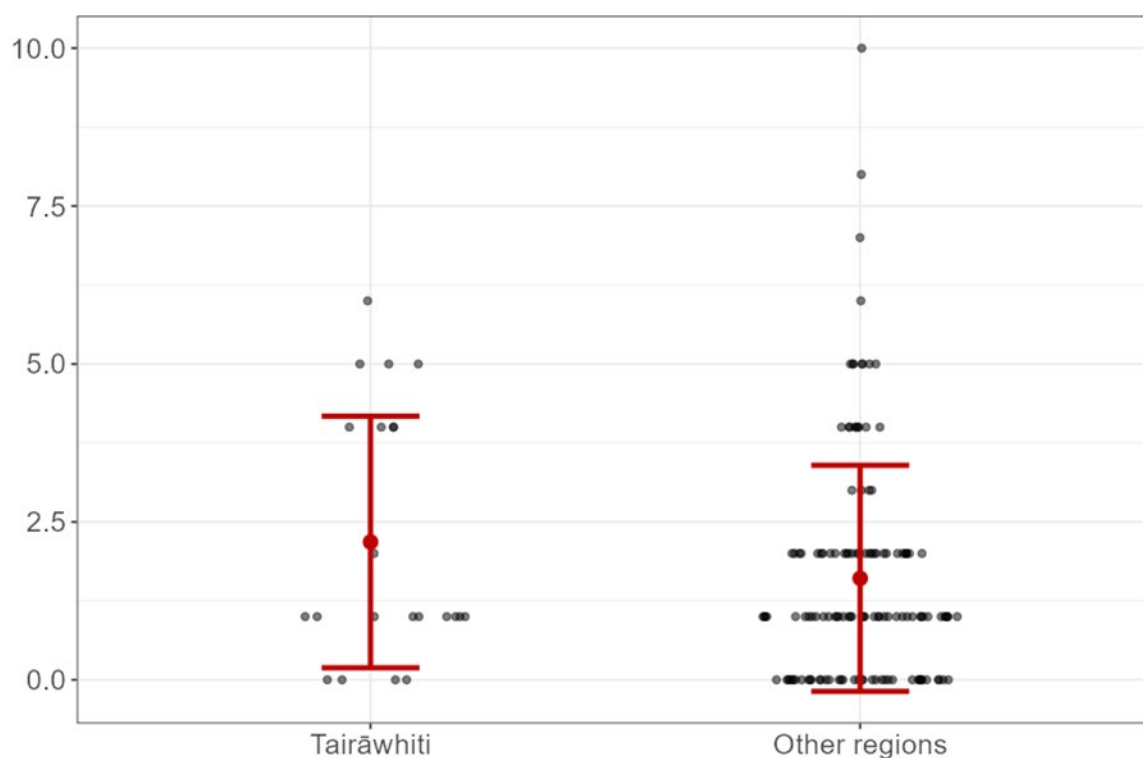
While the survey and experience diaries did not specifically ask about how the CLR allowance had been distributed, a small number of responses (n=17) provided details on how the model was operationalised in their kura. Of these, two thirds had distributed the allowances to individual kaiako, who have scheduled time for CL mahi as part of their weekly timetables.

"I have been given an hour per week during school time solely to allow time to be able to organise, prepare and communicate to whānau and community, which I am appreciative of." (CLR kaiako)

The other responses showed that kura have implemented various models, such as offering kaiako two flexible days per term that can be utilised as needed for community liaison activities. A small number (n=2) of these responses stated that they had not been allocated any additional hours.

3.1.2   Alignment with the specific needs of kura

The early indications are that the CLR is sufficiently flexible to meet the diverse needs of kura, enabling them to respond to their unique cultural contexts and priorities rather than prescribing a one-size-fits-all approach.

This flexibility has allowed kura to undertake activities to suit their unique needs, including strengthening existing cultural initiatives, formalising pastoral care systems, and creating dedicated pathways for cultural leadership that reflect local community needs. By providing an adaptable framework, the CLR model enables kura to determine where the resources will have the greatest impact for their ākonga.

The next cycle of CLR Trial evaluation data collection will generate more in-depth data on the extent to which, and how, the CLR has been implemented in a way that meets the specific needs of the kura and its kaiako, ākonga, whānau, and community.

3.2   Kaiako experience of the community liaison role

> **This section provides interim findings in relation to the following investigative questions.**
> - **What, if anything, are CLR kaiako doing differently after receiving the allowance?**
> - **To what extent is the work CLR kaiako are doing valued and supported by the school?**

3.2.1   CLR kaiako activities

The online surveys asked kaiako who are undertaking the CLR what activities they deliver as part of the role. The questions were split between activities to support ākonga Māori and activities to support Pasifika students.

Activities to support ākonga Māori

Table 3 shows that the three most common activities undertaken to support ākonga Māori were mentoring (71 percent of survey respondents indicated that they undertake this activity), tracking ākonga progress (69 percent), and supporting kaiako/teachers in their learning relationships with ākonga Māori (69 percent).

Table 3: Activities to support ākonga Māori undertaken by CLR kaiako who responded to the survey (*n* = 108)

Activity	Percentage of CLR kaiako who undertake this activity
Mentoring ākonga Māori	71%
Supporting kaiako/teachers in their learning relationships with ākonga Māori	69%
Tracking ākonga Māori progress	69%
Providing support for ākonga Māori with behavioural needs	64%
Educating non-Māori kaiako/teachers on Māori needs and tikanga	61%
Providing support for ākonga Māori with learning needs	61%
Organising/facilitating whānau hui	58%
Taking otherwise unrecognised pastoral care 'responsibility' for ākonga Māori	56%
Advising senior leadership on ākonga Māori needs	54%
Organising cultural groups which represent the kura/school at official welcomes, prize giving, kura/school visits, festivals/events etc.	54%
Delivering greetings at formal and semi-formal kura/school-related occasions	52%
Supporting Māori performing arts e.g., Te Ao Haka, Ngā Manu Kōrero	50%
Getting the kura/school cultural groups up and running	49%
Developing action plans to support ākonga Māori	49%
Attending tangi/unveilings and significant events of whānau Māori	48%
Engaging with relevant governance groups e.g., mana whenua/iwi/hapū	48%
Providing/leading professional learning with tikanga and kawa at kura/school related events	47%
Supporting Māori sports and traditional skills	44%
Helping kaiako/teachers with Professional Growth Cycle and meeting Teaching Standards	43%
Attending meetings with ākonga Māori to provide an appropriate cultural perspective	43%
Supporting whānau and ākonga Māori in dealings with other agencies	38%
Arranging travel/accommodation/hospitality for cultural activities	35%
Organising consultation and information evenings for parents/whānau of ākonga Māori	34%
Visiting whānau Māori to talk about kura/school, aspirations and support of ākonga	33%
Translating for the kura/school (e.g., newsletters, signage, correspondence)	31%
Providing tutoring and study groups for ākonga Māori outside of kura/school hours	31%
Involved in the provision of NCEA for cultural performances and skills	30%
Supporting English language learners from kura kaupapa Māori	29%

These reported activities aligned with qualitative data from the open text survey responses, experience diaries and kōrero with CLR kaiako. When asked about the activities encompassed within their CLR mahi, providing ākonga with mentoring support was frequently mentioned. This often involved providing additional tutoring, leading study groups, support to get goals, or one-on-one coaching. An emerging theme from the qualitative data is that the CLR time

allowance has enabled a greater focus on the needs of individual ākonga and their whānau by providing dedicated time for personalised support.

> *"A big part of the role is mentoring students who are struggling with staying at school. A few of my students lack motivation to complete their last years of school so I have been awhi-ing them through positive feedback, parental involvement, goal setting and visualisation." (CLR kaiako)*

Tracking ākonga Māori progress was also frequently mentioned by experience diary respondents. For example, one CLR kaiako discussed how they had used data on ākonga progress to identify students who were struggling academically and needed help to attain enough credits to pass the year. To address this, they planned a 'Tū Whānau evening' for these ākonga and their whānau. This included a shared meal and a group kōrero on the support provided at school, how whānau could assist at home, and create a collaborative plan to ensure everyone was aligned to support their academic success.

The third most common activity was educating non-Māori kaiako on ākonga Māori needs and tikanga Māori. This often involved sharing resources on tikanga, facilitating discussions on effective teaching strategies for ākonga Māori, and organising or delivering lessons on te reo Māori.

> *"I am leading staff learning of te reo me ōna tikanga for 90 minutes every week as our regular PLD sessions. The whakaaro is that this will help to raise the floor of the whole kura in terms of engaging with ākonga Māori and their whānau." (CLR kaiako)*

The survey also asked kaiako how frequently they undertake various activities. The results (Table 4) show that the activity CLR kaiako performed most often was mentoring ākonga Māori with 51 percent of respondents stating that they undertake this activity daily or weekly.

Table 4: Percentage of CLR kaiako who undertake community liaison activities to support ākonga Māori daily or weekly (*n* = 108)

Activity	Percentage who undertake this task daily/weekly
Mentoring ākonga Māori	51%
Taking otherwise unrecognised pastoral care 'responsibility' for ākonga Māori	48%
Supporting English language learners from kura kaupapa Māori	42%
Providing support for ākonga Māori with learning needs	41%
Tracking ākonga Māori progress	38%
Providing support for ākonga Māori with behavioural needs	38%
Involved in the provision of NCEA for cultural performances and skills	37%
Supporting kaiako/teachers in their learning relationships with ākonga Māori	29%
Supporting Māori performing arts e.g., Te Ao Haka, Ngā Manu Kōrero	29%
Educating non-Māori kaiako/teachers on Māori needs and tikanga	27%
Supporting Māori sports and traditional skills	26%

Activity	Percentage who undertake this task daily/weekly
Helping kaiako/teachers with Professional Growth Cycle and meeting Teaching Standards	22%
Advising senior leadership on ākonga Māori needs	20%
Delivering greetings at formal and semi-formal kura/school-related occasions	20%
Developing action plans to support ākonga Māori	17%
Visiting whānau Māori to talk about kura/school, aspirations and support of ākonga	17%
Getting the kura/school cultural groups up and running	17%
Organising cultural groups which represent the kura/school at official welcomes, prize giving, kura/school visits, festivals/events etc.	16%
Engaging with relevant governance groups e.g., mana whenua/iwi/hapū	15%
Attending meetings with ākonga Māori to provide an appropriate cultural perspective	13%
Supporting whānau and ākonga Māori in dealings with other agencies	13%
Providing/leading professional learning with tikanga and kawa at kura/school related events	12%
Arranging travel/accommodation/hospitality for cultural activities	11%
Attending tangi/unveilings and significant events of whānau Māori	10%
Organising/facilitating whānau hui	8%
Organising consultation and information evenings for parents/whānau of ākonga Māori	8%
Translating for the kura/school (e.g., newsletters, signage, correspondence)	9%

Activities to support Pasifika students

As shown in Table 5 (overleaf), the two most common activities were the same as above; mentoring Pasifika students (49 percent of respondents), and tracking student progress (42 percent of respondents). Qualitative data found that CLR teachers undertake initiatives such as fono with students and families, study circles, and developing tailored support programmes for students based on their interests.

The third most common activity was supporting Pasifika performing arts. The qualitative data indicated that this requires substantial effort from teachers, including leading practice sessions, communicating with parents and families, and fundraising to cover costs associated with events such as Polyfest. Despite the effort involved, this activity has substantial benefits as it effectively engages Pasifika students in school.

> *"The students are really engaged and improving and excitement is building for our Polyfest experience." (CLR kaiako)*

Table 5: Activities to support Pasifika students undertaken by CLR kaiako who responded to the survey (*n* = 76)

Activity	Percentage of CLR kaiako who undertake this activity
Mentoring Pasifika students	49%
Tracking Pasifika student progress	42%
Taking otherwise unrecognised pastoral care 'responsibility' for Pasifika students	32%
Supporting Pasifika performing arts e.g., Polyfest	30%
Providing support for Pasifika students with behavioural needs	30%
Establishing and running kura/school cultural groups	29%
Providing support for Pasifika students with learning needs	29%
Advising senior leadership on Pasifika student needs	26%
Supporting kaiako/teachers in their learning relationships with Pasifika students	24%
Developing action plans to support Pasifika students	22%
Organising cultural groups which represent the kura/school at official welcomes, prize giving, kura/school visits, festivals/events etc.	18%
Providing tutoring and study groups for Pasifika students outside of kura/school hours	18%
Supporting English language learners	18%
Attending significant events of Pasifika students and family members	18%
Organising kura/school-related and community based fono	16%
Delivering greetings at formal and semi-formal kura/school-related occasions	16%
Organising/facilitating family fono	16%
Educating non-Pasifika kaiako/teachers on Pasifika student needs	13%
Involved in the provision of NCEA for cultural performances and skills	13%
Attending meetings with Pasifika students to provide an appropriate cultural perspective	13%
Organising consultation and information evenings for parents/families of Pasifika students	13%
Arranging travel/accommodation/hospitality for cultural activities	12%
Visiting Pasifika families to talk about kura/school, aspiration and support of students	12%
Supporting families and Pasifika students in dealings with other agencies	12%
Helping families with limited English with translation support	9%
Translating for the kura/school (e.g., newsletters, signage, correspondence)	1%

These survey results (Table 6) show the activities that CLR kaiako perform daily or weekly to support Pasifika students. The most common activities are providing tutoring and study groups for Pasifika students outside of kura/school hours (100 percent of kaiako that undertake this activity stated that they do this daily/weekly), mentoring Pasifika students (80 percent do this daily/weekly) and taking otherwise unrecognised pastoral care 'responsibility' for Pasifika students (67 percent do this daily/weekly).

Table 6: Percentage of CLR kaiako who undertake community liaison activities to support Pasifika students daily or weekly (n = 76)

Activity	Percentage who undertake this task daily/weekly
Providing tutoring and study groups for Pasifika students outside of kura/school hours	100%
Mentoring Pasifika students	80%
Taking otherwise unrecognised pastoral care 'responsibility' for Pasifika students	67%
Providing support for Pasifika students with behavioural needs	50%
Tracking Pasifika student progress	40%
Advising senior leadership on Pasifika student needs	37%
Establishing and running kura/school cultural groups	20%
Supporting Pasifika performing arts e.g., Polyfest	17%

The qualitative data included examples of initiatives that had been set up to provide tutoring and mentoring for students. For example, one kura had established a programme in which students within the junior college were paired with a senior student for mentoring and support.

Desire for practice sharing amongst CLR kaiako

A small proportion of kaiako that responded to the survey (less than 10 percent) stated that they are still learning what the role entails, how it looks in practice and what they should be doing with their time. A larger proportion (around 20 percent) stated that they would like an opportunity to share what they are doing and learn from others in the role.

They suggested that an in-person hui, held locally, would be beneficial to discuss how the role is implemented in different kura (through forums like Kāhui Ako). This would allow for the sharing of practice, helping to bring ideas back to their kura communities and improve support for them. Additionally, it would be useful to understand the challenges others are facing and the solutions they have found.

3.2.2   Delivery of new or different activities

The interim findings indicate that, in most kura, CLR kaiako are not doing anything differently after receiving the allowance. Three quarters of the kaiako that commented on this issue in the survey and experience diaries stated that they did not see that CLR as anything new or different.

> *"I have been heavily involved in a number of events to support Māori and Pasifika students without labelling it as community liaison work; it is just what I love to do." (CLR kaiako)*

Instead, the allowance has enabled them to expand or devote more time to existing activities. For example, in one of the kura that was visited during the site visits, the CLR funding was integrated into its well-established 'learning mentor' programme. This focuses on providing support and awhi for ākonga, whānau and other kaiako rather than creating new positions. The kaiako stated that they do not use 'community liaison' as a descriptor of their roles, since

the funding was incorporated into existing structures. The tumuaki of this kura noted that "*CLR is enabling us to acknowledge the work that was already happening.*"

Another kaiako who responded to the survey stated that having dedicated CLR time and resources enabled them to expand their kapa haka programme. This expansion resulted in an increased number of ākonga participating in a regional kapa haka festival and, for the first time, in the Matariki festival within their rohe. The CLR kaiako stated that this has significantly boosted ākonga engagement in the school by "*providing a safe space for these ākonga to connect and grow.*"

While the CLR allowance had not generally been used to deliver new or different activities, the formalised role has provided important recognition for the mahi that kaiako were already undertaking. Data from the survey, experience diaries, and site visits revealed a strong perception that, although the FTTE allocation and funding allowance did not typically cover the costs or time needed for the role, it provided formal acknowledgment of the contributions these kaiako make to cultural leadership, legitimised their expertise and created greater visibility for the work that they do.

> "*It is great that there is now a community liaison role which acknowledges all of the unnoticed tasks of a kaiako Māori.*" (CLR kaiako)

Other kaiako stated that this formal recognition does more than just acknowledge existing responsibilities; it bestows mana on community engagement mahi. Having a clearly defined position empowers kaiako to advocate for and implement changes to benefit ākonga Māori and Pasifika students.

> "*We couldn't have done a lot of this without having had a set role carved out for us which gives us the mana to feel we can push forward.*" (CLR kaiako)

3.2.3   Extent to which CLR mahi is supported by kura

Support for CLR kaiako

The surveys asked CLR kaiako how well supported they feel in their community liaison mahi by the senior leadership team at their kura. The results (Figure 2) show that around two thirds of respondents agree or strongly agree that senior leadership actively supports their CL work. The proportion of kaiako that agreed with this statement increased between the two survey time points.

Figure 2: Extent to which CLR kaiako agree that senior leadership supports their community liaison mahi
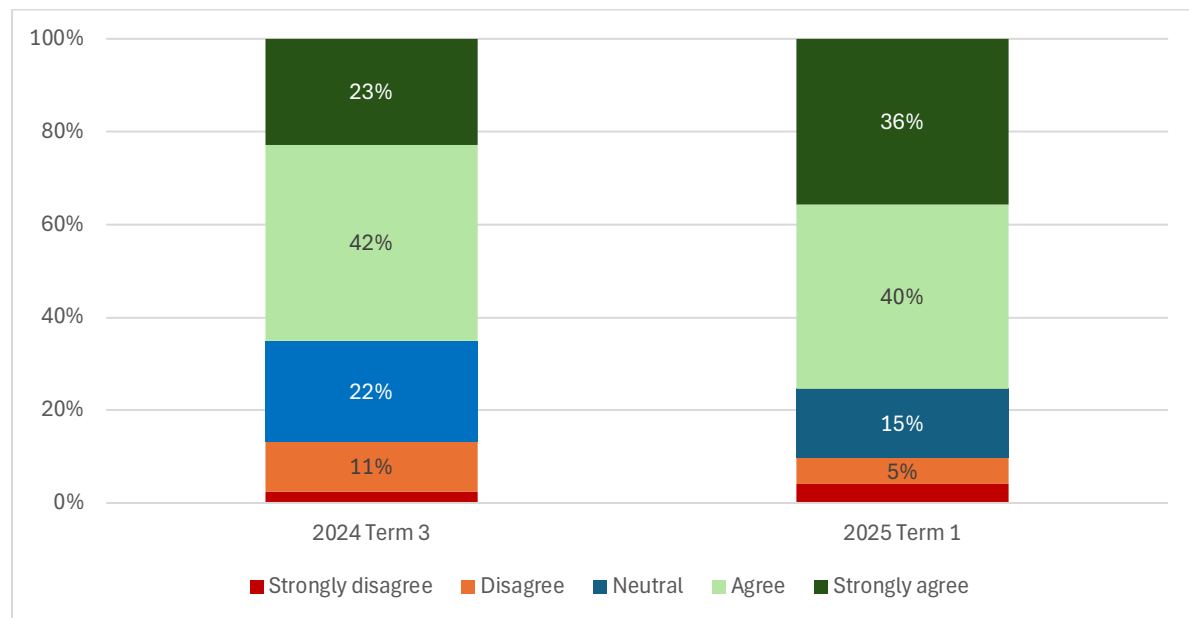

Figure 3 shows similar findings regarding senior leadership team awareness of their mahi; about two thirds agreed or strongly agreed that senior leadership aware of the community liaison mahi that they undertake, and this proportion has also increased over time.

Figure 3: Extent to which CLR kaiako agree that senior leadership are aware of their community liaison mahi
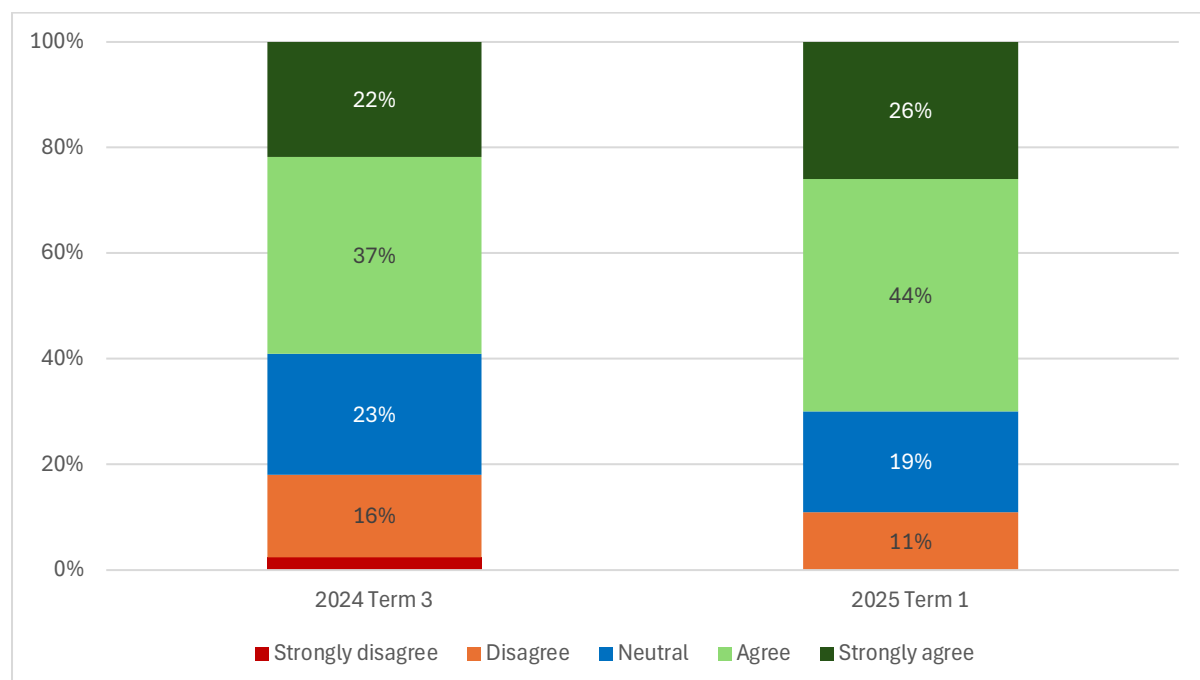
Finally, respondents were asked whether the community liaison mahi that they do is valued by their school's senior leadership. The results (Figure 4) are similar to the above findings.

Figure 4: Extent to which CLR kaiako agree that senior leadership value their community liaison mahi
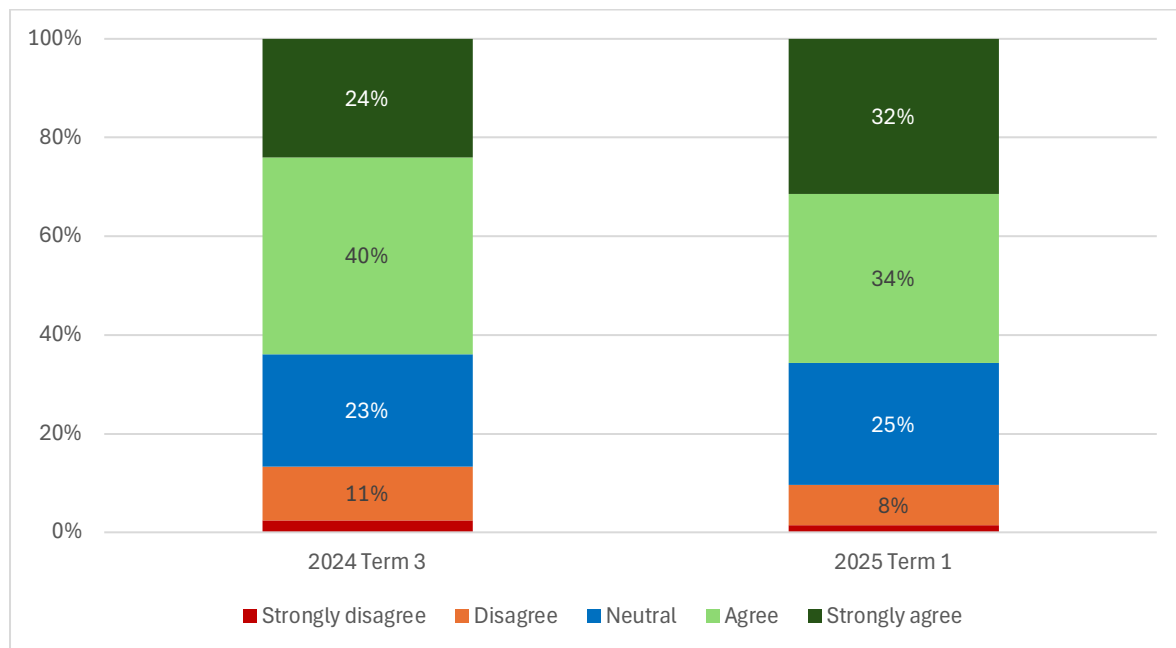
Similarly, a sentiment analysis of the open text survey responses and experience diaries found that just over two thirds of kaiako considered their CLR mahi was well-supported at their kura.

The data highlighted that kaiako feel supported when they have clear job descriptions and allocated time for the roles. This clarity helps CLR kaiako to understand and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Approaches to ongoing support typically involved regular check-ins with tumuaki and/or senior leadership teams, allowing for discussion on how the role is going and offering a platform for ideas sharing.

> *"I have a check-in hui with members of our executive to see how I'm going.*
> *It's helpful as a person to bounce ideas off of without feeling any pressure."*
> *(CLR kaiako)*

At one of the kura that participated in the site visits, it was reported that the senior leadership team provides strong support but through a more informal approach.

> *"The SLT [Senior Leadership Team] are always there for us, always asking*
> *how they are, asking how their workload is going."* (CLR kaiako)

Another key support mechanism is the provision of practical assistance to implement initiatives designed by CLR kaiako. This included support from other kaiako and sometimes the provision of funding. For example, one CLR kaiako arranged a weekend wānanga for ākonga Māori and their whānau, and received funding for kai and assistance from other staff members to organise and deliver the wānanga.

Other support included providing relief teachers to cover CLR kaiako to enable them to focus on community liaison activities.

> *"The kura and Board of Trustees are supportive and always willing to lend a hand and work to remove barriers for me, such as getting a reliver to cover me when needed." (CLR kaiako)*

A small number of kura have provided dedicated space for their CLR kaimahi. For example, one kura that participated in the site visits has provided a dedicated room for CLR kaiako, with a member of the kura leadership team who works alongside them acting in an advocacy role (although this space and function was in place prior to CLR funding). The CLR kaiako share this office space, allowing them to "*tautoko each other*", and leverage their "*collective knowledge to awhi their students.*"

Kaiako and tumuaki emphasised that it is important that the role is supported by all kaimahi, not just the leadership team. In another kura that was visited during the evaluation, the principal emphasised that community liaison had been successful due to high staff buy-in. The school's "tatou tatou" (all of us together) approach has strengthened the effectiveness of the CLR function, because kaimahi across the kura are already committed to fostering a collaborative environment and actively participate in initiatives that support ākonga and their whānau.

Challenges experienced by CLR kaiako in getting the support they need

However, the survey results presented above indicate that around 10 percent of CLR kaiako are not getting the support that they need, and 15-25 percent are neutral. In a small number of kura, leadership team changes have reportedly led to reduced prioritisation of CLR mahi, such as when a supportive tumuaki had left and the new tumuaki did not appear to see the value of the role. Another kaiako described leadership team resistance to requests such as developing a dedicated space for teaching te reo Māori.

> *"The resistance to ngā wāhi Māori was to be "fair" for all the teachers and students, not recognising that taonga such as te reo Māori should be protected and taught in an authentic context." (CLR kaiako)*

Other kaiako (around 10 percent of those who commented on leadership support) stated that they receive encouragement for their CL role but lack practical support such as adequate funding or classroom release time. These respondents raised concerns that their kura has little available funding to cover costs associated with activities or hui to engage ākonga, whānau, and the wider community. This limits their ability to undertake these activities, as there is inadequate funding to follow tikanga such as providing kai and koha if needed. Another issue was limited capacity and/or capability to enable CLR kaiako to take time out of their teaching roles.

> *"I find that my school is supportive of me taking time to attend kaupapa to strengthen hapū relations, it's just the practical aspects of making that happen present challenges. There is no te reo teacher to relieve for me if I am at a hui." (CLR kaiako)*

3.3   Ākonga experience of the community liaison role

> This section provides interim findings in relation to the following investigative questions.
> - **To what extent have ākonga noticed changes in the support they receive?**
> - **To what extent does the support provided align with ākonga needs?**

Kōrero with ākonga during the site visits suggests that the CLR role is enhancing ākonga education experiences through providing culturally responsive support systems. Ākonga particularly value that kaiako in these roles "*focus on students as individuals instead of just looking at our work" (ākonga)* and recognise that "*things that are happening at home impact how well you do at school*" *(ākonga).* This holistic approach has fostered a sense of cultural safety and personal validation.

When asked to describe the support they receive in a single word, students offered responses that directly reflect the cultural responsiveness of these roles, including: "manaakitanga," "whanaungatanga," "safety," "inclusive," and "ihi" (power/energy). These descriptors demonstrate how CLR kaiako have successfully created environments where ākonga feel like they are valued.

Ākonga stated that having a specific kaiako who they can turn to for support, and dedicated "space and time" to speak with staff, created a secure environment in which they can discuss personal challenges. Students in one kura, where the CLR allocation has supported a mentoring programme, described their mentors as guides who help them find "*their specific path*" with "*academic support tailored to our individual goals".* The relationships formed through these roles extend beyond academic, with students highlighting various aspects of support including guidance on career paths, assistance with subject selection, conversations about post-school pathways, and encouragement for participation in cultural activities such as te ao haka, which provides NCEA credits.

> *"The mentors build a good relationship with [us] to make [us] feel safe to talk to them." (Ākonga)*

The importance of these enhanced relationships is evident in students' descriptions of how they feel when working with their mentors, using words like "relieved," "respectful," "encouraging," and "amazing."

Kaiako also provided their views on how the CLR allocation has enabled them to tailor the support they provide to ākonga needs. A high proportion of kaiako considered that the student engagement with the kura has been enhanced through participation in cultural events such as Matariki celebrations, kapa haka, Polyfest, and Ngā Manu Kōrero competitions. The dedicated time that kaiako allocate to these initiatives has led to increased participation, which in turn can support ākonga engagement in their education more broadly.

More in-depth data on changes that ākonga have observed and the extent to which the support meets their needs will be gathered in the next cycle of evaluation data collection.

3.4 Whānau and community experience of the community liaison role

This section provides interim findings in relation to the following investigative questions

- **To what extent have whānau/community noticed changes in their support from and engagement with the school?**
- **To what extent does the support and engagement align with whānau/community needs?**

Whānau engagement

The interim findings indicate the kaiako across different kura are prioritising relationship-building with whānau as a cornerstone of their CLR-related work. One kaiako emphasised that their approach centres on these connections, stating that they regularly investigate the reasons behind student absences by engaging directly with whānau to understand the broader family context.

> *"It's all about the whānau and building relationships with the families – I have a good relationship with lots of people in the community." (CLR kaiako)*

Similarly, another kaiako explained that their role involves direct communication with parents about attendance issues, stating that a core part of their mahi involves engaging with the whānau, finding out the reasons for non-attendance, making a collaborative plan to get their ākonga to engage. This approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of whānau circumstances that might be affecting student participation. Another kaiako regularly meets with whānau of students who lack clear direction.

> *"I meet with whānau of students who are a little bit lost. Just to try and work out solutions, further steps on their journeys." (CLR kaiako)*

One of the kura that participated in the site visits noted the importance of using a range of approaches to whānau engagement, both through formalised events such as hui, as well as leveraging informal connections in the community.

> *"On the way home – it's a bit of a Gizzy thing – we'll just call in [to visit whānau]." (CLR kaiako)*

It was also reported that cultural activities were successful in creating opportunities for whānau engagement, fostering a supportive environment in which families actively participate and contribute. One CLR kaiako described how whānau get involved through activities such as sewing uniforms, providing musical equipment, and other contributions that go beyond what the school can offer. This collective effort enriches the cultural experiences and resources available to students, and involvement of whānau encourages greater student participation.

While kaiako had typically been engaging whānau in various activities before the CLR Trial, the specific allocation of time for this mahi enabled them to adopt a more collaborative

approach to engagement. This allowed for discussions not only about ākonga academic performance but also actively seeking whānau input into the kura.

> *"We've made a concerted effort to engage with our whānau and talk about real issues and enabling them to input into what the school does in terms of te ao Māori." (CLR kaiako)*

The evaluation data collection to date has not included direct kōrero with whānau, which will be a priority during the next stages of the evaluation.

Engagement with hapū and iwi

The approaches to and success with hapū and iwi engagement differ between kura. About half of the kaiako that commented on this issue reported increased mana whenua presence and trust. A further third identified gaps in strategic iwi relationships, while the remainder had not observed much change in hapū and iwi engagement.

Kaiako described a range of approaches to engage with hapū, iwi, and Māori collectives. For example, some kura had appointed one of the CLR kaiako to specifically act as a kura representative to engage with mana whenua, the local rūnanga, and marae. One of the kaiako that participated in the experience kōrero described how they act as a representative available to liaise with Māori organisations and the iwi authority when necessary. The kaiako reported that this kura now has a greater presence of mana whenua in the school, such as being invited for pōwhiri.

Other kura have leveraged events, such as Matariki celebrations, to strengthen their relationships with iwi and hapū. For one kura, this involved linking with mana whenua to celebrate Matariki student achievement awards at a local marae, with the presence of kaumātua and kuia. At another school, iwi elders were invited to attend the kura Matariki festival to share tūpuna stories.

In contrast, a third of kaiako at identified a gap in iwi and hapū engagement, noting that as yet there is little relationship building with iwi and hapū. These kaiako suggested that there is a need for more strategic and intentional approaches to iwi and hapū engagement in their kura.

Engagement with Pasifika communities

The interim findings also show that engagement with Pasifika communities has been inconsistent across different kura. Only about 40 percent of the kaiako that commented on engagement with Pasifika communities said their schools are prioritising this engagement and seeing positive changes. Over half said their school are not as focused on these efforts.

Comparing the responses to this question with school demographics found that the schools that are focusing more on Pasifika community engagement tend to be those with a higher proportion of Pasifika students. In these schools, CLR kaiako reported a strong emphasis on building relationships with Pasifika families, organising culturally relevant events, and incorporating Pacific perspectives into the kura environment. One CLR kaiako reporting receiving positive feedback from the Pasifika community about the increased visibility of Pacific cultures at the school, including initiatives such as fia fia performances.

However, in other kura, the lack of prioritisation has led to limited engagement. For example one CLR kaiako stated that engagement with Pasifika community organisations exists but appears to be developing inconsistently. This kaiako compared this with their previous experience at another school where the Pasifika connections were strong, and considered that there was a need to develop a strategic approach to engagement.

> *"There are some Pasifika connections happening here but it's very ad hoc. If people were shoulder tapped they would take on these roles – but there is no strategy at the moment." (CLR kaiako)*

4 CLR outcomes – interim findings

The emerging findings in this section contribute to addressing the effectiveness KEQ: How effective has the trial been in achieving its intended outcomes?

4.1 Impact on kura

> **This section provides interim findings in relation to the following investigative questions:**
>
> - **To what extent are CLRs influencing improvements for ākonga Māori and Pasifika students in the school:**
>   - **At senior management level?**
>   - **With colleagues?**
>   - **With the taught curriculum?**
>   - **With the learnt curriculum both inside and outside the classroom?**

Influencing senior management

While there is mixed performance, about two thirds of kaiako reported that the CLR has had some success in influencing senior management to support initiatives that foster a more inclusive environment for ākonga Māori and Pasifika students. By formalising the role and dedicating specific time for community liaison mahi, the CLR Trial has been described as an effective mechanism to ensure that the needs and perspectives of Māori and Pasifika students are raised with senior management, such as through regular hui.

However, it was noted that in a small proportion of kura, support from senior management has not always translated into broader changes at all levels of the school.

> *"The Principal and senior leaders are very progressive in their thinking, but change is very slow across the entire staff and there is resistance to things like the inclusion of tikanga Māori into staff meetings" (CLR kaiako)*

Influence on other colleagues

Three quarters of CLR kaiako who commented on this issue reported observing small but important changes in how their colleagues engage with ākonga Māori and Pasifika students. For example, CLR kaiako are leading initiatives such as teaching te reo Māori and tikanga Māori, and have noticed that te reo Māori is becoming more normalised in the kura environment.

> *"I am confident that the upskilling of our staff to feel confident speaking te reo with students and whānau will have positive impacts on our school community." (CLR kaiako)*

Kaiako highlighted the benefits for ākonga of observing their teachers' dedication to understanding their culture and willingness to step out of their comfort zones. For instance, teachers learning their pepeha or saying karakia at the start of class was reported to demonstrate to ākonga Māori that they are valued members of the kura community.

Other kaiako considered that mindset shifts amongst their colleagues have been an important change. One kaiako stated that other teachers were initially frustrated when ākonga Māori and Pacific students were absent from class due to participation in kaupapa such as kapa haka practice. However, after seeing improvements in ākonga engagement in kura, they became supportive of their participation in these activities.

> *"Staff are accepting that these students are out of class a bit and achieving well. They have raved about how well these ākonga have done and for some, it gave them a completely different (positive) view." (CLR kaiako)*

However, a quarter of the CLR kaiako that commented on this issue described frustratingly slow progress, and a small proportion reported active resistance from their colleagues. These kaiako described challenges when trying to implement changes that do not fit with a Westernised education framework.

> *"Generally it's the difference in world view that presents the hugest barriers. I find that I'm always having to make Māori ideas fit into a mainstream context." (CLR kaiako)*

> *"We are often met with confrontational conversations or lots of reasons why something shouldn't go ahead." (CLR kaiako)*

Influence on the taught and learned curriculum

The evaluation data gathered to date has not provided insights on influence on the taught and learned curriculum. This will be a focus on the next phase of data gathering.

4.2   Impact on kaiako

> **This section provides interim findings in relation to the following investigative questions**
> - **To what extent has the allowance changed CLR kaiako workload?**
> - **To what extent has their sense of wellbeing and being valued changed?**

4.2.1   Kaiako workload

Weekly CLR workload for kaiako

The survey asked CLR kaiako to state how many hours they typically spent on community liaison mahi per week, and how many hours a week they have allocated for the role. As was reported in section 3.1.1, the mean weekly allocation of hours for kaiako in Tairāwhiti (2.2 hours per week) is higher than for kaiako other regions (1.6 hours per week).

When compared to the total time that kaiako engage in CLR activities, across both groups kaiako report a similar time commitment of just over 12 hours per week (Figure 5), indicating that the CLR allocation is covering more of the actual time spent on community liaison mahi in Tairāwhiti.

Figure 5: Time spent in CLR activities compared to time allocated, in Tairāwhiti and other regions
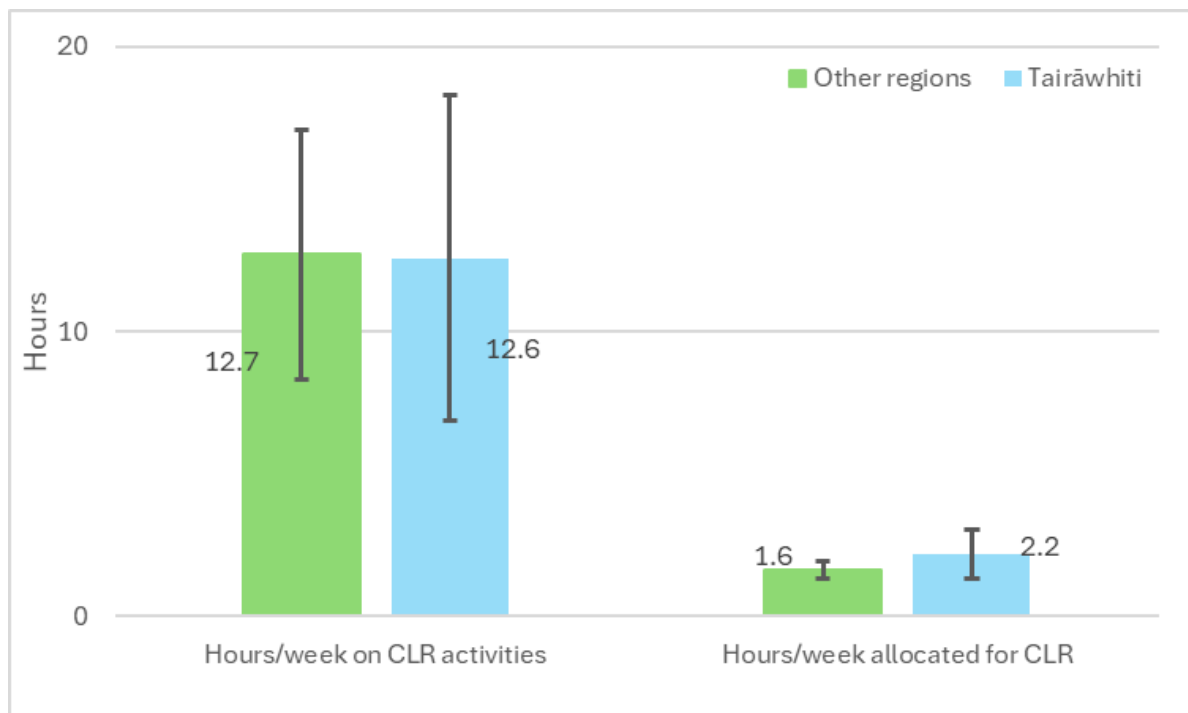
Changes in workload over time

Survey data has been collected at two different time points, allowing the evaluation to track trends. The results for the total respondent cohort, shown in Figure 6, show that the average weekly time commitment and allocation rose slightly between the two surveys conducted in the evaluation to date, and will continue to be tracked in subsequent surveys.

Figure 6: Hours per week spent on CLR activities and allocated to CLR activities (95% Confidence Interval)
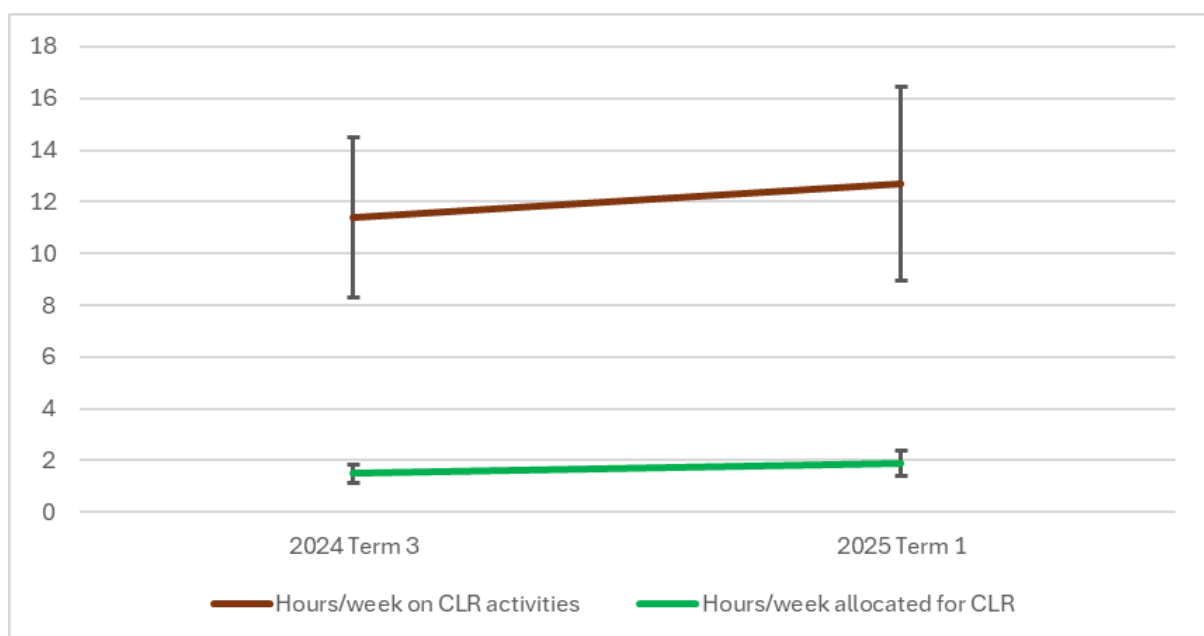
Monthly time spent on activities that kaiako undertake as part of their CL role

Support activities such as mentoring, tracking progress, and providing pastoral care require a substantial time commitment. Survey participants were asked how much time they spend on various activities that they undertake as part of their CL role. The 10 activities on which CLR kaiako spend the most hours supporting ākonga Māori are provided in Table 7. Full data on the time committed to all activities is available in Appendix A:.

Table 7: Average hours per month CLR kaiako commit to activities to engage ākonga Māori

Activity	Hours per month
Mentoring ākonga Māori	17
Getting the kura/school cultural groups up and running	12
Tracking ākonga Māori progress	10
Taking otherwise unrecognised pastoral care 'responsibility' for ākonga Māori	10
Involved in the provision of NCEA for cultural performances and skills	9
Supporting Māori sports and traditional skills	9
Providing support for ākonga Māori with behavioural needs	8
Educating non-Māori kaiako/teachers on Māori needs and tikanga	8
Providing/leading professional learning with tikanga and kawa at kura/school related events	8
Providing support for ākonga Māori with learning needs	8

As shown, mentoring ākonga Māori takes a substantial time commitment from kaiako, with survey data showing that those who provide this activity committing an average of 17 hours per term. Qualitative data confirmed that kaiako devote a large amount of time to this activity. For example, one kaiako described how their CLR colleague focuses on mentoring ākonga Māori, and noted the value this provides to the kura.

> *"One of our CL teachers is a mentor for ākonga Māori to help our students and whānau navigate the high school environment. She is an absolute asset in our school, and that in itself could be a full-time role." (CLR kaiako)*

Other activities that require substantial investment of time for CLR kaiako include getting cultural groups up and running, and tracking ākonga progress. Taking pastoral care responsibilities for ākonga also involved a large time commitment, with one kaiako noting that the workload tends to increase as connections are retained with current student, while simultaneously identifying other ākonga who require support.

> *"This term has been very busy, reconnecting with the students we worked with last year and returned to school, getting a gauge how they're progressing along in their learning. Then we're also identifying students for learning, attendance, behavioural, pastoral issues, and making plans moving forward." (CLR kaiako)*

For CLR kaiako that support Pasifika students, the top 10 activities on they spend the most hours are shown in Table 8 (overleaf). Full data on the time committed to all activities is available in Appendix A:**.**

Table 8: Average hours per month CLR kaiako commit to activities to engage Pasifika students

| Activity	Hours per month
Supporting English language learners	12
Attending meetings with Pasifika students to provide an appropriate cultural perspective	11
Mentoring Pasifika students	10
Taking otherwise unrecognised pastoral care 'responsibility' for Pasifika students	10
Educating non-Pasifika kaiako/teachers on Pasifika student needs	10
Providing support for Pasifika students with learning needs	9
Supporting kaiako/teachers in their learning relationships with Pasifika students	9
Developing action plans to support Pasifika students	9
Providing support for Pasifika students with behavioural needs	8
Establishing and running kura/school cultural groups	8
Organising cultural groups which represent the kura/school at official welcomes, prize giving, kura/school visits, festivals/events etc.	8

In interviews with CLR kaiako, it was noted that these activities are often inter-connected, and that providing language support, mentoring, and pastoral care are part of a holistic support system for Pasifika students.

> *"It's everything…making sure Pacific Island students have Chromebooks, correct school attire, support with academic, behavioural and pastoral needs. Also making connections with the parents via emails, meetings, lunches and dinners that benefit our Polynesian students positively." (CLR kaiako)*

### *Perceptions of adequacy of CLR time allocation*

The survey asked CLR kaiako whether the hours they have been allocated for the role are adequate. The findings, presented in Figure 7 (overleaf) were fairly consistent over the two surveys, with just over half stating that the hours were not enough and a combined total of just under half stating that the hours were just enough or enough.

Figure 7: CLR kaiako survey respondents' perceptions on whether the hours allocated are adequate
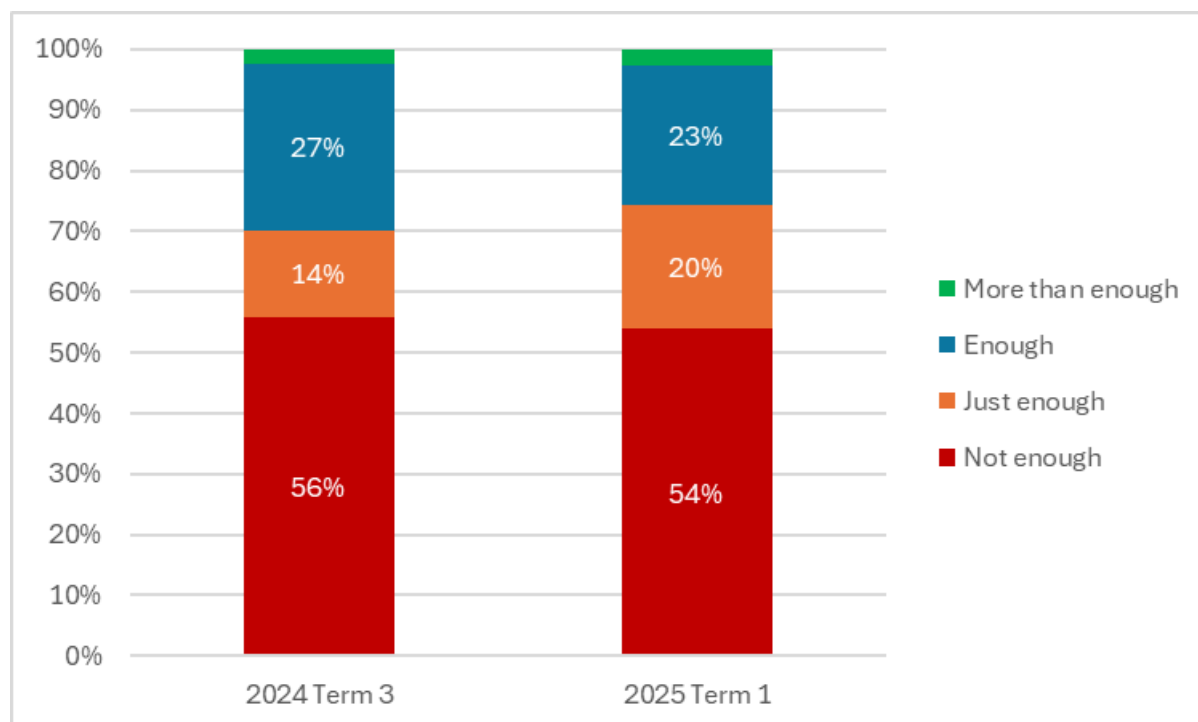
A comparison of results between kaiako in Tairāwhiti and other regions is shown in Figure 8. The findings show that while the majority in both groups feel they do not have enough hours allocated, Tairāwhiti kaiako are more likely to report having 'more than enough' compared to other regions. Tairāwhiti shows a more slightly polarised distribution, with higher percentages of 'just enough' and 'more than enough' responses.

Figure 8: Comparison of kaiako perceptions on whether the hours allocated are adequate between Tairāwhiti and other regions
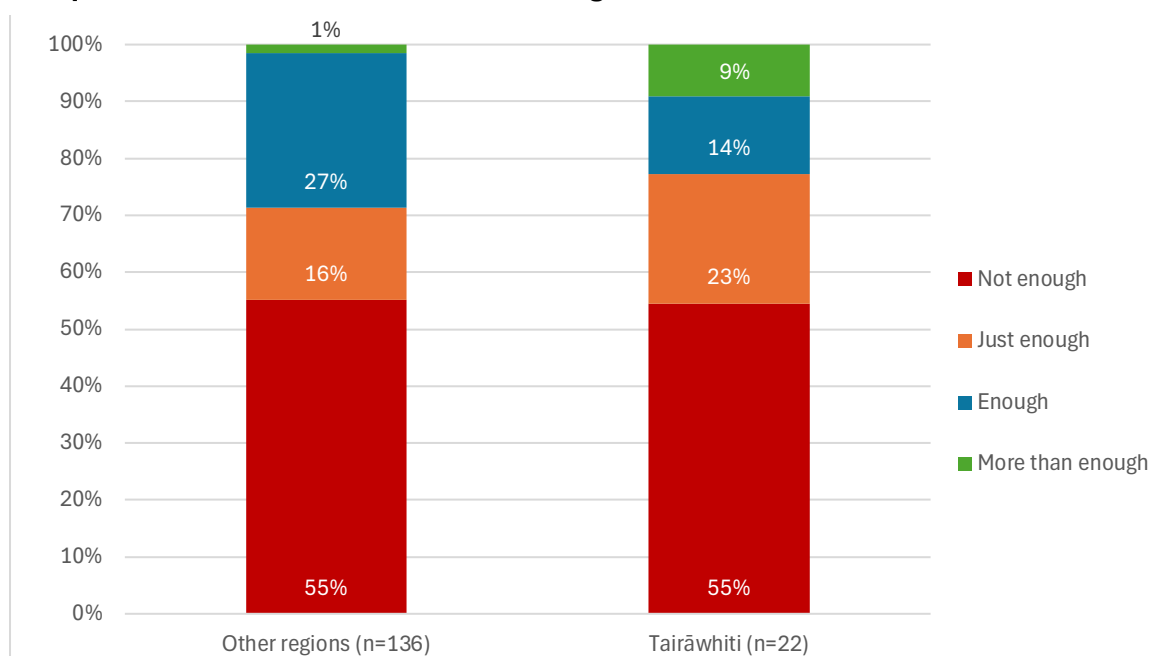
Kaiako perceptions of how the CLR allocation impacted their workload

The workload associated with community liaison mahi has affected kaiako in varied ways across different kura. For three quarters of kaiako that commented on this issue, community liaison had already been part of their teaching role throughout their career, and the workload had remained similar after the role was formalised as part of the CLR Trial.

> *"I have always been heavily involved in a number of events to support Māori and Pasifika students without labelling it as community liaison work; it is just what I love to do." (CLR kaiako)*

Responsibilities such as organising cultural events, supporting students and whānau, and engaging in strategic planning sometimes require kaiako to stay late or work on weekends and holidays. One kaiako expressed how encompassing the role has become:

> *"You think I wasn't even a teacher – I spend so much time doing 'other' mahi." (CLR kaiako)*

Although there has been minimal change in workload, kaiako appreciate the acknowledgment of their roles. Formalising the CL role has provided valuable recognition; just under half of the kaiako that commented on this issue said that the validation of their contribution was as important as workload adjustments.

The CLR time allocation is also appreciated by kaiako. Teachers expressed appreciation for having designated hours within their schedule. Just under half said that the allocated time helps manage their additional responsibilities, although many continue to work beyond these designated hours. For example, one kaiako discussed how the CLR designation has formalised activities they were already undertaking, and noted how the dedicated time has improved their ability to manage their work.

> *"All the things like [liaising] with the iwi authority, and connecting with students, are things that I have done previously. But now I get one more hour specifically for this. That hour is now on the timetable for me. Whereas last year, I would have had to do that work in my lunch breaks." (CLR kaiako)*

However, over half of the kaiako considered that the CLR allocation provides modest compensation relative to the extensive time and effort required.

> *"Really enjoying the mahi. But there is a lot of it, and it is only getting bigger. This past term has seen us need to deal with student and whānau mental health, Polyfest and kapa haka prep, whānau hui, strategic planning, running staff PD, discussing curriculum changes that affect our whānau…The list goes on." (CLR kaiako)*

Despite the workload challenges, kaiako expressed a sense of fulfilment from their community liaison work. Kaiako consistently highlighted the positive impact on students and community relationships. Nearly all kaiako described the work as meaningful and valuable even as they acknowledged its demands.

"I feel more committed to being proactive for our students and although it has added to my workload in terms of more meetings this has been so beneficial for our students and whānau community." (CLR kaiako)
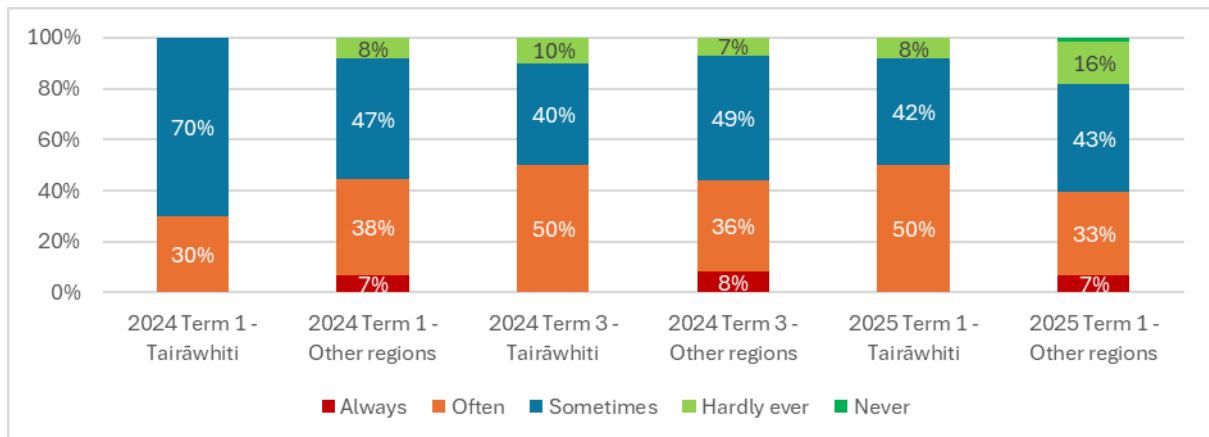
4.2.2   Kaiako wellbeing

The survey asked CLR kaiako how often had found being at work, or the work itself, stressful over the last term. The results (Figure 9) show that the majority of respondents found work stressful 'sometimes' or 'often'. There has been little change over time.

**Figure 9: CLR kaiako survey respondents' experiences of finding work stressful**
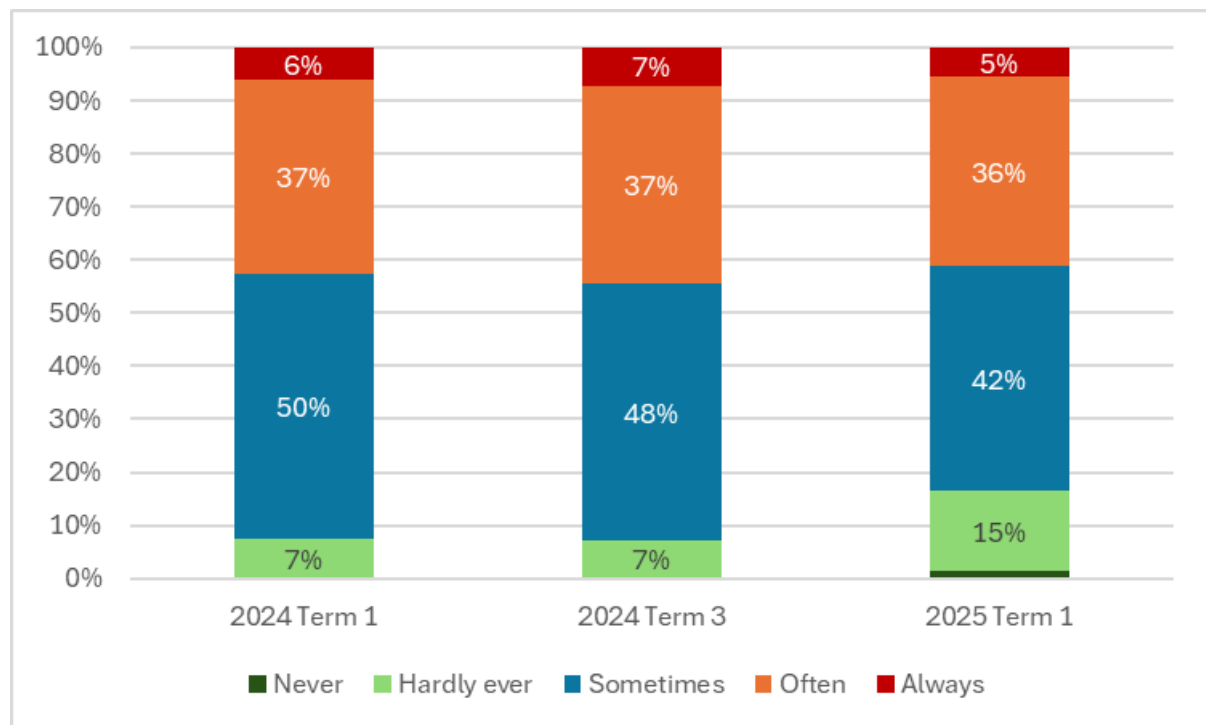
Comparison of experiences of finding work stressful between kaiako in Tairāwhiti and other regions found that kaiako in Tairāwhiti reported being more stressed than other regions at the beginning of the trial period in Term 1 2024 with all respondents indicated they were sometimes or often stressed. The level of work stress decreased over time with CLR kaiako in Tairāwhiti and other regions reporting similar stress levels in Term 3 2024 and Term 1 2025 (although a higher proportion of kaiako in other regions reported never or hardly ever feeling stressed).

Figure 10: CLR kaiako survey respondents' experiences of finding work stressful by Tairāwhiti and other regions

Balancing the demands of the role with personal life is also a challenge. Nearly all of the kaiako that participated in the interviews stated that find it difficult to prioritise their own personal and whānau wellbeing at times. The survey findings align with this (Figure 11), but do indicate some improvement in satisfaction with work-life balance from Term 1 2024 (when the CLR trial was launched) to subsequent terms. This will continue to be measured throughout the evaluation.

Figure 11: CLR kaiako survey respondents' satisfaction with their work-life balance
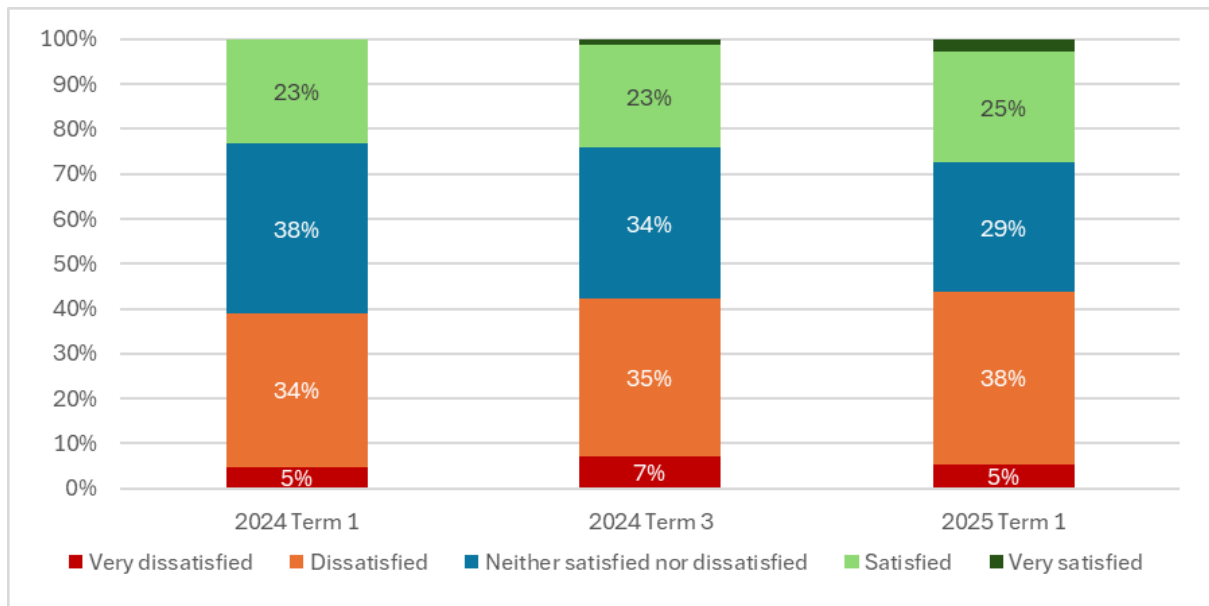
Comparison of satisfaction in work-life balance between kaiako in Tairāwhiti and other regions found an unusual pattern. Kaiako in Tairāwhiti reported being less satisfied than other regions in Term 1 2024, more satisfied in Term 3 2024, and again less satisfied than other regions in Term 1 2025. While the smaller sample representing Tairāwhiti (n=10 in 2024 and n=12 in 2025) mean that the numbers are prone to fluctuate more, this is worth noting.

Figure 12: CLR kaiako survey respondents' satisfaction with their work-life balance by Tairāwhiti and other regions
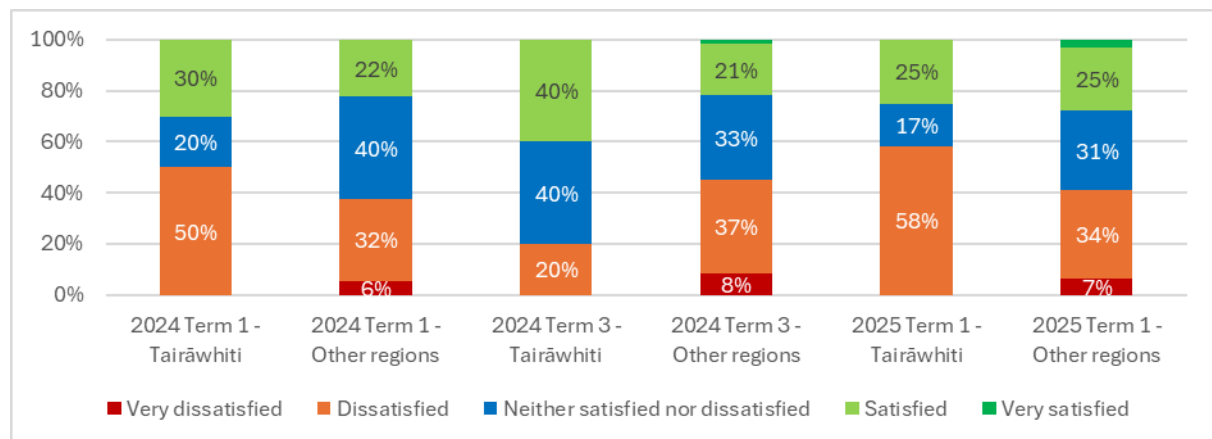
While around a third of kaiako found achieving work-life balance to be difficult, the CLR trial has generally had positive impacts on kaiako wellbeing. As discussed previously, kaiako were positively impacted by the recognition of their extra mahi, which validates their efforts and contributions to the kura and community. The formalisation of the CL role has given kaiako more autonomy, allowing them to plan and execute initiatives, which in turn improves their wellbeing.

> *"It has been fantastic to be acknowledged for the extra mahi we do as the Māori department for the school and our community." (CLR kaiako)*

The welcoming attitude of their colleagues towards cultural initiatives significantly enhances kaiako wellbeing. Their sense of wellbeing is further boosted when they observe tangible changes in the kura environment and among their colleagues, as these visible shifts indicate that their efforts are appreciated and valued throughout the school. This recognition not only validates their hard work but also fosters a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere, reinforcing the importance of their contributions to the cultural and educational fabric of the kura.

> *"My wellbeing has been positively impacted by seeing staff welcome the te reo learning" (CLR kaiako)*

Kaiako wellbeing is also boosted by seeing the meaningful impact their work is having on students and communities. This includes witnessing increased student engagement and enthusiasm for learning, observing stronger connections between students and their culture, and receiving positive feedback from ākonga, whānau, and community members.

> *"I find immense fulfilment in witnessing the joy and engagement of our tamariki and their whānau as they embrace the learning opportunities offered at our kura." (CLR kaiako)*

Several kaiako described how CL work enabled them to operate within culturally affirming relationships and contexts, reinforcing their cultural identity while fulfilling their professional responsibilities.

However, the real risk of burnout was highlighted by around 5 percent of CLR kaiako. These individuals reflected on the challenge of setting boundaries, noting that support from senior leadership was essential. This indicates that while the work is rewarding, it can potentially overwhelm kaiako without appropriate support and boundaries.

4.2.3   Kaiako feelings of being valued

The emerging findings indicate that the CLR trial has enhanced kaiako feelings of being valued through formal recognition, financial acknowledgment, and increased visibility of their cultural work. While the financial recognition and allocated time for CLR is modest, it communicates to kaiako that their expertise and efforts are valued.

> *"Financially speaking, I don't think it has necessarily been life changing, it's only $1000. But it's the hour a week that comes with it, that makes a difference." (CLR kaiako)*

Leadership support is emerging as a crucial factor in kaiako feeling valued. Hands-on engagement and visible advocacy for the role signal to CLR kaiako that their contributions are recognised. For example, one kaiako stated that they had previously organised all aspects of initiatives such as hui for whānau, but since the CLR trial began have been provided administrative support with communications and organising kai. Another kaiako specifically returned to their school because of such support.

> *"I went around some other schools but went back to [my current one] because I realised, hey [this school] really looked after me." (CLR kaiako)*

A large proportion of kaiako also described receiving appreciative comments from ākonga, and emails and phone calls from whānau to express their gratitude for the work that CLR kaimahi are undertaking.

> *"I feel the warmth and appreciation from the parent committee and parents who know how hard I am working to support and guide their son's though their journey." (CLR kaiako)*

4.3   Impact on ākonga Māori and Pacific students

This section provides interim findings in relation to the following investigative questions.

- **To what extent have ākonga/students' sense of belonging and wellbeing changed?**
- **To what extent has attendance/retention changed?**
- **To what extent has their level of participation and success in class/school changed?**

4.3.1   Ākonga sense of belonging and wellbeing

It is too early in the evaluation process to conclusively determine whether ākonga wellbeing and sense of belonging has improved. However, there are some early indications from the qualitative data that CLR activities are positively associated with ākonga sense of belonging.

Kōrero with ākonga during the kura visits revealed that students at one kura felt the school environment had become more inviting. This was because of the increased emphasis on cultural activities that celebrated their heritage, and they could see that their kaiako cared about their success. Ākonga also reported positive impacts in their belonging and wellbeing through the personal connections they had made with CLR kaiako.

> *"It feels easier at school knowing you have someone there and you can talk to." (Ākonga)*

> *"We feel more comfortable with her [CLR kaiako] as we have made a bond with her." (Ākonga)*

Kaiako also reported observing changes in ākonga wellbeing and sense of belonging at kura. Nearly all of the kaiako that commented on this issue stated that cultural initiatives and events organised through the CLR have provided students with opportunities to celebrate their identity, which has been instrumental in boosting their self-esteem and sense of belonging.

> *"I see my ākonga stand proudly to perform, and I see their behaviour change for the better because they have a newfound pride in themselves and their culture. They feel they have a place they belong here at school and believe they are worth good things so they start striving in all areas to do better." (CLR kaiako)*

Kaiako also reported that ākonga have benefited from them being more empowered to address the unique needs of their students, which has contributed to ākonga feeling more valued, leading a stronger sense of community within the kura.

4.3.2   Attendance and retention

While the evaluation has not yet identified a systematic improvement in the attendance and retention of ākonga Māori and Pasifika students, qualitative data collection has revealed numerous reports of attendance improvements.

At one of the kura that participated in the site visits, the tumuaki and kaiako reported that the investment of time into engagement with ākonga has translated to concrete attendance outcomes. Kaiako reported observing students attend kura more regularly and noted that enrolment and attendance rates had particularly increased in te reo Māori classes, with enrolments nearly doubling from 2024 to 2025.

Kaiako at another kura that has a high proportion of Pasifika students described how they had observed improvement in student performance across a number of metrics.

"The real value of this mahi is seeing the Pasifika students' attendance levels increasing, unwanted behaviour decreasing and students passing key academic assessments." (CLR kaiako)

Kaiako at this kura attributed this to increased communication with students' families, which focused on praising regular attendance and good behaviour. They also analysed data to identify students facing attendance challenges and worked with them individually to determine the underlying causes and provide necessary support for improvement.

In the third kura that was visited, kaiako and tumuaki stated that increased emphasis on cultural initiatives and events organised through the CLR had made school more relevant and engaging for students, motivating them to be present.

4.3.3   Participation and engagement

The evaluation also gathered examples and perceptions of enhanced ākonga engagement and participation. During the site visits, kura reported success with individual ākonga, rather than school-wide changes. At one of the kura, kaiako have observed changes among previously detached students who have become actively engaged through kapa haka and music. For instance, two brothers identified as priority cases showed improvement in their engagement after joining kapa haka.

Similarly, at another kura that was visited, it was reported that students who struggle to attend regular classes have been engaged in kura life through participating in cultural events such as Polyfest or kapa haka. These activities provide alternative pathways to success, which are particularly valuable for students who may be overrepresented in negative statistics.

"It's an opportunity for the kids to achieve success within their identity. The Ministry [of Education] talks about Māori succeeding as Māori; some of these children are overrepresented in other stats, and this provides opportunities for them to see success." (Tumuaki)

The interviews and experience diary and survey responses found nearly all kaiako who commented on this issue have observed changes in student engagement resulting from strengthened connections with CLR kaiako. These kaiako noted subtle but meaningful shifts in student attitudes. This highlights how relationship-building contributes to gradual engagement improvements.

"We have seen changes in the attitude of the kids when they know that you care – telling them of improvements and asking the story behind what is going on and developing the relationship. Small changes; it takes time." (CLR kaiako)

About half of the kaiako respondents stated that a key benefits of having ring fenced time to devote to liaison work helps then to identify factors affecting student participation, allowing for early intervention and support before issues escalate.

"There have been situations where tamariki are off for extended periods of time, and it wasn't until much later that we realised that this was because

of wider issues they were dealing with. The liaison mahi helps to catch this type of situation earlier so we can support ākonga before it gets to that point." (CLR kaiako)

The ability to deliver personalised approaches to support, involving whānau and community connections, were reported to have positive impacts on student engagement and participation. For example, a kaiako reported success with a disengaged student who was ready to leave school but returned and became engaged with a programme tailored to their needs and desired career pathway. Another kaiako shared how connecting a student with community training resources provided an alternative pathway for their continuing education, after identifying that the kura environment was not working for them.

4.3.4   Ākonga achievement

While quantitative evidence on changes in achievement is not yet available, qualitative data shows examples of enhanced achievement amongst individual ākonga. At one kura that participated in the site visits, kaiako emphasised the importance of fostering a supportive and culturally responsive learning environment. As part of their liaison role, kaiako at this kura ran a weekend wānanga for ākonga who had been identified as struggling in a particular NCEA topic or assessment. This provided holistic support, including transport, kai, tailored tutoring and liaising with whānau. The kaiako reported that all ākonga who attended subsequently passed the assessment they worked on during the wānanga.

Other kaiako reported that tracking student achievements has revealed several wins. One kaiako described how a student they had mentored had gained Merit in her NCEA external examinations. Another kaiako who worked with Pasifika students who had previously struggled in STEM subjects stated that these students were now doing well and had passed their assignments and gained NCEA credits. A third kaiako reported notable improvements in literacy and numeracy credits for Pasifika students, as well as overall NCEA pass rates.

In another kura that participated in the site visits, the tumuaki identified several positive outcomes from their long-standing mentoring approach, which the CLR funding has helped to sustain.

> *"Academic achievement has improved for all student groups…the achievement difference between Māori and non-Māori students is not significant." (Tumuaki)*

The impacts of the CLR on ākonga wellbeing, attendance/retention and achievements will be further explored through the remaining data collection cycles of the evaluation.

4.4   Changes in whānau and community engagement with the kura

This section provides interim findings in relation to the following investigative question.
- **To what extent has whānau and community engagement with the school/kura changed?**

There are early indications that the activities undertaken by CLR kaiako are successful in engaging whānau more actively in kura. In the site visit schools, kaiako reported that whānau have become more comfortable contacting teachers, and participating in kōrero about their rangatahi and how they can be supported to do well at kura.

Many of these activities were occurring prior to the CL role being formalised, but kaiako noted the benefits of having dedicated time for engagement with whānau, which has led to deeper relationships that continue to be built through informal communication.

> *"I am face and contact for our whānau. I often see whānau before and after school who we met at our whānau hui, they are comfortable to greet and chat." (CLR kaiako)*

These relationships with whānau are reported to be beneficial, providing a foundation for collaboration. However, while these relationships are advantageous, several kaiako highlighted that there is a need to ensuring consistent and widespread engagement across the entire kura community, not just those in community liaison roles.

As was discussed in section 3.4, there has been mixed progress in engaging with iwi, hapū, and Pasifika communities. Where schools have effectively built these relationships, stronger connections facilitate a better understanding of the cultural contexts of ākonga and community needs. Kaiako from these kura reported mutual benefits from regular interactions. For example, CLR kaiako at a kura held fono with students, parents and representatives of the Pasifika community to discuss ideas about what they would like to see the school doing. The conversation was described by kaiako as "joyful", reinforcing the importance of community dialog and collaboration.

> *"Hearing how important it is to give our Pasifika community an opportunity to be part of the decision-making process at our school seemed so easy, but also so shocking that it had not been done before. It makes me feel we are on a far better trajectory now." (CLR kaiako)*

Other reported successes included having mana whenua open new building within a kura, collaborating with local hapū to compose waiata, and inviting kuia and kaumātua to share pūrakau (traditional stories) with ākonga.

However, about a third of the kaiako that commented on this issue reported that their kura has struggled to achieve engagement with mana whenua and just over half reported a lack of traction with Pasifika communities and collectives. While there have been some positive relationships formed, there remains a need for more sustained efforts to ensure that the voices of iwi, hapū, and Pasifika are effectively integrated into kura.

5   Engagement Framework baseline

As part of the CLR Trial, an Engagement Framework was developed to demonstrate ways kura are working to address inequitable ākonga outcomes and support the kaiako who are engaging with the community. The framework includes six overarching themes related to kura engagement mahi:

1. Deliberately liaising with Māori and Pasifika communities to seek input into strategic planning
2. Supporting community liaison teachers in their work with colleagues
3. Acting on opportunities to engage
4. Collecting and using data to inform improvements for ākonga outcomes
5. Reflecting Māori and Pasifika cultures through the school
6. Communicating across the school community

The framework was sent to participating kura, to assist them to assess what they are currently doing, and what other activities might enhance engagement with Māori and Pasifika communities.

5.1   How kura are using the Engagement Framework

The interviews conducted during site visits and a survey based on the Engagement Framework collected feedback and observations on how it is being used within kura. A sentiment analysis of feedback found that over 90 percent of the comments about the Engagement Framework were positive. The findings suggest that kura have found the framework both relevant and practical in guiding their mahi. A summary of feedback on how kura are using the framework is provided below.

Tumuaki and school leaders found the framework useful to feed into strategic planning. By offering a clear set of engagement themes, the framework enables kura to align their school engagement practices with the guidance provided. Tumuaki and school leaders liked how it is explicit about the intentional inclusion of Māori and Pasifika voices in planning and decision-making processes, helping to ensure that strategic plans reflect the aspirations and needs of their kura communities.

Feedback also shows that the Engagement Framework strikes an appropriate balance between guidance and flexibility. It offers clear suggestions for activities and approaches that kura can adopt to support enhanced community liaison, but is not prescriptive. This allows kura to adapt the framework to their unique contexts, strengths, and community needs.

Another positive aspect highlighted by tumuaki is its emphasis on data collection and analysis. The framework encourages kura to gather and use data to inform their engagement strategies and monitor outcomes for ākonga. This data-driven approach supports continuous improvement and helps kura to measure the impact of engagement mahi over time.

While the framework was positively received overall, about one fifth of the responses stated that although it is helpful, they lack the time, staffing, or resources to implement community liaison initiatives as fully as they would like. In kura where workloads are already stretched, there is a risk that the framework's potential impact could be limited by these practical constraints.

Another area where a small number of tumuaki noted some uncertainty was the perceived overlap between themes and examples within the framework. While the themes are designed to be interconnected and mutually reinforcing, it was noted that some activities appear to align with multiple themes. This made it difficult to document progress in a way that clearly reflects the intent of each theme. However, they also acknowledged that this flexibility allows kura to adapt the framework to their own priorities, rather than being confined to a rigid structure.

5.2   Engagement Framework baseline assessment

As part of the evaluation, kura were asked to assess their performance on each theme, based on a five-point continuum as below.

Figure 13: Engagement framework continuum

| We are yet to have focused strategies – E āhei ana ki te mahi	We are initiating working together - Kātahi anō tātou kia timata te mahi tahi	We are starting to connect – Me tīmata ki te hono	We are working together – Kei te mahi tahi tātou	We are working as partners – Whakahoahoa tātou i a tātou

In addition, the six themes in the Engagement Framework were discussed with tumuaki and kura leadership during the site visits.

The baseline assessment data and a summary of the key activities that kura are undertaking to enhance engagement under each theme are provided below. Overall, kura are strongest in culturally reflective practices and engagement, while data use and strategic liaison are themes for which kura rated themselves as less mature.

Theme 1: Deliberately liaising with Māori and Pasifika communities to seek input into strategic planning

The average baseline score across kura that completed the self-assessment was 3.1 out of 5. The distribution of responses is shown in Figure 14. The results show that while some kura are engaging in collaborative planning processes, others may still be developing consistent and structured approaches seek input into strategic planning.

Figure 14: Deliberately liaising with Māori and Pasifika communities to seek input into strategic planning
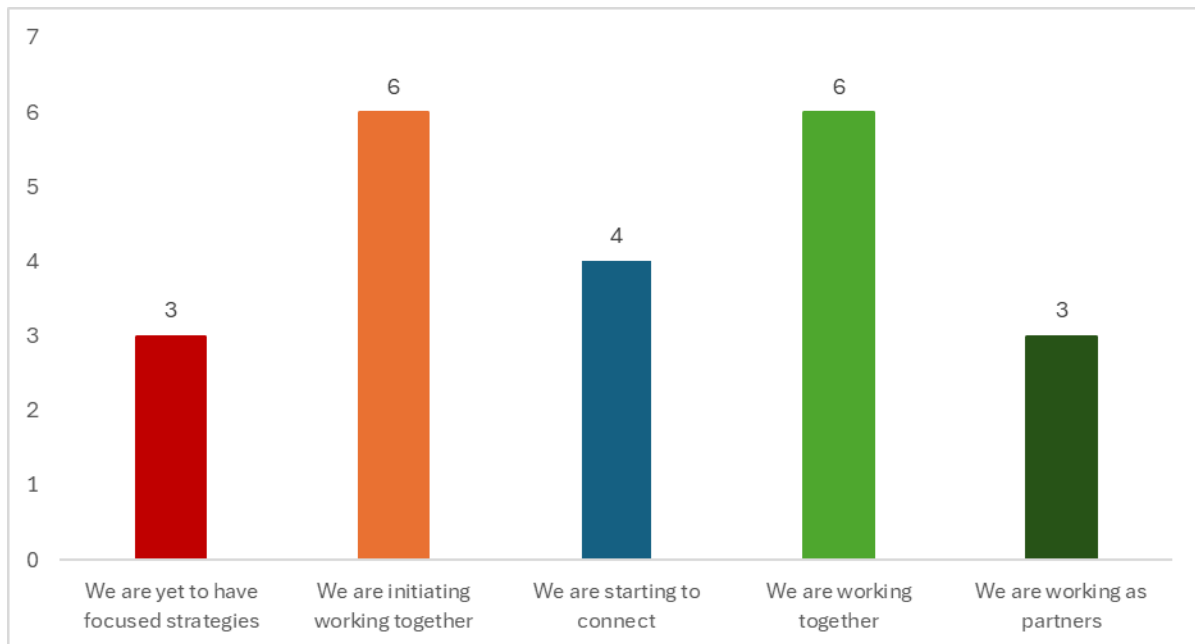

Kura reported undertaking a range of activities under this theme. One kura focused on strategic planning that involves whānau. Rather than presenting a fixed plan, the kura reported that they aim to co-design their strategic plans with whānau, asking how proposed actions affect their rangatahi. This approach encourages agency within the whānau unit, by asking practical questions like 'What does your child need?' and building a learning environment based on their answers.

Another kura ran a Kāhui Rangatira (Council of Chiefs) alongside the four major local iwi and several hapū. They undertake engagement with this roopu to inform strategic planning. In addition, this kura stated that they have iwi, whānau and former ākonga and sitting on their boards, influence the strategic drivers within the school. It was emphasised that 60% of the board are Māori, which is a reflection of the school community.

Theme 2: Supporting community liaison teachers in their work with colleagues

The average baseline score across kura that completed the self-assessment was 3.0 out of 5. The results indicate that while support structures exist in kura there is opportunity for more consistent support practices across schools.

Figure 15: Supporting community liaison teachers in their work with colleagues
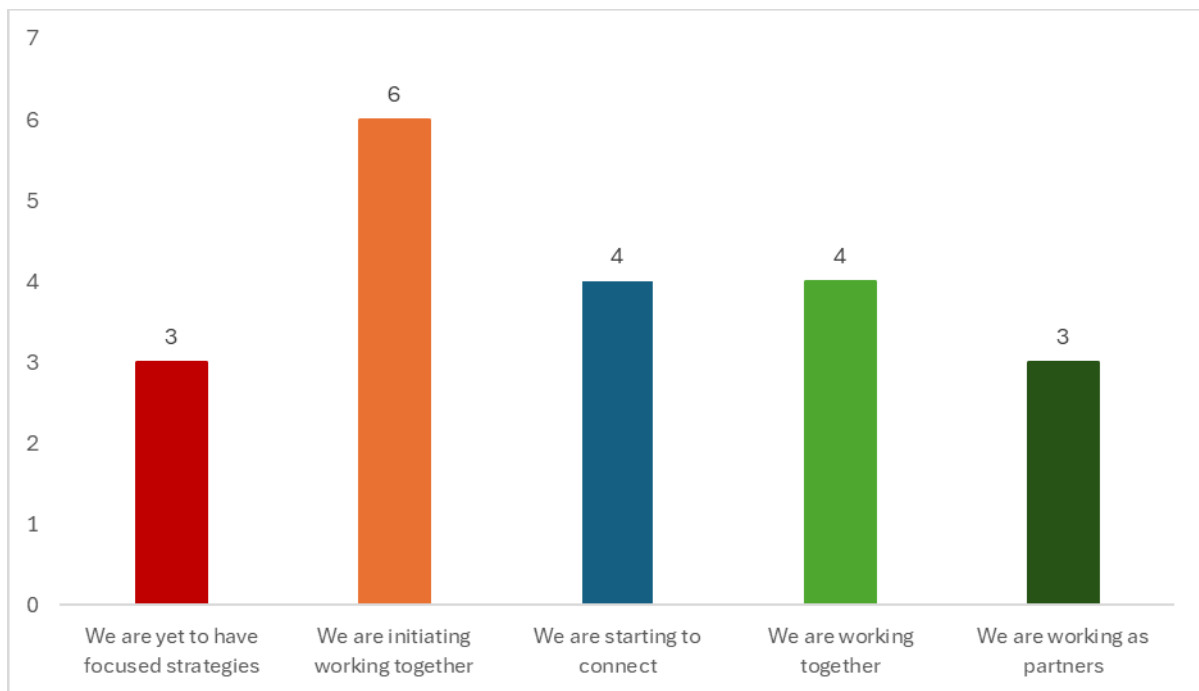
At one kura, weekly meetings with CLR kaiako are attended by a senior leader to maintain a direct with school management. Additionally, the CLR kaiako contribute to the kura Treaty of Waitangi sub-committee, providing forum for support and input.

Another kura has a student support network that the CLR kaiako sit within, which provides an inbuilt support system for these roles. Placing them within an existing support structure at the school allows them to seek guidance from other kaiako already working in the support space.

At a third kura, CLR kaiako work alongside year level deans and counsellors, ensuring they are supported as part of the fabric of the student support network.

Theme 3: Acting on opportunities to engage

The average baseline score across kura that completed the self-assessment was 3.5. The distribution of responses is shown in Figure 16. This theme had relatively high numbers of kura who rated themselves at the beginning of their journey ('we are initiating working together) and a relatively high number who feel they have made strong progress (we are working together'. Overall, the results indicate that kura are actively seeking and responding to opportunities to engage with whānau

and communities, and adapt school practices to strengthen connections with their communities.

Figure 16: Acting on opportunities to engage
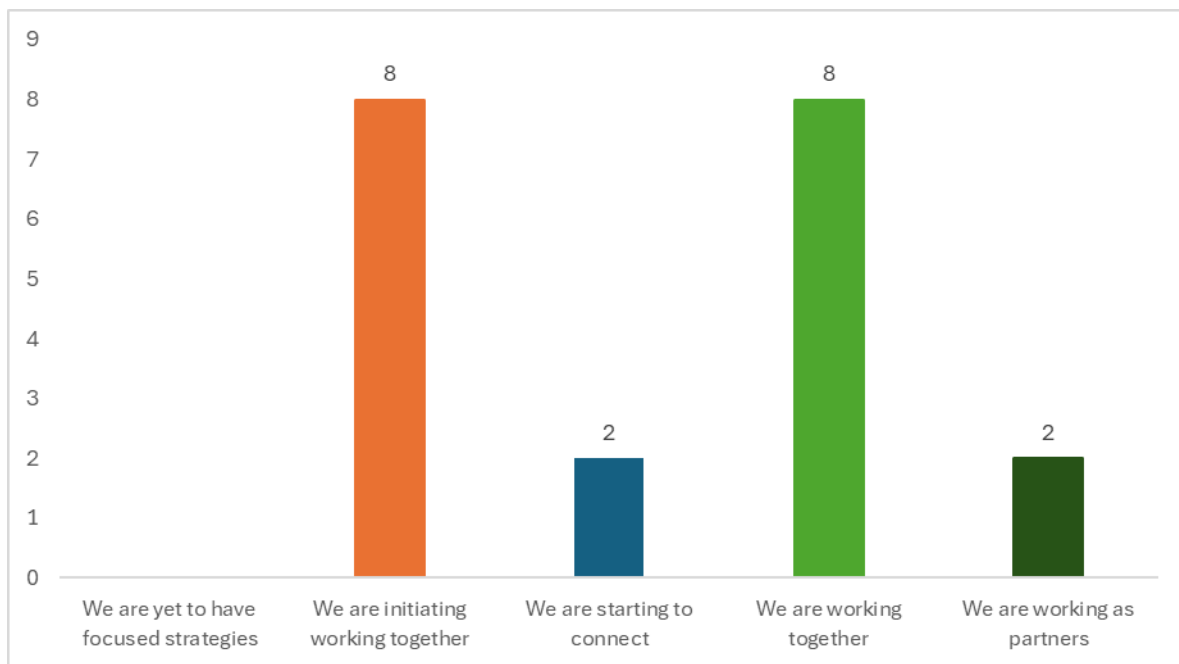
A tumuaki described how their kura is continually seeking new ways to hear the voices of parents and adjust their methods accordingly. For example, incorporating kapa haka as a credit-based activity has been a way to diversify the curriculum. The kura also added modules with stronger cultural influences where they felt student engagement was waning, based on feedback from whānau about what would help keep their rangatahi engaged. Additionally, they have established links with rūnanga through tupuna stories, aiming to connect students with their iwi.

Another kura found that home visits can be a valuable engagement method, especially for reaching hard-to-engage families. It was noted that CLR kaiako are particularly well-suited for this role compared to other kaiako, as they build relationships through initiatives, such as Tū Whānau dinners.

A third kura stated that they are still determining the most effective ways to utilise the CLRs to connect with whānau and the wider communities from which their ākonga come.

Theme 4: Collecting and using data to inform improvements for ākonga outcomes

The average baseline score across kura that completed the self-assessment was 2.9 out of 5. This suggests that while some kura are making strong efforts others are at earlier stages of developing robust, culturally responsive data practices. The distribution of responses is shown in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Collecting and using data to inform improvements for ākonga outcomes
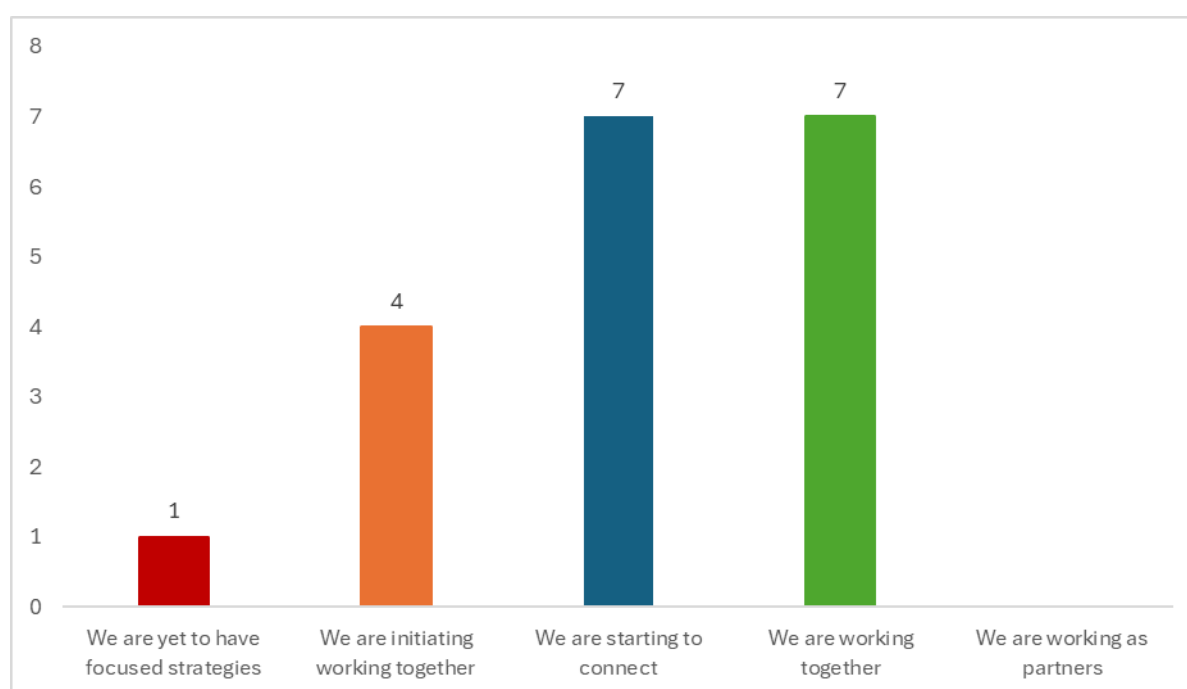

One kura reported they had made strong progress in this theme. Data collected from ākonga is disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, year level, subject area, and modules. Since the implementation of the CLR, there has been a focus on the relationship with parents to discuss ākonga performance. Data collection includes student evaluations of their relationships with kaiako, and the quality of their subject teachers, though there has been some resistance from teachers. Additionally, the kura analyses NCEA results and student leaver data.

At another kura, a wellbeing survey is conducted with ākonga on a yearly basis. The results from this survey are shared with the local iwi. In the survey, students are asked which iwi/hapū they affiliate with, and the data correlating to their iwi/hapū is shared back in a reciprocal manner, ensuring data sovereignty is upheld. Discussing the results with the community is another way they share the survey data, adding a layer of accountability beyond merely 'doing it.' Specifically for the CLR initiative, a tracking sheet created by the Deputy Principal records intervention methods, the frequency and nature of interactions between CLR kaiako and tauira, and whether home visits have been conducted.

Theme 5: Reflecting Māori and Pasifika cultures through the school

The average baseline score across kura that completed the self-assessment was 3.6 out of 5. The distribution of responses is shown in Figure 18. This theme received the highest average score, suggesting that many kura feel confident in their efforts to embed cultural identity and practices throughout the school environment.

Figure 18: Reflecting Māori and Pasifika cultures through the school
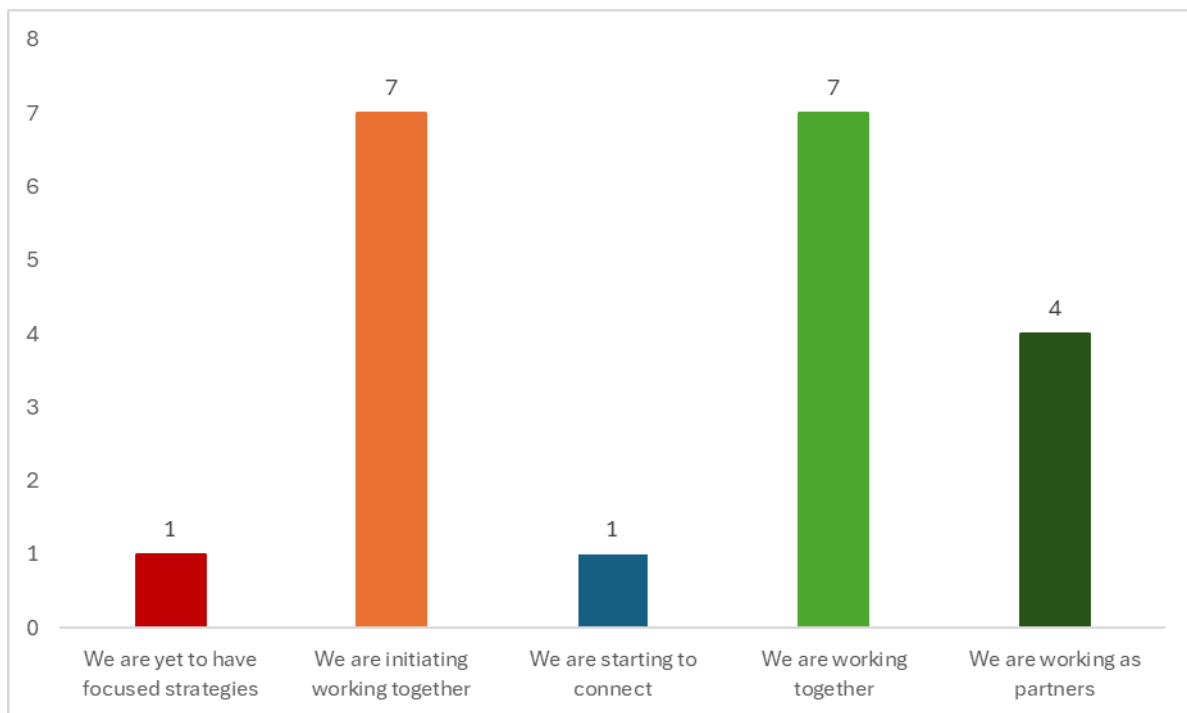
At one kura, tumuaki, and kaiako discussed how the physical environment has been enhanced with the creation of a waharoa, stemming from a request by the school's Māori community. Ākonga were actively involved in its creation, carving sections themselves. The waharoa signified a shift in the school's approach, increasing ākonga engagement in modules with greater cultural significance. The rūnanga also contributed by discussing the cultural significance of the area.

Another kura stated that are focusing recruitment efforts to prioritise employing kaimahi Māori and culturally responsive staff, aligning with the CLR trial and other government initiatives. These efforts have changed what and how they are teaching to foster embodied knowledge.

At a third kura, all staff are required to learn te reo Māori, which is supported as part of their professional learning. Each day begins with karakia, and the school has a waiata and haka. In addition, te reo Māori is compulsory for year 9 students, and tikanga classes are compulsory for those in year 10. These practices were reported to show that te ao Māori is embedded in all aspects of the school's activities.

Theme 6: Communicating across the school community

The average baseline score across kura that completed the self-assessment was 3.5 out of 5, highlighting the importance kura place on maintaining ongoing communication with their wider school communities. The distribution of responses is shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Communicating across the school community
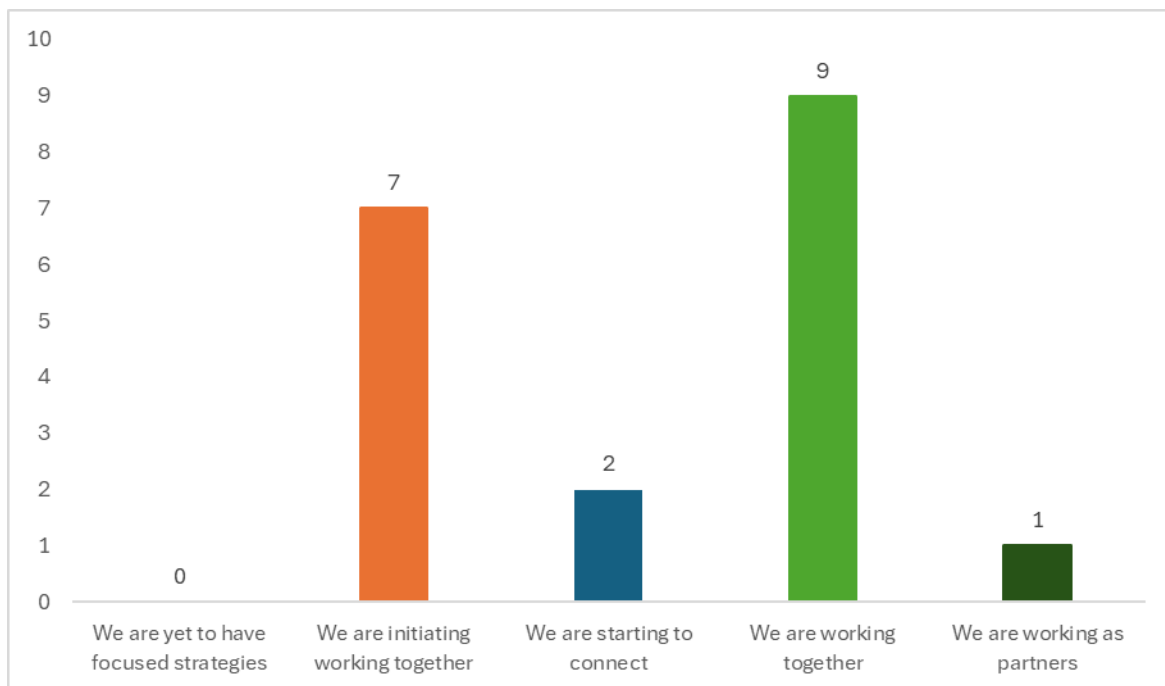
A kura stated that there is ongoing dialogue with the kura community regarding initiatives for Māori students. The tumuaki also engages in professional learning exchanges with other kura, and share their approaches for supporting Māori and Pasifika students.

Another kura reported a close relationship with whānau and the community, with ongoing discussions focusing support, pastoral care and academic performance of ākonga.

6 Conclusion

While it is too early to make firm conclusions on the CLR Trial, the interim assessment of the shows varied implementation across schools. The flexibility of the CLR has allowed schools to tailor the activities they deliver to ākonga Māori and Pasifika students' needs and adapt approaches to meet the unique needs of their communities. However, some kura appear to be unclear about the different ways in which the CLR can be configured and may need communication or guidance on different implementation models.

By formalising roles and dedicating specific time for community liaison mahi, the CLR has legitimised the existing cultural leadership of kaiako, providing them with the recognition and support needed to advocate for and implement meaningful changes.

The limited resources allocated may suggest a gap between policy intent and practical reality. While kaiako appreciate the formal recognition of the CL role, nearly all devote substantially more time to the role than is available through the CLR allocation. Many kaiako in community liaison roles still find their workloads unsustainable, some are at risk of burnout. This emphasises the need for adequate support and recognition from kura leadership.

Despite the limited allocated time for community liaison mahi, kaiako have demonstrated a strong commitment to fostering supportive and culturally responsive environments. This dedication has led to reported improvements in student engagement, particularly through cultural activities such as kapa haka and Polyfest, which provide alternative pathways to success for students who might otherwise struggle. The ability to identify and address underlying issues affecting student participation early on has proven crucial in supporting ākonga to succeed.

The success of the CLR in some kura underscores the importance of a holistic approach to education, which considers the cultural and personal contexts of students, has created environments where ākonga feel valued and supported. Students describe their interactions using terms like "supported," "manaakitanga", and "whanaungatanga", indicating improved cultural connection. However, the evaluation has not yet identified systematic improvements in key metrics like attendance and retention. While individual success stories demonstrate potential, they may not represent widespread change. The next phase of the evaluation will explore whether these early findings are widespread.

Kura have seen uneven progress in strengthening community connections. While whānau engagement has generally improved, relationships with iwi, hapū, and Pasifika communities remain underdeveloped in many schools. Several schools identified gaps in their strategic iwi relationships, and Pasifika engagement was often described as reactive rather than planned. This inconsistency suggests schools need more structured approaches and capability development to build meaningful community partnerships.

The next phase of the evaluation will focus on gathering more in-depth data on the extent to which the CLR has been implemented in a way that meets the specific needs of kura, kaiako, ākonga, whānau, and the community. This will include prioritise direct kōrero with ākonga, whānau, and community members to gain deeper insights into their experiences and needs. Additionally, the evaluation will continue to track trends in kaiako workload and wellbeing, with

a focus on identifying effective strategies for managing the workload and preventing burnout among kaiako. Data collection will also be expanded to provide a more comprehensive picture of changes in attendance, retention, and academic achievement. By addressing these areas, the evaluation will aim to provide evaluative judgements and actionable regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the CL role.

Appendix A: Survey data on CLR kaiako activities

Table 9: CLR kaiako activities to support ākonga Māori (*n* = 108)

Activity	% who undertake this activity	Hours per month	Daily/ weekly	Monthly/ Each term	As required
Mentoring ākonga Māori	71%	17	51%	1%	23%
Supporting kaiako/teachers in their learning relationships with ākonga Māori	69%	7	29%	10%	36%
Tracking ākonga Māori progress	69%	10	38%	28%	17%
Providing support for ākonga Māori with behavioural needs	64%	8	38%	4%	35%
Educating non-Māori kaiako/teachers on Māori needs and tikanga	61%	8	27%	20%	36%
Providing support for ākonga Māori with learning needs	61%	8	41%	3%	29%
Organising/facilitating whānau hui	58%	7	8%	37%	51%
Taking otherwise unrecognised pastoral care 'responsibility' for ākonga Māori	56%	10	48%	7%	23%
Advising senior leadership on ākonga Māori needs	54%	0	20%	10%	50%
Organising cultural groups which represent the kura/school at official welcomes, prize giving, kura/school visits, festivals/events etc.	54%	7	16%	23%	61%
Delivering greetings at formal and semi-formal kura/school-related occasions	52%		20%	16%	54%
Supporting Māori performing arts e.g., Te Ao Haka, Ngā Manu Kōrero	50%	7	29%	13%	44%
Getting the kura/school cultural groups up and running	49%	12	17%	17%	38%
Developing action plans to support ākonga Māori	49%	7	17%	23%	38%
Attending tangi/unveilings and significant events of whānau Māori	48%	6	10%	12%	84%
Engaging with relevant governance groups e.g., mana whenua/iwi/hapū	48%	6	15%	19%	65%
Providing/leading professional learning with tikanga and kawa at kura/school related events	47%	8	12%	29%	41%
Supporting Māori sports and traditional skills	44%	9	26%	11%	41%
Helping kaiako/teachers with Professional Growth Cycle and meeting Teaching Standards	43%	6	22%	28%	46%
Attending meetings with ākonga Māori to provide an appropriate cultural perspective	43%	7	13%	13%	54%
Supporting whānau and ākonga Māori in dealings with other agencies	38%	6	13%	10%	75%

Activity	% who undertake this activity	Hours per month	Daily/ weekly	Monthly/ Each term	As required
Arranging travel/accommodation/hospitality for cultural activities	35%	7	11%	25%	67%
Organising consultation and information evenings for parents/whānau of ākonga Māori	34%	5	8%	31%	61%
Visiting whānau Māori to talk about kura/school, aspirations and support of ākonga	33%	5	17%	31%	56%
Translating for the kura/school (e.g., newsletters, signage, correspondence)	31%	5	9%	6%	76%
Providing tutoring and study groups for ākonga Māori outside of kura/school hours	31%	8	12%	6%	52%
Involved in the provision of NCEA for cultural performances and skills	30%	9	37%	17%	40%
Supporting English language learners from kura kaupapa Māori	29%	5	42%	10%	32%

Table 10: CLR kaiako activities to support Pasifika students (*n* = 76)

Activity	% who undertake this activity	Hours/ month	Weekly/ Daily	Monthly/ Each term	As required
Mentoring Pasifika students	49%	10	80%	0%	20%
Tracking Pasifika student progress	42%	6	40%	40%	20%
Taking otherwise unrecognised pastoral care 'responsibility' for Pasifika students	32%	10	67%	0%	33%
Supporting Pasifika performing arts e.g., Polyfest	30%	7	17%	17%	67%
Providing support for Pasifika students with behavioural needs	30%	8	50%	0%	50%
Establishing and running kura/school cultural groups	29%	8	20%	0%	80%
Providing support for Pasifika students with learning needs	29%	9	0%	0%	100%
Advising senior leadership on Pasifika student needs	26%		37%	21%	42%
Supporting kaiako/teachers in their learning relationships with Pasifika students	24%	9	0%	0%	100%
Developing action plans to support Pasifika students	22%	9	0%	0%	100%
Organising cultural groups which represent the kura/school at official welcomes, prize giving, kura/school visits, festivals/events etc.	18%	8	0%	0%	100%
Providing tutoring and study groups for Pasifika students outside of kura/school hours	18%	8	100%	0%	0%

Activity	% who undertake this activity	Hours/ month	Weekly/ Daily	Monthly/ Each term	As required
Supporting English language learners	18%	12	0%	0%	100%
Attending significant events of Pasifika students and family members	18%	5	0%	0%	100%
Organising kura/school-related and community based fono	16%	7	0%	0%	100%
Delivering greetings at formal and semi-formal kura/school-related occasions	16%	6	0%	0%	100%
Organising/facilitating family fono	16%	8	0%	0%	100%
Educating non-Pasifika kaiako/teachers on Pasifika student needs	13%	10	0%	0%	100%
Involved in the provision of NCEA for cultural performances and skills	13%	8	0%	0%	100%
Attending meetings with Pasifika students to provide an appropriate cultural perspective	13%	11	0%	0%	100%
Organising consultation and information evenings for parents/families of Pasifika students	13%	7	0%	0%	100%
Arranging travel/accommodation/hospitality for cultural activities	12%	5			
Visiting Pasifika families to talk about kura/school, aspiration and support of students	12%	2			
Supporting families and Pasifika students in dealings with other agencies	12%	7			
Helping families with limited English with translation support	9.2%	2			
Translating for the kura/school (e.g., newsletters, signage, correspondence)	1%				
Please specify (this included teaching Pasifika students within the classroom setting, organising NCEA evening with a Pasifika focus, livestreaming sports and cultural events, including Pasifika poets in our English curriculum)	14%				

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