

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

AT WHIRINAKI WHARE TAONGA



Message from the
Learning Programmes
Specialist, Karen Nel

Kia ora koutou,

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, a perfect time to pause and reflect on all that 2025 has brought us at Whirinaki Whare Taonga. This year we had learning opportunities linked to Kupe Sites, Bodgies to Bogan's, Levon Biss's Microsculpture: The Insect Photography and *Dinosaurs: Surviving Extinction* exhibition. In term 4 we had more 1600 tamariki walking among prehistoric giants, made volcanoes erupt, created fossils, and even touched a real 73-million-year-old Edmontosaurus fossil.

We know the end of the year is a busy time for teachers as you wrap up reports and prepare for 2026. Teaching is never an predictable game, you never quite know how the dice will roll! Whatever next year brings, we've got you covered. Term 1 kicks off with two exciting learning opportunities: **Let's Play, AND The Superlative Artistry of Japan.**

Thank you for your incredible mahi this year. We can't wait to welcome you and your students back in 2026 for more creativity, curiosity, and fun. Meri Kirihimete and a Happy New Year!



LET'S PLAY TERM 1 and 2

TERM 1-2: Jan - 19 July 2026

NE – Year 8: FREE

Let's Play is an exhibition that celebrates the creativity, strategy, and storytelling of board games. Tamariki will explore how **design, rules, and narrative** shape the way we play and interact with others as they engage with real board games throughout the gallery.

Through life-sized displays and interactive stations that will provide learning across **Social Studies, Visual Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Technology**. Each visit is inquiry-rich and aligned with the **Aotearoa New Zealand Curriculum**, sparking curiosity, creativity, and big thinking. Students investigate the **design and symbolism** behind game boards and pieces, linking to **Visual Arts**, where they explore how artistic choices communicate meaning. In **Mathematics**, tamariki apply **spatial reasoning** as they consider movement patterns, pathways, and game mechanics.

In **Social Studies**, students discover how games reflect cultural practices, traditions, and values by exploring the origins of traditional games like chess and the evolution of modern board games over time. Through **Technology**, they examine how games are designed to meet user needs — considering materials, aesthetics, and playability.

Tamariki will also **create their own board game** to take home, applying what they have learned about visual design, storytelling, rules, and user experience.



Exhibition Overview

Let's Play! celebrates the joy, excitement, and occasional frustration of playing games. Through life-sized displays, interactive stations, and real board games to try, ākonga will explore how games connect people, tell stories, and spark imagination across cultures and generations.

This exhibition showcases the fascinating world of board and strategy games — from family favourites like *Monopoly*, *Scrabble*, and *Connect Four*, to traditional games such as chess and cultural classics from around the world. Students will investigate how games are designed, what they express about culture and society, and how they have evolved over time.



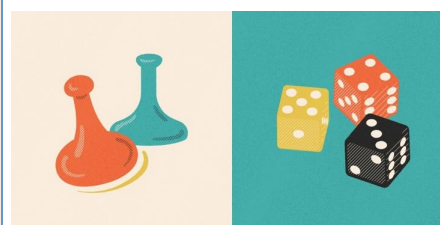
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Our Big Questions This Term

- What makes a great game?
- How do games bring people together?
- How can design and creativity turn ideas into playable experiences?
- What can traditional and modern games teach us about strategy, fairness, and fun?



1. **START**

Welcoming and karakia
A warm welcome.

2.

3.

Interactive presentation about boardgames.

4.

5.

Guided gallery exploration Observation, discussion, and play with interactive game displays.

6.

7.

Creative Workshop

Design your own board game:

8.

Invent characters, symbols, and challenges, then bring it to life through drawing and mixed media.

9. **FINISH**

Reflection

Share creations and game ideas.

THE SUPERLATIVE ARTISTRY OF JAPAN

TERM 1

January – 29 March 2026

NE – Year 8: FREE

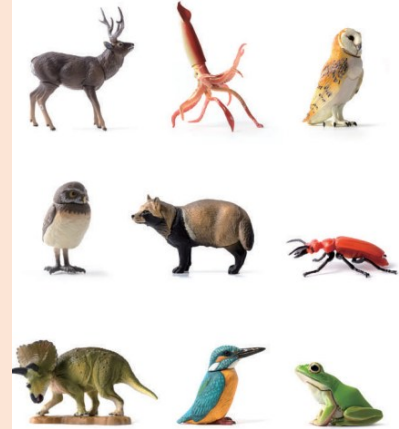
We can learn a lot from each other and from different cultures. In the exhibition ***The Superlative Artistry of Japan***, ākonga will explore the works to understand what they reveal about Japanese customs, values, and how culture is passed on over time — connecting to **Social Sciences**.

Back in the classroom, students will create their own artworks inspired by **Kaiyodo's food art and figures**, exploring how visual art communicates meaning and reflects identity. This links to **Visual Arts**, where students investigate art from different cultures and develop practical skills using materials and techniques inspired by Japanese design.

This learning experience supports both **Social Sciences** and **Visual Arts**, and is fully aligned with the **Aotearoa New Zealand Curriculum** to spark curiosity and creativity.

Exhibition Overview

This exhibition captures Japan's creative culture and spirit through a collection of work from a variety of art genres. Elaborate Meiji era (1868-1912) works are shown alongside traditional arts & crafts, and contemporary art, craft works, food samples, and *shokugan* (small toys sold with candy). All illustrate a strong commitment to craftsmanship and a high level of perfection and often an element of surprise.



Gallery & Workshop Schedule

- **Welcoming and karakia**

A warm welcome.

Presentation about Japanese Culture and introduction to the exhibition.

- **Guided gallery exploration**

Observation, discussion and looking at artworks and encouraging conversation to link to students' culture

- **Creative Workshop**

Tamariki create their own food or toy artworks

- **Reflection & Poroporoaki** – Share creations and game ideas.

Our Big Questions This Term

- How can objects tell the story of a culture?
- What can we learn about ourselves by exploring another culture's art?
- What makes something a masterpiece?
- How do artists across time and cultures keep traditions alive?

PLANNING AHEAD

TERM 2

NUGENT WELCH; SKETCHES FROM THE TRENCHES

4 April—3 July 2026

Nugent Welch was New Zealand's first 'war artist.' The works he made stand as a unique and highly personal record of New Zealand's involvement in the First World War from the perspective of a soldier who served in the trenches. This exhibition explores what it was like on a WW1 battlefield through intimate landscape watercolours, and how people remember and record the past.

CURRICULUM LINKS:

Social Studies and Visual Arts



Sneak Peak

AIR PLAYGROUND

31 October—28 February 2027

Whoosh, swirl, gust, squish, flow, float and more in Air Playground. This touring exhibition gives curious kids the chance to play with air and focus on STEM. Experience hands-on the science of aerodynamics and the amazing invisible elemental force of air and embark on a journey of scientific exploration, discovery and fun – let science blow you away! An amazing way to end the year tighter.



Primary and Intermediate School Visits

We welcome schools to visit Whirinaki Whare Taonga and take part in our booked education programmes with our Learning Programmes Specialist.

Booking in advance is recommended.

What to Expect

- Hands-on gallery experiences where students explore and discuss artworks.
- Opportunities for students to share ideas, ask questions, and connect with the themes.
- Creative workshops where learning is extended through practical activities.
- Flexible programming—adaptable to suit the needs of your learners.

Cost: There is **no charge** for our education classes.

Classroom Connection

Visit includes a **curriculum-linked resource pack** with:

- Creative, themed activities.
- Learning extensions.
- Online resources for further exploration.
- Ideas for before and after your gallery experience.

PLANNING YOUR VISIT

Getting Here

Public Transport: Just a 5-minute walk from Upper Hutt Station (bus and train).

Bus/Car: Parking and bus drop-off are behind Whirinaki near H2O Xstream.

During Your Visit

Morning Tea/Lunch: Indoor space available if needed.

Bags & Jackets: Space is provided for storage during your visit.

Book Your Visit

Karen Nel

Learning Programmes Specialist

T +64 (4) 527 2149

karen.nel@whirinakiarts.org.nz

