

# PROSPECTUS

YEARS 1-6

**ADTANHI** UNLIMITED  
DISCOVERY









**KIA ORA KOUTOU**

## **BEING SUCCESSFUL IN THE 21ST CENTURY REQUIRES KNOWING HOW TO LEARN.**

Children at our schools today are likely to have several careers in their lifetime.

To be successful in this environment our children must develop strong critical thinking and interpersonal communication skills in order to navigate an increasingly fluid, interconnected and complex world. Meeting this challenge demands changes in the way parents think about learning, the way teachers teach and the way learners learn. Every person needs to feel and develop a love for lifelong learning.

At Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery we believe that we have the answer to this challenge. We are a special character state school where students are able to follow their passions and interests and are central in directing their own learning. We do this so that the simple joy and enthusiasm they have for their learning is retained throughout their lives.

Learning can happen at any time and any place and is not locked within our school gates. We pride ourselves on using our city and community as a learning resource and thus taking advantage of the best people and places that the local area has to offer.

I invite you to have a closer look at this prospectus to find out how we cultivate a love of lifelong learning. We also encourage you to visit Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery and feel the energy and enthusiasm for learning.

Steven Mustor - Director

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery

# OUR SPECIAL CHARACTER...

# INNOVATIVE, HOLISTIC, INDIVIDUAL

The 21st century is demanding so-called 'higher-order' skills such as analysing, evaluating and synthesising information, problem solving and social and emotional skills. This will become even more pressing in the future – not only for businesses, but for entire societies.

At Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery we believe that we rise to this challenge. We are a special character school with a fundamental tenet that the student is central in directing his or her own learning so that the enthusiasm and love of learning is retained. Active learning happens when students are self-directed to learn for themselves through their demands to solve authentic or personally meaningful problems.

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery is a special character, co-educational, state integrated school for students from Years 1 to 13. We have five guiding principles and five core values that define our special character.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ▶ Students are at the centre of their learning.
- ▶ Learners are encouraged to be creative, innovative and take risks.
- ▶ Diverse and flexible individual learning pathways are supported.
- ▶ Learning is a partnership.
- ▶ Everyone is a learner and everyone is a teacher.

## CORE VALUES

- ▶ We develop relationships and a sense of belonging that strengthens each member of our learning community.
- ▶ We commit to honouring the individual while celebrating our diversity. We respect ourselves and each other as we aspire to build an empowering learning community.
- ▶ We encourage energetic and powerful learning. Our students are courageous as they push the boundaries of their own learning by taking risks and developing their own path.
- ▶ Building your own learning path requires that our students live up to their commitments and responsibilities. They are trusted to make decisions and follow them through with integrity.
- ▶ We actively strive to celebrate the uniqueness of individuals, while unifying the community. We share our successes and work through our difficulties with compassion, caring and tolerance.

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**“We have to learn to make our own way through a complex world without the benefit of an accepted trustworthy route map.”**

(Guy Claxton)







The core aim of our school is for our students to play an active role in the design of their learning programmes. When children explore the world through their passions and are challenged at the right pace, learning becomes engaging and fun. We encourage young learners to keep their inquisitive passions alive, to cultivate a spirit of lifelong curiosity, and to subsequently challenge themselves personally, academically and socially.

Our approach to learning accommodates New Zealand's national curriculum but gives students the freedom to forge their own paths through it.

Classes are open to a range of ages or year groups, so that students can work at whichever level of the curriculum that best serves their needs. No two children are the same. One may thrive in a classroom setting, while others may prefer to learn in smaller groups or individually. Some find it easy to concentrate while others are easily distracted. That's why we offer individual education to every child, at their own pace, using learning methods that the child likes and that work for him/her. Our students can advance when they have demonstrated competency in an area, not because the class has advanced.

We believe that a strong academic foundation is essential for children to become fully self-directed learners. We offer teacher facilitated courses across the New Zealand Curriculum, where we aim to incorporate the children's interests whenever possible. In addition, children are encouraged to carry out their own inquiries and to lead or opt into workshops or projects that are either initiated by themselves, other children, parents or teachers. We equip our children with the tools that they need to become self-directed learners and we promote a learning culture that encourages children to seek advice, try something new and where they are not afraid to make mistakes.



Through the rich and varied learning environment at our school, our children are exposed to a large diversity of topics which helps them to discover their own interests and passions. Our school subsequently offers a fertile ground to develop their passions.

## OUR STUDENTS...

## DIVERSE, CREATIVE, RISK TAKERS

At Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery our students are central to every decision made about their education and we want them to be as diverse as they choose to be. Every day, our entire community encourages each child to be creative, innovative and take risks with their learning. We empower our students to drive their own learning today so they will be able to navigate their future with confidence and ingenuity.

Every student at Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery develops an Individual Education Plan. This plan forms the basis of how and what they will learn. It is set and reviewed at an Individual Education Meeting at the end of each term. This meeting allows the student, their family, and their Homebase Learning Advisor, to share their thoughts, challenges and goals. It takes a holistic approach to finding the best way to let the students follow their passions, interests and needs.

### MOLLY, Year 6

"My favourite project was the re-opening of the café that the seniors used to run before they moved to the other site. The school really allows you to be creative with your ideas. I've always liked cafés and I thought if the seniors did it we can do it, so I did an inquiry into it. I talked to some adults and they helped. Now we have a café and the money that we earn goes back to the school.

We call our teachers Learning Advisors and we call them by their first name. This way you are talking to someone at the same level rather than looking up. They are here to support and help you rather than to tell you what to do. They treat us like another adult, not like little people who can't manage themselves."

### ISAAC, Year 5

"We have inquiry and SDL time where you can self-manage your own stuff, but we do reading and writing at certain times. I have done an inquiry on creating board games and card games recently."

### JACKSON, Year 5

"We go to lots of places, we did a big inquiry into the beach and then we went there. We did a big clean up, we found a lot of stuff there."

### MILLIE, Year 4

"We get lots of opportunities to go to places. I went to Mount Hutt last week for skiing. The school organised the trip, but you could decide whether or not you wanted to go.

I really enjoy playing netball. We are doing a netball inquiry at the moment and we also teach the younger children in netball."

### AARON, Year 5

"School is fun, you get to do cool stuff. We have a lot of iPads. They really trust us not to scratch the screen. After three years you get to keep it. We have one each and we use it for our inquiries. We have computers as well; we have a lot of resources."

### TESSA, Year 5

"I like the school, you can do things that you couldn't do at other schools. For example, if you wanted to build something, you could use the 'Makers Space' and Learning Advisors and parents would support you to make it happen. We made a fairy garden and huts. A group of students made them but now everybody can use them.

At our school, you learn a lot through play. You learn in a different way but you learn just as much. We still follow the curriculum.

We don't have bells. They trust us to know when it's time to come in, it is all about trust and respect. But you can only have trust and respect if you are trustworthy. We have a thing called 'trust licence'. You have to write down why you want a trust licence and if you get it you can go and learn anywhere you want on the campus. You can also go to the Wharenui (our community hall) without an adult."



## OUR TEACHERS...

At Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery teachers are called **Learning Advisors**. This term deliberately emphasises a role comprised of facilitation, mentorship and coaching. Learning Advisors function both as curriculum experts and as advisors who support each student's goals and needs, help them grow and assess student progress on an ongoing basis to keep them challenged.

In their role as curriculum experts, our Learning Advisors have a strong willingness to adapt their courses to the needs and desires of the children. Learning Advisors do more than just teach, they are responsive to individual student voice, while ensuring that the curriculum is delivered in a relevant, challenging and interesting way.

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery empowers Learning Advisors to be their best. Learning Advisors are encouraged to continually improve and align with the most recent discoveries in education and to personalise the curriculum for individual students and their classes as a whole.



## ADVISORS, MENTORS, EXPERTS

### **NADINE, Learning Advisor** **Community Leader Years 1-3**

“I teach children in Years 0 to 3. Just like most schools we have a timetable but I would never say our timetable is fixed; we want to be spontaneous in case an opportunity for learning suddenly presents itself. We have our reading groups, maths groups, phonics groups, literacy and handwriting on most days because in order to become a fully self-directed learner you need to be proficient in those areas. However, when we teach literacy and numeracy there is plenty of room for the children to follow their own style of learning and their own interests/passions. We create a number of stations that are based on the children's interests and needs. The children plan which stations they will do or negotiate a different activity that is relevant to that session.

Each term we also run an inquiry which is usually done as a class. For this we try and pull together all the children's interests and create a cross-curricula learning programme.

On Wednesdays there is a strong focus on self-directed learning. We have blocks of time called ‘Make you Thinks, which are run by Learning Advisors or parents, based on children's interests or an interest the adult may have. In addition



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**“The current New Zealand Curriculum requires a shift in perspective: from a teacher of the subject to a teacher of the person”**

(Dr Julia Atkin)

to that, our children run the 'Kids inspire Kids' sessions. This is an opportunity for them to share their knowledge about the things they are really passionate about. We also use the 'Makers Space' a lot on Wednesdays. This is a room equipped with plenty of resources to make or build things. Sometimes children lead directed activities in there but more often than not the children create whatever they wish.

On Fridays we have our Celebration of Learning. This is a time when children can share individually, in a group or as a Homebase, the learning they have been doing. This time often inspires children to give new things a go. We then run a number of adult led workshops that the children can book themselves into such as: Mandarin, yoga, gardening, sports, or singing. These sessions are run by parents or experts in the community. On Friday afternoons we usually have child-led workshops. These are pre-planned by the children and happen across all ages of the Discovery Campus. Sometimes children from the Unlimited Campus come over and run these too.

PINs (Passions, Interests and Needs) workshops are run each term. These are workshops that are offered by either children, parents or Learning Advisors and allow children to access a great variety of activities. Some examples are: fishing, cooking, art, jewellery making, rugby, camping skills, board games, lego, geocaching - the list is endless and constantly changing.

At our school relationships are everything - we really are a community of learners. Parents work in partnership with Learning Advisors to create a rich and supportive learning environment. We firmly believe that everyone can contribute to another learning, and everyone is on a learning journey of their own."







**MELVA, Learning Advisor**  
**Community Leader Years 4-6**

“Our Homebase is comprised of children who have always been immersed in Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery learning and those who have started later from another school. A core part of Homebase life is our core values which work together to support and create a positive learning environment.

As part of our commitment to the special character children are at the centre of their learning supported by family and Learning Advisors. No one has to learn the same thing, at the same time, in the same way and we have the freedom to create with the child the best pathways of learning for them.

It is important to us that children have the freedom to follow their own passions with the nuts and bolts of self-managing, literacy and numeracy in place to be able to do so.

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**“Teachers have a ‘can do’ attitude in assisting students to follow their goals.”**

ERO NEW SCHOOL ASSURANCE REVIEW  
REPORT, June 2016

at researching and are much more independent in their inquiries. We encourage a mind-set where children try things that are new and accept that it is okay to make mistakes. We talk about ways we are being self-managers or self-directed in our learning. We also support our tamariki in knowing that asking for help is also part of being a self-directed learner.

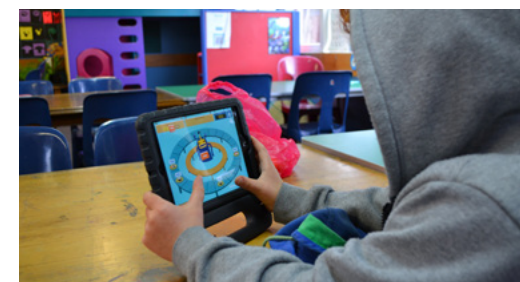
We want our kids to use their literacy skills to actually change something, and this can be anything inside themselves or out in the community and wider world.

Children in our community are growing in their effectiveness

As children grow in their ability to self-manage and negotiate their own pathways it is great to see them realise ‘I can do this on my own, I want to achieve this’.

We are really lucky to have a supportive community of parents and we keep emphasising that we love communication. The more communication we have the better we can support your child, and the more parent involvement, the richer the experiences for every child. We want parents to share in the learning journey, whether that is running workshops, taking kids on excursions around the city or learning alongside us. Being a part of a learning community means Learning Advisors also share in learning alongside our families and tamariki.

Attending Ao Tawhiti is not just about enrolling your child, it is about enrolling the family and becoming part of the community. The idea is that children, families and Learning Advisors share the learning journey together.”





## OUR PARENTS...

## ENGAGED, ACTIVE PARTNERS, TEACHERS & LEARNERS

Our learning community is very well supported by parents and we encourage parents and caregivers to be actively involved in their children's learning programme. Parents commit to the special character of the school by forming a strong partnership with their child and his/her Learning Advisor. They play an active role in the goal setting for their child and for the support and achievement of those goals.

Beyond this, many parents offer learning opportunities that reflect their own passions or skills. You may see parents at our school working alongside students as mentors, tutors, instructors or coaches, as they run a workshop, support an event or project, or assist a group of children. We encourage all family members to share their time and resources in the ways that are most meaningful to them.

Many parents engage in the school on a regular basis. Spending time in their child's Homebase helps them and their child feel part of our community and assists in building bonds with other families. A strong community means a more engaging and vibrant educational experience for your child.





**ROSIE**

**Mother of Sid, Year 1**

“The transition from preschool to school was easy for Sid. The school is a great, family friendly community, and children are engaged in their learning.

Learning does not only take place in the classroom, but in real life situations, and we love the many opportunities for children to spend a day off site. Apart from that, Sid is really inspired by the workshops. The first one that he instigated was on gardening, as he wanted to show the children how seeds grow. This is such a good example of how kids take charge of their own learning. Sid’s second workshop is on rainbow boxes, so right now, every afternoon he is working on building some kind of a diorama. He feels confident and he thinks that he has something to offer to other children, I believe there are not many five year olds that are given these opportunities. I love that he is involved in the other children’s workshops, too. He is very happy here, as he gets to be himself, he gets to be who he is.”



**CLINT**

**Father of Mia (Year 4)**

“Initially, we enrolled our daughter at a mainstream school. We wanted to be involved in our child’s education, but we felt somehow excluded there. Here, we feel so welcome and there is a real sense of family. We would like for our children to grow up thinking a bit outside the square, questioning the norm and not just go with the flow, without questioning why. This school definitely encourages the children to expand their thinking. Recently, my partner and I decided that we want to spend more time with our children, so now we work three days each and spend some time helping at school on the days when we are free.”

**SALLY**

**Mother of Logan (Year 5), Rhys (Year 4) and Beth (Year 3)**

“Our children are encouraged to be who they are and as parents we are actively encouraged to work alongside them to make things happen for them. Recently, a few boys developed an interest in rugby, and we were able to collaborate with another school to make this interest a reality. We now have two rugby teams that play every Friday. Each term workshops are run by adults and children within the community, through these I have been involved in organising excursions such as nature walks up to Mt Grey; tramping at Lake Daniells and as a lab technician I have dissected beef and sheep hearts with children interested in anatomy.

The opportunities for learning here are endless: music, art, animal care, tramping, wood tech, cooking and baking, knitting, scootering are just a few examples of the activities run by parents, LA’s and by the children themselves.”



## OUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT...

## RESPECTFUL, SAFE, SUPPORTIVE

Every day our young learners are supported and nurtured in a safe, rich, caring and dynamic learning environment. Students are vertically grouped in **Homebases** which they are free to select each year, and where they are supported by their designated Learning Advisor. At Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery there are few age boundaries. Older students engage with and work alongside younger students in natural and supportive ways, treating everyone as an individual and with respect so they can experience being leaders, learners, and friends together.

We believe that learning does not necessarily need to take place in the classroom but can occur anywhere, anytime. Our children go on frequent field trips across the city and beyond, either as a class or in smaller groups. Families can choose to engage in 'off site learning' in the community instead of coming into school every day and we encourage families and their children to use local resources as part of their learning. Real-world inquiry brings learning to life and connects children with the wider community.

There are no school uniforms or school bells. Learning Advisors are on a first name basis with their learners and our campus houses common spaces rather than designated staff rooms. These are only a few distinctive elements of our school that create strong and trustful relationships and a strong sense of community that is fundamental to the spirit of Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery.

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**“Interactions between students and staff are supportive and respectful. Student choice is the basis for these relationships and decision making.”**

ERO NEW SCHOOL ASSURANCE REVIEW REPORT, June 2016



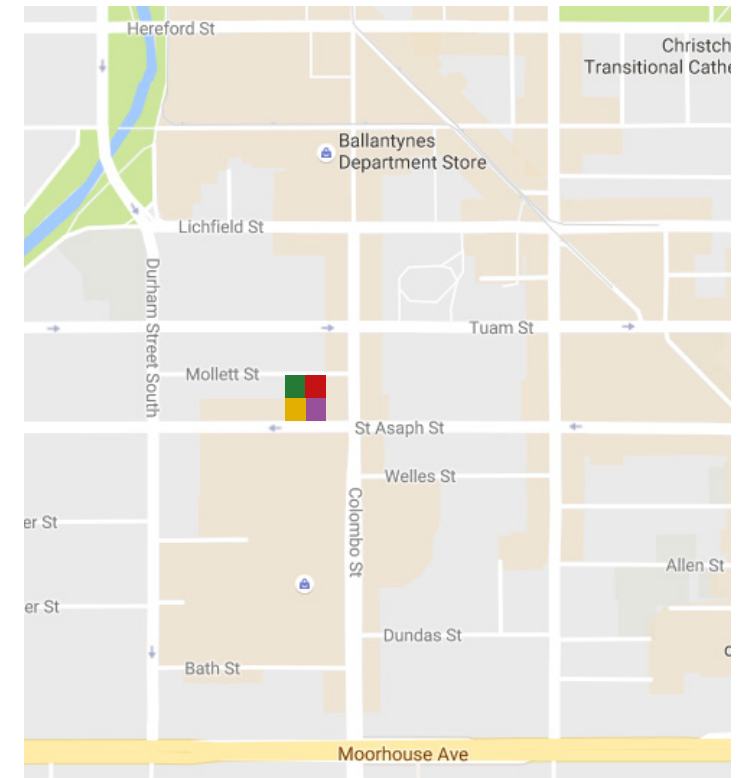


## OUR LOCATION...

## BACK TO THE CITY CENTRE OF CHRISTCHURCH

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery was formed in 2014 as a result of the merger of Discovery 1 and Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti. These schools had world class modern learning environments in the central city. Following the 2011 Christchurch earthquakes both schools were forced to relocate. We are currently located on two campuses. Our year 1-6 students are based in Halswell, while our year 7-13 students are at the University of Canterbury.

We are excited about moving back into brand new, purpose built facilities in 2019. The construction of our new, innovative campus at **177 St Asaph Street** is well underway and will provide us with spaces specifically designed for how we deliver personalised student driven learning. The new location will also enable us to once again being a truly city based school that can easily access all of the amenities, resources, and learning opportunities that Christchurch has to offer.



### LUCY, graduated 2007

“Looking back, I think what really stood out about my schooling was the degree of respect and trust that we received as students. I believe that this makes our students generally more confident and more mature. If you are treated like an adult, it is much easier to behave like an adult.

I was lucky to attend high school when the school was still located in the city centre. The bus exchange would take us pretty much anywhere we wanted to go. If we had a question, it was really encouraged to go out and find the answers. Being in the city inspired our curiosity and the environment enabled us to create some really strong interpersonal skills as we were constantly interacting with lots of ‘real life’ people. This made the school very special.”





# ENROLMENT

# YOUR JOURNEY STARTS HERE!

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery is open to any student seeking enrolment. Commitment to, or empathy with, the 'special character' is the only entry requirement.

We expect all of our applicants to have attended a school tour.

Tours run at 10am on Wednesdays at our Discovery campus. To arrange a tour please email [discovery@aotawhiti.school.nz](mailto:discovery@aotawhiti.school.nz)

Entry to our school requires an enrolment application and an interview with families by senior staff.

Welcome to Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery – your journey starts here!

## **For further information, please contact:**

Postal address: PO Box 4666, Christchurch 8140

## **YEARS 0 TO 6 – DISCOVERY CAMPUS**

90 McMahon Drive, Halswell, Christchurch 8025

(03) 365 4678 | [discovery@aotawhiti.school.nz](mailto:discovery@aotawhiti.school.nz)

## **YEARS 7 TO 13 – UNLIMITED CAMPUS**

Wairarapa Block, University of Canterbury, Cnr Parkstone Ave & Oak Drive, Christchurch 8041

(03) 377 7773 | [unlimited@aotawhiti.school.nz](mailto:unlimited@aotawhiti.school.nz)









[aotawhiti.school.nz](http://aotawhiti.school.nz)