

# Six weeks full immersion; Te Reo Māori Principal Sabbatical Report

## Author

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## Acknowledgements

Koka Keri (*Tumuaki*)  
Koka Terehia (*Kaiako*)  
Whaea Leah (*Kaiako*)  
Whaea Te Ao (*Kaiako*)  
Whaea Mana (*Hēkeretari*)  
Matua Hone (*Kaitiaki Whenua*)  
Ngā tamariki o Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Kōtuku  
Ngā whānau Board of Trustees o Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Kōtuku  
Ngā whānau o Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Kōtuku

## Purpose, Rationale and Background information

### Professional Study:

- ❖ To learn Te Reo Māori in a full immersion Kura over a five to six week period
- ❖ To learn about Tikanga Māori first hand in relation to students and their learning in a Māori educational setting
- ❖ To be able to learn to mihi as a principal in our school which has a Māori Bi-lingual Unit and is rich in Tikanga Māori

### Personal Study:

- ❖ To learn about whaikaro and its relevance to understanding about different wharehau and their stories on the pou

### Research:

- ❖ To research about the different kaupapa and techniques of whaikaro

### Visiting schools and other institutions:

- ❖ 5/6 weeks Fulltime as a voluntary teacher-aide at Te Kura Kaupapa Māori O Te Kōtuku

### Programme outline

- ❖ Spend the first 5-6 weeks of the year at Te Kura Kaupapa Māori O Te Kōtuku to experience the Tikanga that is associated with starting a school year in a Māori educational setting.
- ❖ Act as a Teacher-aide, assisting in classes with day-to-day tasks and assisting kaiako.
- ❖ In a solely Māori speaking environment; learn to speak basic Te Reo and build on previous learning in a full immersion setting.
- ❖ Be involved in all aspects of daily life at the Marae including:  
Mau Taiaha; Kapa Haka; Te Reo; Tikanga Māori; Powhiri; Haka Powhiri; Tangi; Whaikaro; Kai; Mihi; Pepeha; Whakapapa; Waiata
- ❖ Liaise with the Principal and Kaiako for specific tasks and needs.

### Time commitments of activities

- ❖ Weeks 1-5/6 of Term 1 2012 at Te Kura Kaupapa Māori O Te Kōtuku
- ❖ Weeks 6-10 of Term 1 2012 Rejuvenation, Rest and reflection time
- ❖ Time for reviewing learning at night
- ❖ Time for writing in my learning journal

## Benefits of the sabbatical

### **Benefits to my school:**

- ❖ Time to reflect on the direction of the school
- ❖ Be recharged with energy and enthusiasm to lead our school
- ❖ Be more confident when speaking Te Reo Maōri with our Maōri students and Whanau; and to encourage Ngati Pakeha to continue building closer relationships with their local Marae and Kaumatua
- ❖ Being able to understand the Te Marautanga o Aotearoa with more confidence and engage with kaiako with its implementation at Birdwood School.

### **Benefits to fellow principals:**

- ❖ Encouraging and sharing with colleagues about the importance of Tikanga Maōri in our schools and lives; and how Maōri students need to learn as Maōri.
- ❖ Be able to represent fellow colleagues when needed with mihi on the Marae or other educational settings.

### **Benefits to wider education sector:**

- ❖ Linking with Maōri Educators and stakeholders to continue to improve engagement and success of our young Maōri men; especially those who have been displaced from their traditional Maōri settings, traditions and values.
- ❖ To see more Maōri men and woman leading in our nation in local and nationwide roles
- ❖ To be a role model for young Maōri and an encourager of never giving up!

### **Benefits to myself:**

- ❖ Further my passion and journey in being a part of our Maōri culture and learning Te Reo Maōri
- ❖ Deepen my relationships within the Kura
- ❖ Continue the journey towards one day being able to mihi confidently on the Marae, at school and other educational settings.
- ❖ Become confident with my pepeha
- ❖ Rest and reflect on my time as a principal and think about my future in education
- ❖ Recharge after my first five years as a principal

### **Links to issues important to the school:**

- ❖ Implementation of Te Marautanga O Aotearoa
- ❖ Importance of Maōri at Birdwood School and in our community

### **Links to the school's strategic and annual plan:**

- ❖ **Strategic Plan goal #4** Maōri enjoying educational success as Maōri to achieve both universal outcomes and outcomes that are unique to each learner

#### **Strategic Actions**

1. Use teaching strategies, learning styles and experiences that best suits our Maōri students
2. Improve the transition to school, and to college for Maōri children and their whanau.
3. Build on Professional Development programmes that show what works for and with Maōri students.
4. Te Reo Me Ona Tikanga (To increase level of students' Te Reo)
5. Strengthen the participation of Maōri whānau in their children's learning
6. Use holistic reporting on Student achievement

### **Links to my personal professional development:**

To oversee the consultation process and pending implementation of Te Marautanga o te Aotearoa Curriculum, and ensuring the Board can make an informed decision (Strategic Goal 4)

### **Links to current primary school sector priorities:**

- ❖ Maōri education and raising achievement of Maōri
- ❖ Te Marautanga o Aotearoa

### **Costing schedule**

- ❖ Costs will be covered by myself

### **Reporting intention**

- ❖ Share my learning journal with my Board
- ❖ Share Written report with my Board and wider Sector
- ❖ Share my learning and gratitude with Te Kura Kaupapa Maōri O Te Kōtuku

## **Executive summary**

### **Activities undertaken**

#### **Kaiawhina**

For the first six weeks of the school year I attended Kōtuku Kura as a kaiawhina (Teacher aide). The first activity was into the kitchen and washing dishes. You would be amazed at the korero (conversational) experiences and learning that can take place whilst scrubbing large roasting trays. Everyday Maōri spoken language is fast, full of laughter, and can be said in a load of different ways! So the focus for me in this full immersion setting was whakarongo mai (turn the ears on).

#### **Term tuatahi focus**

The focus for the term was He Mara (The garden), so I set about helping to prepare the mara for the tamariki (Students) to start their mahi (work) there. There was mowing, weeding, clearing and chain-sawing to be done; most enjoyable! There were plenty of opportunities for korero; and I needed to take written instructions in Te Reo with me so I could keep to the kaupapa (No English spoken). Each morning started with karakia and mihi (prayer, welcomes & notices). This was an opportunity to practice my questions and simple conversation in front of the tamariki and kaiako (teachers). Each day there were a range of activities for me to do; preparing mahi, taking photos, supporting students with their mahi, break duties, helping in the wharekai (kitchen), working in the mara, personal research, study and practice of Te Reo Maōri. I kept a workbook of my learning which including; ngā pātai (questions) translations, answers, kupu hou (new phrases and words), drawings, lists and plans.



#### **Te Reo Maōri**

My personal studies of improving my reo included daily revision and practice. I undertook simple sentences, made up of phrases and single words. Each day I prepared my questions I needed to communicate with the tamariki and Kaiako. I would continually ask and re-ask questions so I could be made sense of. Everyone was so patient an understanding; it made the task of learning so much easier. I focused on new words that were used in everyday conversation, and simple phrases to communicate. Constant repetition of the same phrases really helped, and sticking to the same ones each day embedded them into my memory.

## **Mihi (Speak to a group)**

I had many opportunities to mihi and although incredibly nervous about it, I took these opportunities and gave it a go. There was plenty of encouragement and laughter with me when I said funny things that didn't make sense, or I said something rude without realising it! It was a lot of fun. By the end of the six weeks I had the opportunity to mihi at my farewell. My wife came to tautoko (support) me too. I spoke for about four minutes in a bumbled way, but I was able to get my message of gratitude and experiences across. This is an area I really feel I have improved in.

## **Fale**

A major part of my time at Kōtuku was building a whare (fale) for the mara. The plan was to have a structure that had a tepu (table) for students to work at, for planting and mara preparation; a roof to shade nga tamariki, and finally a system to collect water for the large mara (approximately 25 x 10 metres).

My aim was to work with tamariki and teach them how to build, use tools, work together, construct a whare that will last and handle the wind and weather, and lastly a structure that represented Kōtuku Kura and its kaupapa.



## **He Taiaha**

One of my goals was to further my knowledge of whakairo (carving). I felt led to make a taiaha to koha to Koka Keri and the tamariki of Kōtuku Kura as an appreciation for their incredible welcome into their whānau, and for the privilege of being able to be a part of this wonderful kura. The rakau I used was a railway sleeper; a hardwood called Jarrah that was a koha to me from Kaumatua Tom Ngapere. It was a beautiful wood to work with; caramel in colour, soft to carve, flexible, yet very strong and heavy.

It took its shape from a Korero and whakaaro (Way of telling its story) that came to me. This taiaha embodied the elements of Te Aho Matua, colours of the Kura, and represented the kaiako, Hēkeretari, Kaitiaki, whānau, and tamariki. I photographed the process of making the taiaha and documented it ready to make into a book for the tamariki so they could learn about the process and take up the mahi for themselves in the future, or just add to their kete (bag) of understanding around the tikanga (traditions) of making traditional Māori weapons. This book was written in English and then spent several weeks being translated into Te Reo Māori. My special thanks to Matua Lee Tamihere's daughter; Mary Dixon ("Dixon") for her hours of mahi towards translating this book.

I have included my book in both Te Reo Maori and English in the appendix for the purpose of this report. (It remains my intellectual property and must not be reproduced in any way without my permission)

## **Te Wānanga o Aotearoa**

I have enrolled in a university paper at 'Te Wānanga o Aotearoa' called; 'Te Whare Tuu Taua o Aotearoa' (Tuu Taua – Level 4 2012). This paper is a full-time course over eight wānanga (eight full weekends) over 2012. The paper covers all the tikanga for Te Whare Tuu Taua (House of war) and involves indepth research and learning; including written assignments to be completed at each wānanga. For the majority of the time there is mau rakau training from 5.45am in the morning till 1.00pm with breaks for kai and paperwork only; it is an endurance training concept (when you are at your most exhausted is when learning truly is embedded!). There is mahi kainga (homework) involving a personal hauora plan (eating, fitness and training plan) to be completed between each wānanga.

## **Findings**

### **Full Immersion**

Kōtuku Kura is a full immersion Kura Kaupapa Māori, which embodies Te Aho Matua as its curriculum. Te Aho Matua is a way of teaching and learning that encompasses the child. Whānau (family) are absolutely central to the success of students at Kōtuku Kura. The Board of trustees is a whānau board; so all parents are welcome and encouraged to attend monthly meetings. This ensures that the principles of Te Aho Matua are held to and that communication is clear and transparent, and that consensus is achieved around important decisions.

### **Starting the year off...**

To start the year the kaiako had prepared an amazing time to allow the tamariki to get to know each other, and for kaiako to observe tamariki so they could know their students need's explicitly.

For two weeks there were fun days, sports, group activities, pepeha (family tree and your origins), and whakawhanaungatanga (getting to know each other). This was such an important process, because it grounded and reaffirmed students with their whānau and cultural identity. This time allowed children to make friends in a semi social but carefully structured setting.

An important part of the start of the year was for the tamariki to connect with the whenua (ground) and all that was built or connected to it. (You can see in the photo the tamariki touching the fale, as an important part of connecting to the new whare as part of its blessing).



### **Kotahitanga**

During the entire six weeks I observed no fights, swearing or major student behaviour. In my opinion this was due to the rangimarie (peace) and kotahitanga (unity) that was present at all times and reinforced everyday both morning and afternoon, and by the time set aside during the first two weeks for whakawhanaungatanga.

Another significant reason for nga rangimarie and kotahitanga was the use of Tuakana Teina. Each new student and their whānau who enrolled was given a full Powhiri. This process really gave the new student and their whānau a genuine sense of belonging. Tuakana were set up to awhi (support) the new student. Haka, kai, waiata and mihi were all an essential part of this welcome. As a result there wasn't the uneasy feeling of being alone, not knowing anyone in your class and taking a long time to connect with other students. This was a totally embracing process and once completed the new tamariki and their whānau were considered whānau. Unlike many schools I've worked in where there are many inappropriate behaviours seen on a regular basis, due to the normal up's and down's of students relationships; I did not witness this at Kōtuku Kura. I believe the reasons for this was firstly the underpinning Te Aho Matua principles that all staff, students and whānau have complete ownership and understanding of; Secondly, the welcoming process that took away any initial feelings of whakama (unease) or isolation which often causes students to act up or seek attention in order to be noticed or make friends; Thirdly, the highly effective use of tuakana teina on a daily basis (at every opportunity the teina (junior students) were supported and never left to stand in front of everyone and feel shy and close up) Tuakana spoke softly and gently to teina and encouraged them to speak and contribute and become

confident; Fourthly, because the school is whānau based, when speaking in front of an audience it was less intimidating for the tamariki as it was like speaking to your family around the table; Fifthly, every opportunity was taken to reinforce the kaupapa (values and expectations) of the kura. There was hui, mihi, waiata and karakia every morning and afternoon; this was an extremely effective method to ensure a sense of belonging.

### **He Taiaha**

Making Taiaha is a personal, physical, emotional and spiritual undertaking. It is a calling and can be conducted in many different ways, taking differing amounts of time, using different methods and using different protocols. My personal belief is that the taiaha is an extension of your body and so it is unique and different for every person. When making taiaha it is wise to listen to those with experience in this mahi and those who know about the tikanga that belongs to this taonga (treasure). I have been making taiaha for two and a half years now and have found that each time the process was different. I have spent time having korero with many different tangata (people), including Kaumatua from different iwi around the North Island. Each person I've spoken with has shared different tikanga, process and information with me about making taiaha as well as the history and origins of taiaha. I usually get a story, picture or vision come to my mind which stays with me for some time, becoming stronger. These pictures become a korero (story) that describes the taiaha and its purpose; including a personal name. This is what I call the rakau (wood) calling me, and that it is time to start.

### **Learning Te Reo Māori**

I found it best to Learn in phrases rather than single words. Don't try to translate Māori to English to learn Te Reo; it doesn't work that way, as the structure is completely different and sentences are structured in reverse to English, so translating just confuses you and doesn't give the intended meaning. Full immersion language learning is the only way to go! There is no room for let up, just full on learning. At the end of the day my head felt sore from all the new learning! I really appreciate what our ESOL students go through when they come to New Zealand and have to learn our language. I only hope we can all be as patient with second language learners as those at Kōtuku were to me. The thing is with Te Reo is if you don't use it, you'll lose it! I have also found that I am speaking the Reo more effortlessly and sub-consciously. It slips into my English speaking. I constantly find myself using the Te Reo in sentences to explain things; as many concepts and explanations are more clearly expressed using Te Reo. I'm comfortably caught in two worlds.

### **Implications & Conclusions**

My goals now are to use Te Reo Māori daily and as often as I can so that I can maintain what I have learnt and practice it. I plan to continue using Te Reo at school in my Maori-Bilingual classes, at assembly, and in conversation with whānau. Each Thursday when I attend mau taiaha classes I will continue to practice my Reo there too. I attend wānanga each month for a whole weekend, and this is a great place to speak Te Reo.

Maori Tikanga is very close to the teachings of the bible and much of the tikanga is related to the creator Io (The name for God the creator). I learnt about subjects such as Tapu and Noa and how and why these relate to everyday life. Many of my views and understandings have been challenged and clarified. I feel that my Christian walk parallels seamlessly with Tikanga Māori. I plan to continue to live out the tikanga at the appropriate times throughout my work and personal life. Examples of this is: Starting and ending with karakia when having a meeting with whānau or eating kai. Finding out where a person is from before getting straight into the business of a meeting (Making connections).

## **References**

- Let's Learn Māori by Bruce Biggs
- Māori phrasebook and dictionary by Patricia Tauroa
- On-line Māori dictionary: [www.Maoridictionary.co.nz](http://www.Maoridictionary.co.nz)
- Official Version of Te Aho Matua o ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori – Pursuant to Section 155A of the Education Act 1989 (New Zealand Gazette 21<sup>st</sup> Feb, 2008)
- <http://www.twoa.ac.nz> (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa)

## Appendix One: Taiaha book (Te Reo Version)



Te pukapuka by  
Mike Carswell-Griffiths  
2012



KOTAHITANGI

He mihi maioha, he mihi aroha kia koutou e Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Kōtuku i awhina mai i ahau ki te ako i Te Reo Māori me te noho i waenga i te wairua o tō whānau. Ānei he koha, hei tākoha atu kia koutou.

Ngā karu i te wairua o te kura  
Ngā karaka awe i ngā tamariki  
Ngā ma awe i ngā kaiako, tumuaki, Hēkeretari, Kaitiaki me ngā whānau o Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Kōtuku  
Ngā whaikaro, *on ate*, i te whetu kopapa o Te Ao Matua

Nāku noa, Matua Mike



I mua i taku nei tope i te rākau, me mōhio matua koe tōna kaha,

Mā te tiro atu i te ripa (grain) o te rākau, mēnā kua pīrau haere ia, a, mēnā kua wawāhia rānei tōna āhua ka whakatau mēnā he rākau pai hei topea ki raro.

I whakamahia e au i te kani mīhini kia topea i te rākau.

Mā te pene rākau au i tuhia i te auaha o te taiaha.



Mā te kani kōrepe (rip saw) i toro tika me te hanga hoki i ngā pouaka nā ngā tahataha katoa o te rākau,

Mā te waru (hand plane) e whakaenea (smooth) i ngā māka a te kani mīhini.



I whakamahia e au i te whao tīwhana (curved chisel) me te kuru (mallet) ki te wetekina i ngā pīrau me ngā takarepa o runga i te rākau.



Nā te kani kōrepe me te kani ārero (tenon saw) i whakamahia kia kutia i te auaha matua. Mā te kota tarata (rasp file) e hanga te āhua o te taiaha.



I mua i te whakamahi o te kani ārero, ka mākāhia tuatahi kit e pouaka i te upoko me te arero o te taiaha.



Kia mukua i ngā mākā kua waihotia e te kota tarata, ka whakamahia ko te mīhini tāhoru (sander). E 40 te kaha o tōna kakati (Grit).



Mā te whao me te kuru ka timata te whakaauahatia i te upoko. Tokowaru ngā taumata rerekē o ngā pepa tāhoru i whakamahia mo te taiaha katoa kia māeneene (smooth) te āhua; ka timata ki te kakati 40, katahi rā ko te 80, ko te 120, ko te 240, ko te 320, ko te 400, ko te 800 katahi ka mutu ki te kakati 1200 kia puta mai te tiro pērā ki tētahi kārewa karāhe (glass-like surface).



Ka āta whakairohia i ngā karu, kia pai ai te ū atu o ngā paua ki roto. Kia mohiotia rā ka noho kaha te kiri o te taiaha me te kārewa hoki ka whakamahia i tētahi hinu hei āwhinatia i te taiaha, kia maha hoki ngā makitohi (coat). Kia mārō, kia waiawai (soaking) tōna kaha me tōna āhua, me waihotia mo ngā rā e aha nei i waenga i ngā wā makitohi. I tōna otinga, ka whakamahia i te 'Brasso' hei parakena (polish) i te taiaha, katahi kia māeneene tōna hanga ma te whakamahi i tētahi kākā ka aumiri (buff) te taiaha, kia pīataata tōna āhua.



Mā te pene rākau ka mākāhia i ngā wāhi mo ngā raukura. Ka parakatihi i te whio ki runga i tētahi rākau wātea i te tuatahi. Mā te whakamahi i te matatika-katau (right-angle) o te whao, ka āta whakairohia i ngā raukura, me te kopī (delicate) o te haere kia kauaka rā e hē te hanga.



Ka tāpiritia, ka rōrutia (rolled) katahi ka kāpiatia te awe mā ki te Tinana o te taiaha. Katahi ko te awe kahurangi.

Kia noho pūmau te awe ki tōna wāhi ka kopaina tētahi kirikau kua whiria kia kitakita (tightly) te mau.

Kia whakaatu i tōna ataahua katoa ka whakamahia ko tētahi nīra tapi, kia hangaia he pare tikitiki mo te taiaha nei.



I hangaia e ngā karu i te paua.

I āta tapahi e te tangata mā tētahi mīhini kato, katahi mā te hōanga i whakarite i te āhua o te paua.

Ka parakena mā te maitai parakena, kia puta ōna tae katoa o te paua.



Mā te whakamahi i tētahi kāpia tino kaha, ka tāpirihia ngā paua ki ngā karu o te taiaha. Koia rā te mahi whakamutunga mo tēnei wahanga.



Kua whakanoatia e tōku hoa ko Tom Ngapera tōna ingoa, i te taiaha nei. He kaumātua, he 'Pastor' hoki ia ki te whare karakia Papita o Maungawhau.

I whakapai e ia i te awa o Jordan, a, i whakaingoatia e au ko Kotahitanga..



Ko te tikanga o tōna ingoa, nā runga ano i te rangimārie e ora ana i waenga i Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Kōtuku, i whakaaro tika e au koia nei tōna ingoa tika mōnā.

## Appendix Two: Taiaha book (English Version)



Te pukapuka by Matua Mike Carswell-Griffiths  
2012



KOTAHITANGI

He mihi maioha, he mihi aroha kia koutou e Te Kura  
Kaupapa Māori o Te Kōtuku i awhina mai i ahau ki  
te ako i Te Reo Māori me te noho i waenga i te  
wairua o tō whānau. Ānei he koha, hei tākoha atu  
kia koutou.

Ngā karu i te wairua o te kura  
Ngā karaka awe i ngā tamariki  
Ngā ma awe i ngā kaiako, tumuaki, Hēkeretari,  
Kaitiaki me ngā whānau o Te Kura Kaupapa Māori  
o Te Kōtuku  
Ngā whaikaro, *on ate*, i te whetu kopapa o Te Ao  
Matua

Nāku noa, Matua Mike



Look at the wood for grain, splits, rot, strength,  
before deciding where to cut out rakau. Skill saw  
was used to cut out block. Draw out shape of taiaha  
using pencil.



All Edges were then straightened and made square  
using a rip saw. A hand plane was used to smooth  
saw blade marks



Rot and imperfections were removed using a curved  
chisel and mallet.



The basic shape was then cut out using a rip saw and hand tennon saw.  
A rasp file is used to shape the taiaha.



The upuko and arero are marked out using a square and then cut out using a tennon saw



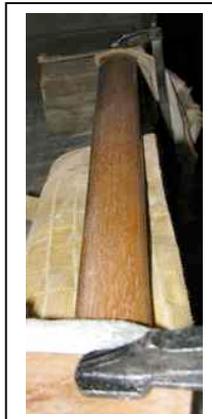
A sander is used to take out the cut marks left from the rasp file. The sand paper used is 40 Grit.



The head is then shaped using chisels and a mallet. The entire taiaha was then sanded with 8 different grades of sand paper; starting with 40 Grit, 80, 120, 240, 320, 400, 800, and finally 1200 grit to make a glass-like surface



The eyes are carefully carved out in preparation for the paua to be inserted. The taiaha is given many coat of teak oil to make the surface and skin strong and durable. Several days must be left in between coats for hardening and soaking deep. The taiaha is then polished with braso and then buff with a smooth cloth



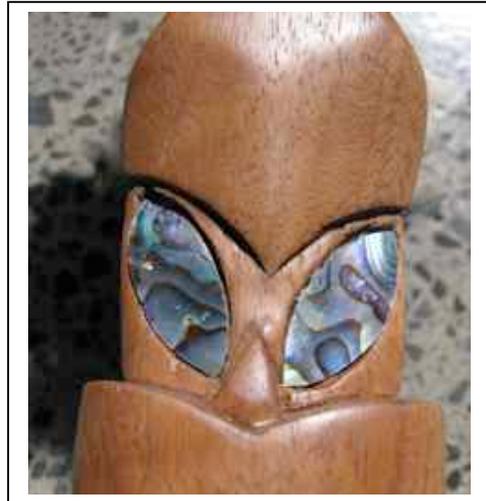
The feathers are marked out using a pencil. The carving is practised on a spare piece of wood first. The feathers are then carved with a right angle chisel and mallet, using small, delicate strokes.



The white awe is taped, then rolled and glued around the Tinana. The blue awe is then attached. Platted leather thronging is then wrapped tightly around the awe to keep it in place. A knotless braid stitch is used, using a darning needle, to give the final effect.



The eyes are made from paua. They are cut out carefully using a hacksaw blade, and then are shaped using a grinder with a smooth stone. The paua is then polished with a metal polish.



The very last task is to set the eyes in place, using strong craft glue.



The taiaha has been blessed by my friend Tom Ngapera who is a kaumatua and the Pastor of Mt Wellington Faith Baptist Church. I named it Kotahitanga and he blessed it with water from the river Jordan.



Kotahitanga is the unity that comes from the peace that lives at Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Kōtuku.