

RESEARCH BRIEF

Improving teachers' experiences with student behaviour through a more inclusive school culture

**Findings from National Survey
of Primary Schools Uiuinga
ā-Motu o ngā Kura**

Mengnan Li and Jessie Dong



Rangahau Mātauranga o Aotearoa | New Zealand Council for Educational Research
Te Pakokori
Level 4, 10 Brandon St
Wellington
New Zealand

www.nzcer.org.nz

<https://doi.org/10.18296/rep.0097>

© New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 2026



RESEARCH BRIEF

Improving teachers' experiences with student behaviour through a more inclusive school culture

Findings from National Survey of Primary Schools Uiuinga ā-Motu o ngā Kura

Mengnan Li and Jessie Dong

2026



He ihirangi | Contents

Key messages	1
1. Background	2
Challenging student behaviour	2
<i>Definitions and forms of challenging behaviour vary</i>	2
<i>Student behaviour can impact both teaching and learning environments</i>	2
Mediating role of teachers' confidence	3
School culture and wellbeing training	4
<i>Inclusive school culture</i>	4
<i>Training to support student wellbeing</i>	4
2. What we wanted to find out	6
3. What we did	7
Who we asked	7
What we asked	7
How we analysed the data	8
4. What we found	9
Relations between the factors	9
Teachers' confidence to teach about diversity mediates how school conditions support their experiences and wellbeing	10
5. Key messages and implications	12
References	13
Appendix	15



Tables

Table 1	Factors and sample items	7
Table 2	Correlations between different factors	9
Table A1	Descriptive statistics by factors and items related to school culture and training to support students' wellbeing	15
Table A2	Descriptive statistics by factors and items related to teachers' confidence, experiences with student behaviours, and wellbeing	15

Figures

Figure 1	Relations between school culture and support, teaching beliefs, student behaviours, and teacher wellbeing	5
Figure 2	Theoretical framework	8
Figure 3	Our model showing statistically significant paths	11



Key messages

This brief draws on data from the 2024 National Survey of Primary School Teachers to explore how teachers' experience with student behaviour can be improved by strengthening school conditions and teachers' professional confidence.

Consistent with international trends, Aotearoa New Zealand is experiencing a rise in challenging student behaviour in classrooms. Managing such behaviour has become one of the most demanding aspects of teachers' work and is frequently associated with increased stress and workload. Findings from the 2024 National Survey of Primary School Teachers show that 82% of teachers (up from 68% in 2019) had experienced disruptive student behaviour that caused serious disruption to their teaching. At the same time, the survey shows that over half of new teachers (53% of those with 0–5 years' experience) identified "classroom management and behaviour approaches" as a priority for future professional learning and development (M. Li et al., 2025). These findings highlight a growing need to better support teachers in navigating students' behavioural challenges in their work.

Using structural equation modelling, this study examined how school conditions influence teachers' experiences through the mediating role of teachers' confidence. The results suggest that when schools foster an inclusive culture (e.g., diversity is valued and teachers feel supported) and when teachers receive Professional Learning and Development (PLD) that helps them understand and respond to students' wellbeing needs, teachers are more likely to develop confidence in teaching about diversity in their classrooms. It appears that this confidence then shapes both teachers' experiences with student behaviour and their own wellbeing. It serves as a key mechanism through which supportive school environments translate into teachers' day-to-day classroom experiences.

The findings are consistent with previous research showing that confident teachers are more likely to interpret behavioural challenges as manageable and respond effectively in complex situations. As a result, they are less likely to experience severe disruptions to their teaching and less likely to feel unsafe in their work, which in turn enhances their own wellbeing.

In sum, the findings tell an important story about how schools can better support teachers in the face of increasing behavioural challenges. Rather than focusing solely on reducing student misbehaviour, schools can strengthen the conditions that enable teachers to feel confident and supported in responding to such behaviour.



1. Background

The National Survey of Schools is part of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research's (NZCER's) Te Pae Tawhiti programme of research. NZCER has run a National Survey of Primary Schools regularly since 1989, with the latest survey of primary schools taking place from October to December 2024. A complete report of the latest 2024 national survey can be accessed here: [Uiuinga ā-Motu o ngā Kura; National Survey of Schools | New Zealand Council for Educational Research](https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/projects/national-survey).¹

This research brief is part of a series of topic-based publications, which present National Survey findings of interest to policymakers and school leaders, and highlight areas worthy of further exploration.

Challenging student behaviour

Definitions and forms of challenging behaviour vary

Challenging student behaviour is commonly defined as actions that disrupt teaching and learning and may result in harm to people or property (Levin & Nolan, 2014). The literature highlights that challenging behaviour is not limited to extreme incidents but includes a wide spectrum of everyday classroom disruptions that can interfere with learning and classroom functioning. These behaviours range from relatively low-level disruptions, such as talking out of turn, inattention, or off-task behaviour, to more overt actions such as arguing, leaving seats without permission, or showing disrespect toward others (for a review, see Karasova & Nehyba, 2025). However, while these behaviours are widely recognised, perceptions of what constitutes challenging behaviour and how serious it is can vary (Aas et al., 2024).

Evidence suggests that challenging student behaviour is increasingly common in classrooms. The 2024 National Survey of Primary School Teachers found that 82% of teachers (up from 68% in 2019) had experienced student behaviour causing serious disruption to their teaching. This trend reflects a range of contributing factors identified in existing research, such as home and family circumstances (e.g., limited parental availability), broader social conditions (e.g., socioeconomic disadvantage), student-related factors (e.g., disabilities), school-level conditions (e.g., large class sizes), and wider policy contexts (Patnaik et al., 2022). In addition, it was also found that teachers' beliefs, their perceptions about causes of and solutions for challenging behaviour vary considerably, which can further influence their experiences with student behaviour and their choice of management strategies (Patnaik et al., 2022).

Student behaviour can impact both teaching and learning environments

The literature is replete with empirical evidence showing that challenging student behaviour affects not only classmates and learning outcomes, but also teachers' professional experiences (Jamil et al., 2022). Managing student behaviour is often considered as one of the most challenging areas of the teaching profession and has been associated with higher levels of stress (Longmuir et al., 2025), anxiety (Gidlund, 2018), burnout (Hastings & Bham, 2003), and reduced job satisfaction (Worth et al., 2026).

¹ <https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/projects/national-survey>



The literature suggests that student behaviour plays a central role in shaping teachers' day-to-day emotional experiences and longer-term wellbeing. Challenging student behaviour is associated with teachers' emotional responses during teaching. For example, more negative emotions in the classroom, such as anger and anxiety, are found to be related to disruptive behaviour (P.-H. Li et al., 2022). In some cases, particularly when aggressive or persistent, student behaviour may also affect teachers' sense of safety in the classroom or school environment (Longmuir et al., 2025)—a factor explored in this research brief. These experiences are not confined to individual lessons; rather, they accumulate over time and contribute to teachers' broader sense of wellbeing and professional sustainability.

Mediating role of teachers' confidence

Teachers' experiences of student behaviour are shaped not only by the behaviours themselves but also by how teachers perceive, interpret, and respond to them. Drawing on appraisal theory, emotional responses are understood to arise from individuals' interpretations of events rather than the events alone (Lazarus, 1991). In classrooms, this means that teachers may *react differently* to the same behaviour depending on their beliefs and perceived capability (e.g., their teaching confidence—a factor explored in this research brief). The rich evidence around teacher self-efficacy provides an important framework for understanding these differences. Defined as teachers' beliefs about their ability to bring about positive student change (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), teachers self-efficacy shapes both how teachers interpret and experience challenging behaviour. For example, teachers with higher self-efficacy may show greater resilience and confidence to navigate challenges, and view challenges as opportunities for learning and adaptation rather than merely as threats to their teaching (Woodcock et al., 2023).

In addition, teachers' beliefs also shape how they respond to and manage such behaviours in the classroom. Different behaviour management strategies vary in their effectiveness, which in turn, influence future student behaviours and teachers' wellbeing. For example, compared to proactive and student-centred strategies (e.g., providing clear explanations, structured instructions, and supportive feedback), reactive responses (e.g., reprimands) often produce only short-term or limited effects and may escalate disruptive behaviour (Karasova & Nehyba, 2025).

Teachers with higher self-efficacy are more likely to adopt proactive and inclusive behaviour management strategies (Ni Ógáin, 2024; Woodcock, Hitches, et al., 2023), whereas teachers who feel less confident in managing classroom behaviour tend to use reactive responses (Woodcock et al., 2023) and negative strategies, such as threats and punishments, or neutral approaches like closely monitoring students' behaviour (Andreou & Rapti, 2010). Andreou and Rapti (2010) further explained that this tendency is stronger when teachers believe that students' behaviour problems are caused by family-related factors, which shows that teachers' beliefs about the causes of students' behaviour also influence how they respond. It is also documented that once teachers develop a deeper understanding of their students, they are better able to identify the underlying causes of challenging behaviour, which can foster greater empathy, support more inclusive teaching practices, and reduce reliance on exclusionary responses (Stanforth & Rose, 2018).



School culture and wellbeing training

Inclusive school culture

Research consistently shows that school culture plays an important role in shaping student behaviour and classroom climate. Schools characterised by positive cultures and strong support systems tend to foster more constructive behavioural environments. In these settings, teachers are more likely to remain in the profession and report greater job satisfaction (Worth et al., 2026).

Of particular importance is the presence of an *inclusive culture* (a factor explored in this research brief). This is particularly important for behaviour management, as students displaying behavioural difficulties are often perceived as more challenging to include, and teachers tend to hold more negative attitudes toward their inclusion (Gidlund, 2018). Differences in the ethos of inclusion held by schools can therefore influence how behaviour is understood and managed, which shapes teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and their different teaching practices (Ni Ógáin, 2024).

In addition, inclusive school culture also appears to strengthen teachers' confidence in supporting diverse learners and managing challenging behaviours (Hosford & O'Sullivan, 2016). For example, Hosford and O'Sullivan (2016) suggest that when teachers perceive their school culture as positive and supportive, they are more likely to feel confident in inclusive teaching, view challenging behaviours more positively, and feel more capable of managing commonly encountered behavioural issues.

Training to support student wellbeing

The evidence reviewed above clearly highlights the importance of supporting teachers to better understand student wellbeing, reflect on their own beliefs, and strengthen their confidence in inclusive education. These elements represent a critical foundation for managing challenging behaviour effectively.

However, many teachers worldwide are shown to be unprepared for classroom management and behaviour support (Shank, 2023). This lack of preparation has broader implications. It not only undermines teachers' confidence and ability to navigate behavioural challenges (Moore et al., 2024) but may also lead to increased teacher stress, and, in some cases, decisions to leave the profession (Worth et al., 2026). In Aotearoa New Zealand, there is a strong demand for further Professional Learning and Development (PLD) in classroom management and behaviour-related approaches. The 2024 National Survey found that over half (53%) of new teachers (0–5 years' experience) identified "classroom management and behaviour approaches" as a priority for future PLD (M. Li et al., 2025).

In this context, ongoing professional learning and support are essential for strengthening teachers' skills, confidence, and emotional resilience. Training that helps teachers to understand student behaviour and their wellbeing is particularly important, especially where students may be experiencing complex social and emotional challenges. As some challenging behaviours may reflect underlying distress or unmet needs (Southall, 2024), developing teachers' ability to recognise early warning signs and trauma-related responses can enable more timely and supportive responses (a factor explored in this research brief). Southall (2024) further explained that responding to trauma-related behaviours requires teachers to develop a deep understanding of how trauma affects individual students and manifests in classroom behaviour. This understanding is necessary to design targeted and sustained interventions. At the same time, training should also support teachers in managing their own emotional responses when dealing with complex behavioural situations.

Figure 1 presents a summary of the key relationships outlined in this background section, providing a visual overview to support reader understanding.



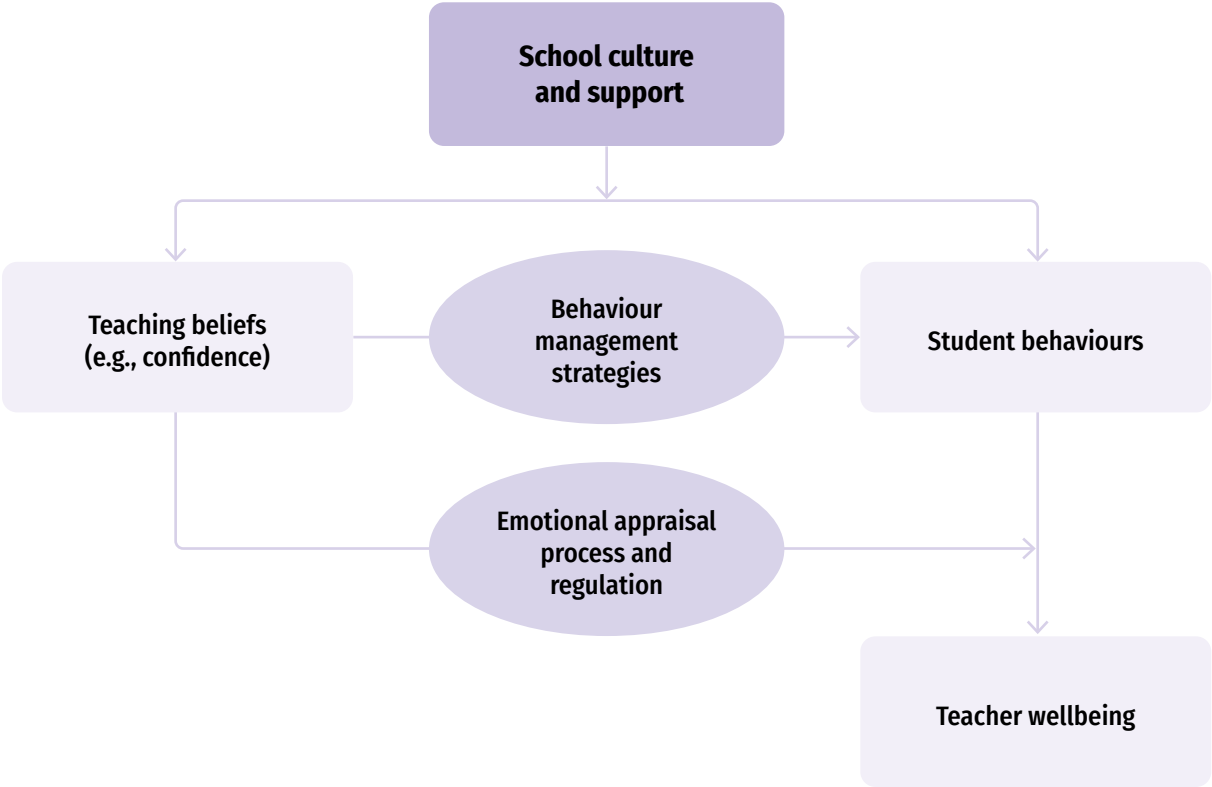


FIGURE 1 Relations between school culture and support, teaching beliefs, student behaviours, and teacher wellbeing



2. What we wanted to find out

This research brief examines how teachers' confidence in teaching about diversity mediates the relations between school culture, PLD, and teachers' experiences with student behaviour and their own wellbeing. In particular, it explores enabling conditions—such as an inclusive school culture and PLD to support student wellbeing—that may strengthen teachers' confidence in teaching about diversity. It also investigates whether and how these conditions influence teachers' experiences with student behaviour and, in turn, their own wellbeing.

Research Questions

- How do school culture and PLD shape teachers' experiences with student behaviour?
- What role does teachers' confidence play in shaping their experiences with student behaviour and, in turn, teachers' wellbeing?

Building on the research literature, this study focuses on five factors to understand how the school culture and PLD and teachers' confidence help shape their experiences with student behaviours and their own wellbeing.

A. School culture and training

- Factor 1: Inclusive school culture
- Factor 2: Training to support student wellbeing


B. Teaching confidence

- Factor 1: Teachers' confidence to teach about diversity

C. Teachers' experiences

- Factor 1: Teachers' experiences with student behaviours

D. Teachers' wellbeing

- Factor 1: Teachers' enjoyment and stress
- 

3. What we did

The 2024 national survey engaged principals and teachers from a nationally representative sample of all English-medium full primary, contributing, and intermediate schools in Aotearoa New Zealand. This research brief draws on data from the teacher survey only.

Who we asked

Data collection took place from 16 October to 5 December 2024. Of the 324 schools invited, 49% ($n = 158$) returned at least one teacher response. After data cleaning, we obtained 639 valid teacher responses from 148 schools, resulting in a 46% school response rate. The responses are nationally representative by School Equity Index (EQI) Groups and broadly representative by area and region. All technical information, including a full demographic breakdown of teacher responses, is reported in the full report² (M. Li et al., 2025).

This research brief draws on responses from 459 teachers who completed all questions that were included in the factors we explored below.

What we asked

We analysed teacher responses to survey questions that fall within the five factors in Table 1 (see Appendix for the full list of items):

TABLE 1 Factors and sample items

Scale	Factor	Sample items
School culture and training	Inclusive school culture	"Our school sees all forms of student diversity as a resource and a strength, not as a difficulty."
	Training to support student wellbeing	"I have had sufficient training to recognise trauma-related responses."
Teaching confidence	Teachers' confidence to teach about diversity	"I have the knowledge and resources to teach students about cultural diversity, including language and identity."
Teachers' experiences	Teachers' experiences with student behaviours	"At this school, I have felt unsafe in my class."
Teachers' wellbeing	Teachers' enjoyment and stress	"The level of work-related stress in my job is manageable."

2 <https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/national-survey-2024-primary-teachers>



How we analysed the data

Figure 2 shows the model that presents the hypothesised relations between school culture and training, teachers' confidence to teach about diversity, teachers' experience with student behaviours, and teacher wellbeing. The model examines the role of teachers' confidence in shaping their experiences with student behaviour and in turn their own wellbeing. The model also explores whether and how teachers' confidence mediates the relations between school-level conditions and teachers' personal experiences.

Quantitative data analysis included descriptive statistics (see Appendix for details), factor analysis, and path analysis. These methods allowed us to examine how school conditions contribute to teachers' experiences with student behaviour and their own wellbeing through teachers' confidence to teach about diversity. It is important to note, however, that these analyses do not allow causal conclusions to be drawn.

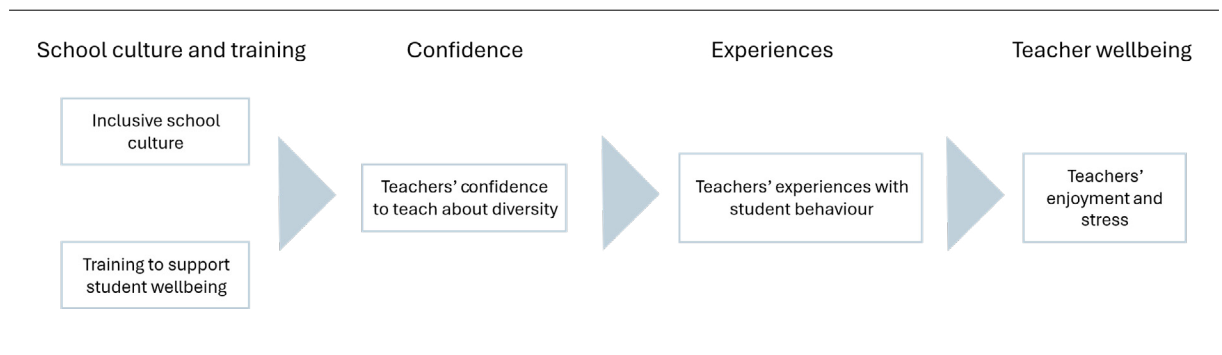


FIGURE 2 Theoretical framework



4. What we found

Relations between the factors

Table 2 shows the correlations between different factors. The three strongest statistically significant associations observed across the different scales were:

- **Training to support student wellbeing** and **Confidence to teach about diversity** ($r = .46$)
- **Teachers' experiences with student behaviour** and **Teachers' enjoyment and stress** ($r = .33$).
- **Inclusive school culture** and **Teachers' confidence to teach about diversity** ($r = .31$)

Inclusive school culture was found to be statistically significant related to **Training to support student wellbeing** ($r = .33$).

TABLE 2 Correlations between different factors ($n = 459$)

Scale	School culture and training		Teaching confidence	Teachers' experiences	Teachers' wellbeing
	Inclusive school culture	Training to support student wellbeing	Teachers' confidence to teach about diversity	Teachers' experiences with student behaviour	Teachers' enjoyment and stress
Inclusive culture	1				
Training to support student wellbeing	0.33***	1			
Teachers' confidence to teach about diversity	0.31***	0.46***	1		
Teachers' experiences with student behaviour	0.26***	0.10*	0.14*	1	
Teachers' enjoyment and stress	0.22***	0.13**	0.05	0.33***	1

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Teachers' confidence to teach about diversity mediates how school conditions support their experiences and wellbeing

Figure 3 shows hypothesised relations among various factors. The structural equation model highlights the mediating role of **teachers' confidence to teach about diversity**, which is predicted by school conditions and, in turn, contributes to teachers' experiences with student behaviour and their own wellbeing.

Key findings include:

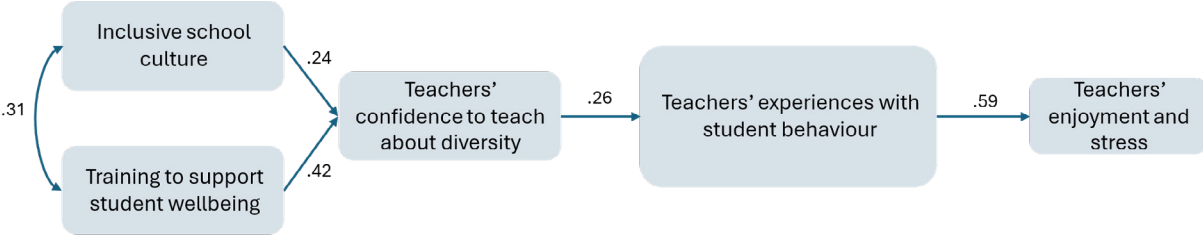
- **Inclusive school culture** and **Training to support student wellbeing** were positively related to each other.
- Both **Inclusive school culture** and **Training to support student wellbeing** positively predicted **Teachers' confidence to teach about diversity**, with training to support student wellbeing being a stronger predictor.
- **Teachers' confidence to teach about diversity** was a moderate predictor of **Teachers' experiences with student behaviour**.
- **Teachers' experiences with student behaviour** emerged as a strong predictor of **Teacher wellbeing**.

The model suggests that inclusive school environments and wellbeing-related PLD can strengthen teachers' confidence to teach about diversity, which in turn reduces negative experiences associated with student behaviour and ultimately supports teachers' wellbeing.

In particular, the model highlights **teachers' confidence to teach about diversity as a key mediating factor** linking school-level conditions (such as inclusive culture and PLD) to teachers' everyday classroom experiences. This finding aligns with existing literature showing the key role of teachers' beliefs and confidence in shaping how they experience and respond to student behaviour. This finding needs to be understood in relation to the evidence identified in previous studies where teachers' confidence not only influences emotional regulation and behaviour interpretation, but also teachers' use of behaviour management strategies. One possible explanation is that when teachers feel more confident and supported by their school environment, they are less likely to perceive challenging student behaviours as threatening or overwhelming. Instead, they may interpret such behaviours as manageable aspects of teaching. Another possible explanation is that greater confidence to teach about diversity suggests that teachers are better equipped to respond more effectively, increasing the likelihood that they will adopt proactive and supportive strategies rather than reactive responses when addressing behavioural challenges. Given that proactive approaches are generally more effective in managing student behaviours, teachers with greater confidence to teach about diversity may be less likely to experience severe or escalating disruptions compared with those who lack sufficient PLD, support, or confidence.

The model further highlights the importance of **teachers' experiences with student behaviour as a strong predictor of teacher wellbeing**. Teachers who feel safer in their classrooms and schools and experience fewer disruptions to their teaching are more likely to report positive wellbeing outcomes, such as enjoying their job and perceiving their work-related stress as manageable.





CFI: .970
TLI: .971
RMSEA: .079
SRMR: .085

Control for EQI, Years of teaching experiences

Note: .1 = weak, .3 = moderate, .5 = strong

FIGURE 3 Our model showing statistically significant paths



5. Key messages and implications

The findings from this study suggest that strengthening an inclusive school culture and providing relevant PLD to support student wellbeing may strengthen teachers' confidence to teach about diversity, which in turn can improve both their professional experiences with student behaviours and their own wellbeing.

Teachers' experiences with student behaviour do not happen in isolation. Their experiences are shaped by the environment they work in, the support they receive, and how confident they feel to teach about diversity. The model suggests that when schools create supportive and inclusive conditions, teachers are better equipped to navigate the everyday realities of the classroom.

This research brief shifts the focus from managing student behaviour itself to considering what schools and education systems can do to better support teachers, particularly in the context of increasing stress associated with challenging student behaviours. The findings show that improving teacher wellbeing may not depend only on reducing student behaviour challenges themselves. Instead, improving teacher wellbeing may also depend on strengthening the conditions that help teachers feel confident and supported when those challenges arise. By fostering inclusive school cultures and providing meaningful PLD in supporting student wellbeing, schools can help teachers feel more capable in their roles, which in turn will further benefit both teachers and the students they support.

This research highlights the role of teacher confidence to teach about diversity in shaping New Zealand teachers' experiences with student behaviour. It remains less clear which specific teaching practices are most influenced by teachers' confidence to teach about diversity and how these practices contribute to safer and more supportive classroom environments in the New Zealand context. Future research could explore in greater detail how teachers' confidence shapes their behaviour management approaches and how these practices influence both student behaviour and teachers' sense of safety and wellbeing.



References

- Aas, H. K., Uthus, M., & Løhre, A. (2024). Inclusive education for students with challenging behaviour: Development of teachers' beliefs and ideas for adaptations through Lesson Study. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 39(1), 64–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2023.2191107>
- Andreou, E., & Rapti, A. (2010). Teachers' causal attributions for behaviour problems and perceived efficacy for class management in relation to selected interventions. *Behaviour Change*, 27(1), 53–67. <https://doi.org/10.1375/bech.27.1.53>
- Gibson, S., & Dembo, M. H. (1984). Teacher efficacy: A construct validation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76(4), 569–582. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.76.4.569>
- Gidlund, U. (2018). Teachers' attitudes towards including students with emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream school: A systematic research synthesis. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 17, 45–63. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.17.2.3>
- Hastings, R. P., & Bham, M. S. (2003). The relationship between student behaviour patterns and teacher burnout. *School Psychology International*, 24(1), 115–127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034303024001905>
- Hosford, S., & O'Sullivan, S. (2016). A climate for self-efficacy: The relationship between school climate and teacher efficacy for inclusion. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20(6), 604–621. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2015.1102339>
- Jamil, F. M., Emerson, A., McKown, G., & Stephan, A. T. (2022). The struggle is real: An investigation of preschool teachers' perceptions of students' challenging behaviors through reflective writing. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 50(8), 1395–1405. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-021-01267-1>
- Karasova, J., & Nehyba, J. (2025). Novice teachers' classroom behaviour management: Situations, responses and impact on student behaviour. *British Educational Research Journal*, 51(5), 2116–2141. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.4166>
- Lazarus, R. S. (1991). Progress on a cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotion. *American Psychologist*, 46(8), 819–834. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.46.8.819>
- Levin, J., & Nolan, J. F. (2014). *Principles of classroom management: A professional decision-making model* (7th ed.), Pearson.
- Li, M., MacDonald, J., Boyd, S., Bolstad, R., Rowe-Williams, J., Dong, J., Durie, K., Smaill, E., & Campell, N. (2025). *Primary school teachers' perspectives from the 2024 National Survey Uiuinga ā-Motu o ngā Kura*. New Zealand Council for Educational Research. <https://doi.org/10.18296/rep.0081>
- Li, P.-H., Mayer, D., & Malmberg, L.-E. (2022). Teacher well-being in the classroom: A micro-longitudinal study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 115, 103720. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103720>
- Longmuir, F., McKay, A., Gallo Cordoba, B., Allen, K.-A., & Phillips, M. (2025). Australian teachers' perceptions of safety, violence and limited support in their workplaces. *Journal of School Violence*, 24(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2024.2385893>

- Moore, T. C., Daniels, S., Taylor, K. L. H., Oliver, R. M., Chow, J., & Wehby, J. H. (2024). Supporting teachers' effective classroom and behavior management: What do teachers tell us? *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 68(1), 60–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2022.2158160>
- Ni Ógáin, E. (2024). *Exploring the relationships between teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, self-efficacy, behaviour management strategies, and use of exclusion in UK classrooms* [Doctoral thesis, University of East Anglia]. <https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/id/eprint/95287/>
- Patnaik, S., Sharma, U., & Subban, P. (2022). Who is responsible for students' challenging behaviour? A study of the causal attributions of teachers to challenging behaviour in primary schools in West Bengal, India. *Disabilities*, 2(1), 56–72. <https://doi.org/10.3390/disabilities2010005>
- Shank, M. K. (2023). Novice teachers' training and support needs in evidence-based classroom management. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 67(4), 197–208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2023.2195361>
- Southall, A. (2024). The trauma challenge: How teachers experience students with complex trauma. *British Journal of Special Education*, 51(1), 3–14. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12487>
- Stanforth, A., & Rose, J. (2018). 'You kind of don't want them in the room': Tensions in the discourse of inclusion and exclusion for students displaying challenging behaviour in an English secondary school. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 24(12), 1253–1267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1516821>
- Woodcock, S., Hitches, E., & Manning, A. (2023). 'The hardest part is...': Teacher self-efficacy and inclusive practice. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 5, 100289. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2023.100289>
- Worth, J., Del Pozo Segura, J. M., & Kuhn, L. (2026). *What helps to improve teacher retention? A pathway analysis of factors affecting retention*. National Foundation for Educational Research. https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/3stjkeac/what_helps_to_improve_teacher_retention.pdf



Appendix

TABLE A1 **Descriptive statistics by factors and items related to school culture and training to support student wellbeing (n = 459)**

Factor 1 School's inclusive culture		Disagreement %	Neutral %	Agreement %
We have school-wide support to understand and address biases we may have as teachers.		13	29	57
Our school sees all forms of student diversity as a resource and a strength, not as a difficulty.		6	19	75
All staff think it is possible to address the barriers to learning that are experienced by students who need learning support.		15	20	65
Factor 2 Training to support student wellbeing				
I have had sufficient training to recognise mental health warning signs in students.		29	27	44
I have had sufficient training to recognise trauma-related responses.		25	27	48

TABLE A2 **Descriptive statistics by factors and items related to teachers' confidence, experiences with student behaviours, and wellbeing (n = 459)**

Factor 3 Teachers' confidence to teach about diversity		Disagreement %	Neutral %	Agreement %
I have the knowledge and resources to teach students about ...	Cultural diversity, including language and identity	5	17	79
	Religious diversity	25	27	47
	Diversity of abilities and disabilities (e.g., neurodiversity)	10	22	68
	Diversity in gender identity or sexual orientation	35	36	29
Factor 4 Teachers' experiences with student behaviour		Yes, frequently %	Yes, occasionally %	No/never %
At this school, I felt unsafe in the school grounds, hall, corridors or other areas outside my class (e.g., when on duty).		3	18	80
At this school, I have felt unsafe in my class.		2	20	78
I have experienced student behaviour that causes serious disruption to my teaching.		28	55	18
Factor 5 Teachers' enjoyment and stress		Disagreement %	Neutral %	Agreement %
I enjoy my job.		3	7	90
The level of work-related stress in my job is manageable.		29	27	45

