

He Tīwai Mātauranga - Heaton Normal Intermediate School, Christchurch.



*Photo by Ross Cooper -Kaiako
He Tīwai Mātauranga/Heaton
Normal Intermediate School*

When walking along the driveway of Heaton Normal Intermediate school/He Tīwai Mātauranga, your eyes are drawn to a large sculpture at the edge of field near the student counsellor services. It is impressive with its 3-dimensional shape, an infinity symbol with a story of movement and travel around five continents. This is Kotahitanga (unity), a celebration of school diversity, yet also a focus on school belonging and togetherness. The main shape of the sculpture is pīkorua, a never-ending path of life, love and loyalty between people.

The sculpture is testament to a motivated art teacher, Fiona Taylor, and a small group of student ambassadors led from the ESOL team by Cathy Mundy. These students wanted to increase the visibility of the school multilingual and multicultural population, a project which eventually developed into this sculpture. The team describe it as a 'labour of love' through the design, research and placement of motifs to encapsulate everyone.

Fiona worked with students from the cultural group and Extension Art to guide them in deciding how to represent the cultures and values of the school. Much research was required to find inspiring symbols which could be carved for the continents showcased: Oceania, Asia, Africa, Europe, North America and South America.



Look closely and you may see a turtle, a carp, flowers, a celtic knot. The motifs had to be layered together and to sit strongly and proudly within the overall curve of infinity.

In 2019, Fiona arranged for Aaron Smith, one of the wonderful Heaton parents and a talented carver, to help. Aaron sourced the stone for the school and taught the students how to carve it. The construction material is a large block of Oāmaru stone, gifted to the school.

Additional funding was allocated by James Griggs, Principal/Tumukai, to ensure appropriate and safe installation. The sculpture is supported by a wooden archway and strong chain, upcycled materials from a dockyard. A decision was made on its placement in the school and a new home for Kotahitangi was a reality.

More work is anticipated with the addition of seating and planting. The area is going to be developed into a holistic student wellbeing area with a peaceful, calm environment. A place for relaxation, reflection, and spiritual wellbeing. It is a way of living the school values. What an achievement that reflects students and teachers' commitment and love for their school.

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