

Most schools are based on a 19th Century model and build innovations on old foundations. The Villa Education Trust model was created to suit students learning in the 21st Century and brings an ideal means of teaching and learning to the information age. Our Designated Character Schools are based on the Villa Education Trust model. The programme involves all students in fantastic learning experiences and caters for all intelligence traits and learning styles. Academic standards are high and expectations of the students are both demanding and fully supported. Teaching staff are given minimal administrative tasks as their prime focus is to teach to the best of their ability.

Our Vision:

Through effective teaching, quality facilities, an optimal day structure, and an integrated curriculum – to allow young people to develop and learn to give them a base for excellence in all spheres of life.

The aims of our Designated Character School are:

- To provide a window of opportunity for outstanding learning for students in Years 7 to 10.
- To play a significant part in preparing students for full and effective participation in their future academic, cultural, sporting, social and working lives.
- To provide a learning environment that is thorough, innovative and able to be applied to the best advantage to each student through individualized education.

Our Values:

- Excellence in learning.
- Cooperation among students, families and the community.
- Building of personal character through applied Christian values.
- A strong emphasis on thinking skills and students understanding how they think and learn.

Special features of our Designated Character School:

- A small school environment.
- A student:teacher ratio of no more than 15:1.
- An Integrated Project Based Curriculum.
- Individualised education for each student.
- A modified day structure to allow excellent learning outside of the classroom and the use of community resources.
- Excellent learning resources -including up to date and thoughtfully used ICT.

The schools design has a number of key features. The teacher: student ratio is no more than 15:1 so that students become very well known in terms of their strengths, weaknesses and interests. This allows for high quality feedback to students and their families on a very regular basis. All students have individual aspects to their programmes which allow those with very high ability to be well catered for as well as students who bring a range of varying ability levels.

Until 12.50pm English, Social Studies, Maths, Science, and Technology are taught following the New Zealand Curriculum. During this time students also have an independent hour (with assistance available) each morning to work on cross curricula (integrated) projects with the aim of developing a wide range of knowledge and as a skill set that includes: thinking, planning, researching, writing up, referencing, organizing and presenting. The tasks involved take into account all learning styles. Students do eight five week projects a year covering: Architecture, Animals, Flight and Space, Reactions, Inventions, NZ Places and People, Spanish, Shakespeare at the Globe, Business in Action and many others.

The afternoon programme covers Music, Art, Sport, Community Learning and Community Service. Music and Art are taken by specialists in their fields. Sport is taught in five week modules using high quality local facilities and specialist coaches. Community Learning involves field trips and guest speakers and specialist tutors coming in to the schools. Community Service is a major aspect of the programme with whole school Community Service programmes that focus both globally and locally.

The values in the schools are openly based on the principles of Christian faith. Students come from all backgrounds, and expectations are high in terms of effort, behaviour, inter-student relationships with each other and respect towards all those who interact within the schools' community. The staff/parent relationships are a key feature of the model is this partnership.

When students move on they take with them documented improvements in their ability levels and skills, and go on to do well over the range of qualification options in either their zoned high school or a chosen private school. Our experience is that they adjust extremely well to their new Year 11 environment using the skills and abilities honed in the Middle School environment to their advantage. We hear particularly of the value of this project work in their development as independent learners.

For more information on the schools please see www.southauckland.school.nz, www.westauckland.school.nz