



# Wilson School Curriculum



***'Excellence in Special Education'***

# Vision

Wilson School caters for students with diverse special needs. That diversity means there will be a significant range of capabilities among the students. The Wilson School community has ambitious aspirations for each student. It aims to be viewed as a place of excellence in Special Education in its vision, practice and belief in the potential of each unique individual as a learner.

The school vision is to develop a school culture that provides a safe and nurturing environment that will enable schools and families to work in partnership to support student development and learning.

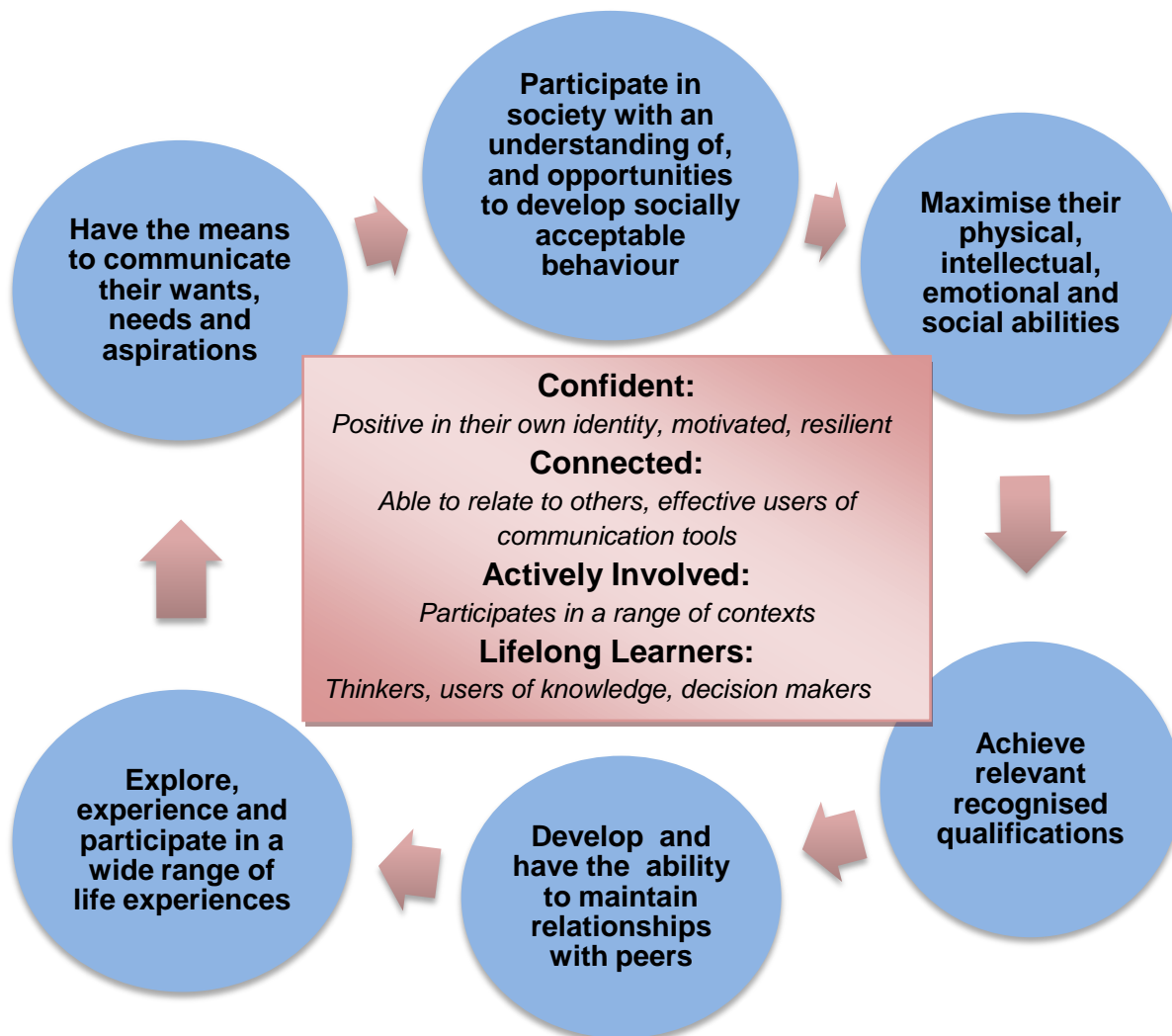


*Wilson School will:*

- *Invest in expert staff and resources to provide high quality, educational and therapeutic programmes based on current best practice*
- *Continue to develop strong links with appropriate health, social and educational professional communities*
- *Be recognised as a school which caters especially for students with physical, multiple and learning disabilities which continually adapts and develops specialist education programmes*
- *Be responsive to the needs of the educational community by providing guidance, professional development and other relevant services.*
- *Transition students to mainstream or post - school environments as appropriate and available*

# Mission Statement

The school's vision is captured in our Mission Statement as it highlights the aspirations for our students. Wilson School aims to support individuals to reach their potential and develop **Confident, Connected, Actively Involved, Lifelong Learners** equipped to participate in society.



## Values

The values are an integral part of the schools' direction and vision. The values are integrated into the way the school community operates. Values are expressed through the ways in which people think and act.

Every decision and interaction that takes place at Wilson School reflects the values of the individuals involved and the collective values of the school. The values are part of the everyday curriculum – encouraged, modelled and explored.



**The Wilson School Community will:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster the physical, intellectual, emotional and social well being of the school community</li> </ul>	Community & Participation Diversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employ effective communication strategies at all levels to meet the needs of individuals in the school community</li> </ul>	Innovation, Inquiry & Curiosity Excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model and encourage respect for self and others through empathy and understanding of difference</li> </ul>	Respect Equity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a safe physical and emotional environment for all</li> </ul>	Community & Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build genuine partnerships with families through an emphasis on teamwork</li> </ul>	Community & Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a collaborative team approach to enable students to achieve their potential in all areas of learning</li> </ul>	Community & Participation

# Principles

The principles underpin the design and direction of the curriculum of Wilson School. The principles provide the foundation for teaching and learning, and support the platform, to enable students to be involved in a curriculum that engages and challenges them.

## High Expectations

The curriculum design and practice is based in the premise that all students can work towards learning and succeed at their individual level

## Treaty of Waitangi

The curriculum endeavours to develop an awareness of Tikanga Maori and Te Reo Maori and provide the means of fostering better cultural understanding consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi.

## Cultural Diversity

The curriculum reflects that all cultures within the school will be valued and accepted through active encouragement of a multi-cultural school

## Inclusion

The curriculum reflects the individuality of students, who require different approaches, strategies and differentiated goals to access learning opportunities.

## Learning to Learn

The curriculum encourages the students to know how to learn to work towards achieving incremental steps in their unique learning pathway.

## Community Engagement

The curriculum has meaning for students, connects with their wider lives and engages the support of their families, whanua and communities they interact with.

## Future Focus

The curriculum encourages students to look at the future by explicit exploration of skills and attitudes linked to citizenship.

## Coherence

The curriculum offers students a precise focus on skills and attitudes that endeavours to support them to explore in authentic and meaningful ways, fostering learning dispositions that can support their learning pathway.

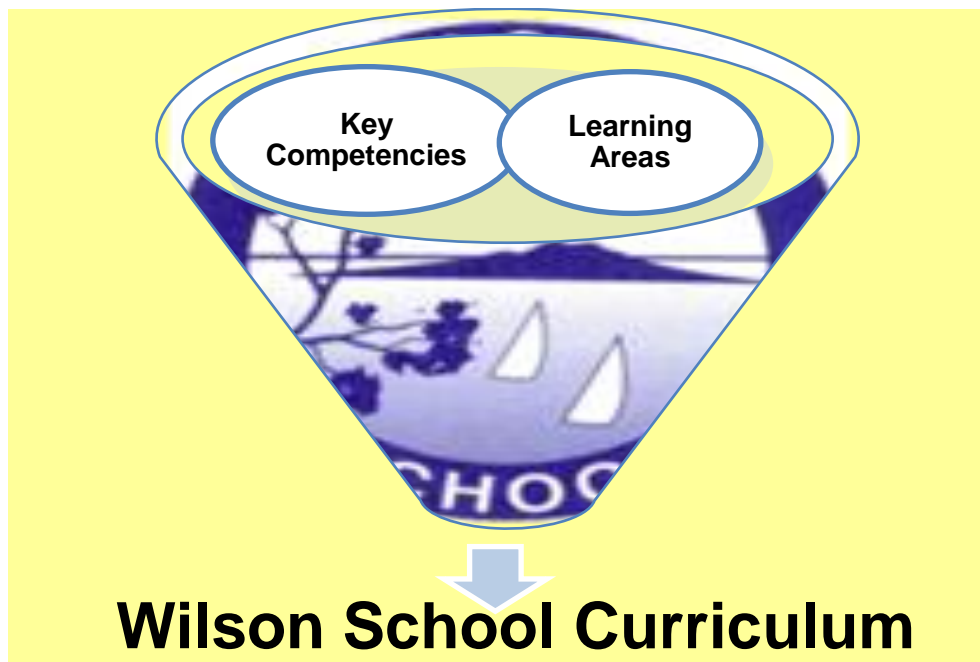
# Teaching and Learning Focus

*The Teaching and Learning focus of the New Zealand Curriculum is to provide students with the opportunity to actively practise and strengthen their learning.*

Teaching and Learning opportunities need to be attuned to student's needs and aspirations. To support the diversity and needs of Wilson School student's the school has organised its curriculum emphasis around 2 main foci: *Key Competencies* and the *Learning Areas*. Each focus area enables a platform from which to build and extend skills and attitudes and dispositions towards learning.

**Key Competency Focus:** Learning is referenced deliberately and explicitly in teaching and supporting knowledge, and understanding of key capabilities needed for growing, working and participating in the student's communities and society. The key competencies are fundamental to student's access in everyday life considering opportunities both present and future.

**Learning Area Focus:** Teaching and Learning programmes are referenced in Learning Areas, where students explore, and work within the achievement objectives and skills at the initial New Zealand Curriculum Level 1. The key competencies are intertwined within the Learning Areas framework.



**Both focus areas for learning are of equal value, and the emphasis reflects student needs.**

# The Curriculum Elements Defined

Wilson School students are involved in programmes that are attuned to their needs and abilities.

The **Learning Areas** provide the focus to develop and strengthen learning opportunities. The key Learning Areas are: Literacy/ Communication and Numeracy. The support Learning Areas are seen as:

- ❖ Unit Study: Science / Social Studies / Health and Physical Well Being / Technology
- ❖ The Arts

The **Key Competencies** identify knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are particularly important for students to learn and work towards. They are referenced through the following key concepts.



- ❖ Using language, Symbols & Texts
- ❖ Thinking
- ❖ Managing Self
- ❖ Relating to Others
- ❖ Participating & Contributing

Within the key competency framework students are supported to experience, work through and/ or develop independence within their capabilities. This can operate within a *Learning Area* or a *Key Competency* focus area.

## The Place of P. Level Attainment Indicators

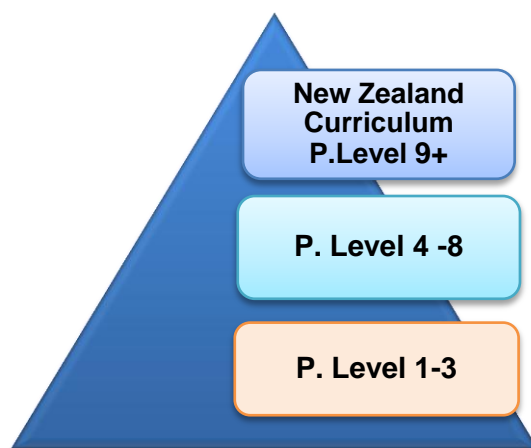
Wilson School supports the development of teaching and learning through precise, incremental steps. We use **P. Level** attainment targets to support the teaching and learning focus for students, who are operating below the New Zealand Curriculum.

The P. Level attainment targets P. 1 - 3 describe the range of general performance characteristics those students, *may demonstrate when experiencing* learning opportunities.

P. Levels 4 -8 describe students' performance in a way that indicates the *emergence of* skills, knowledge and understanding. The descriptors are characteristic of the types of attainment the students are *likely to demonstrate*.

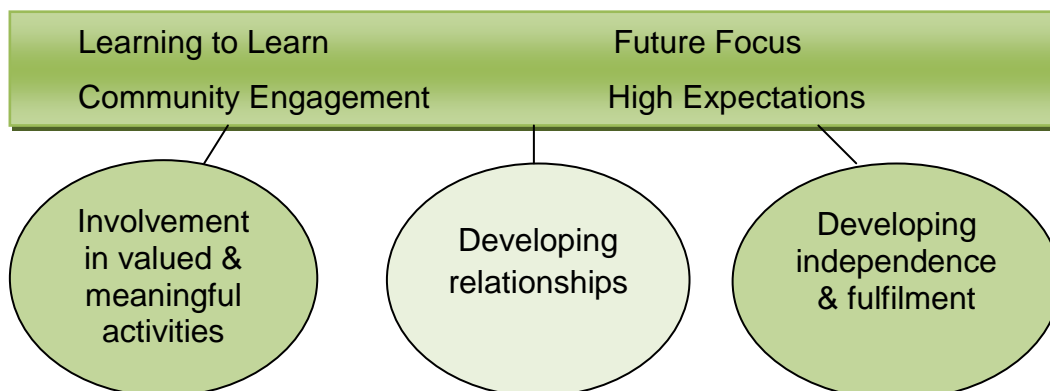
P. Level 9+ is seen as *operating at* the early stages of the New Zealand Curriculum Level 1. Learning is referenced against performance indicators aligned to the NZC document.

#### P. Level Progressions



The incremental indicators of the P. Levels and the key competencies enable Wilson school students to be involved in teaching and learning opportunities which are relevant in their learning pathway.

**This is reflected in global outcomes linked to Wilson School's Principles and generally described in terms of:**



# Key Competencies



The Key Competencies support students to live, learn and contribute as active members of their communities. The competencies draw on knowledge, attitudes and values in ways that lead to action.

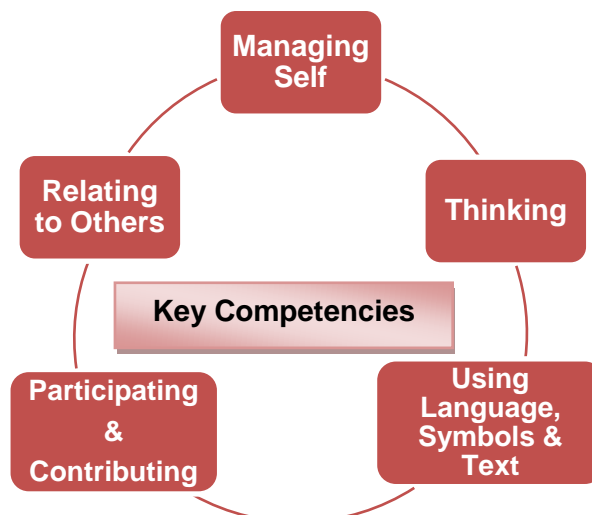
They are not seen as separate or stand alone but as both a means and an end (a goal). The key competencies are a focus for learning, and they enable learning. The development of the Key Competencies are fundamental to students' success in every area of life, both present and future.

Within each learning direction the key focus for Wilson School students is on developing dispositions for learning and life. Knowledge and attitudes can be defined within the parameters of:

- ❖ **Experiencing**
- ❖ **Needing to Learn**
- ❖ **Able to do**

Wilson School students are also encouraged to use developing skills and attitudes to assist them to be able to recognise when, why and how in a wide range of contexts and settings.

The Key Competencies are seen as important for ongoing development. They continue to develop over time, shaped by interactions with people, places, ideas and things and become part of the student's identity.



## Barriers to Learning

All Wilson School students present with unique characteristics of disability that may create barriers to learning opportunities, and the way they can access and engage in learning.

Students are supported through Wilson School's educational and therapy programmes to maximise learning potential, with the aim of reducing the impact of the identified barriers to learning.

Students are not defined by disability. They require specific interventions to be designed, trialled, employed and monitored, to support them to operate within teaching and learning opportunities.

The elements that typically characterise the barriers, and the possible interventions used to reduce the impact on Wilson School students' ability to be involved in learning opportunities are complex and varied. This requires specific assessments to ensure that there is an understanding of skill progression and attainment by all disciplines.

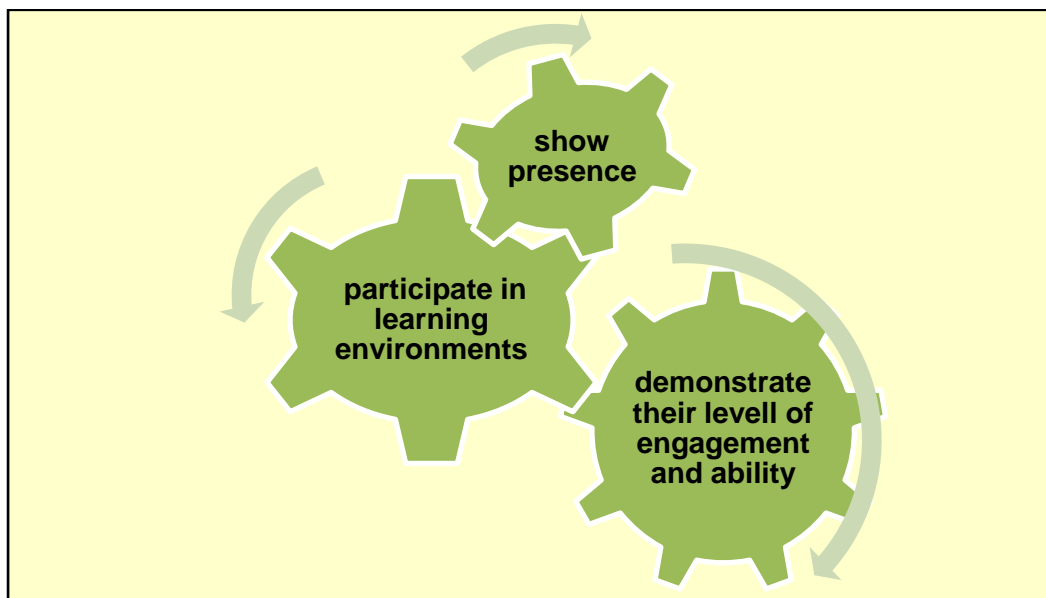
An collaborative team approach provides the opportunity to develop a more comprehensive learning environment. The optimum goal is to enhance students ability to interact / engage in their learning and living environments.

[Example of Barriers and Interventions \(this is an exhaustive list\)](#)

Barriers	Interventions
<u>Language Processing Difficulties:</u> Receptive and expressive language Vocabulary / word meanings Pragmatic / social use of language ESOL	Visual systems – symbol support / Makaton signing, gestures Modelling of simple sentence structure ICT and assistive devices
<u>Cognitive Challenges:</u> Cognitive capacity & processing challenges Fluctuating learning patterns	Differentiated learning programme to match individual need Active waiting, Reduction of distractions Awareness of cognitive overload
<u>Speech Difficulties</u> Non verbal, Dyspraxia Dysarthria	ICT and assistive devices Active waiting Awareness of student's personal voice Intensive interactions
Barriers	Interventions

<u>Written Communication Difficulties</u> Dyslexia Script production challenges	ICT & computer support Use of sticky labels to reflect ideas Triangle pens Pencil grips Keyboard & mouse skill development Slanted desktops/ boards
<u>Motor Disorders</u> Planning, Processing, Initiating, Co –ordination, Muscle tone & power, Dyspraxia	Active waiting techniques- support processing time Focus on movement quality Increase size of equipment (e.g. balls), Decrease speed of activity Bilateral activities, Scaffolding of task, backward chaining of task
<u>Sensory Challenges</u> Visual perceptual challenges, Sensory overload, Sensory processing	Sensory diet, Signing, visual systems, simplifying language, Clear expectations, consistent approach, Simplify background. Consider colour, size of resources
<u>Emotional &amp; Behavioural Challenges</u> Anxiety , perseveration Lack of social awareness	Provide structure and routine Use of visual timetables & clues Team tech behavioural plans

It is essential to capture a student’s learning potential, identifying strategies and approaches that enable the students to:



The Wilson School community endeavours to implement pedagogical approaches, alongside explicit strategies to support the notion of presence, participation and learning for all students at Wilson School.

# Pedagogy: Effective Teaching & Learning

## *Teacher actions promoting student learning*

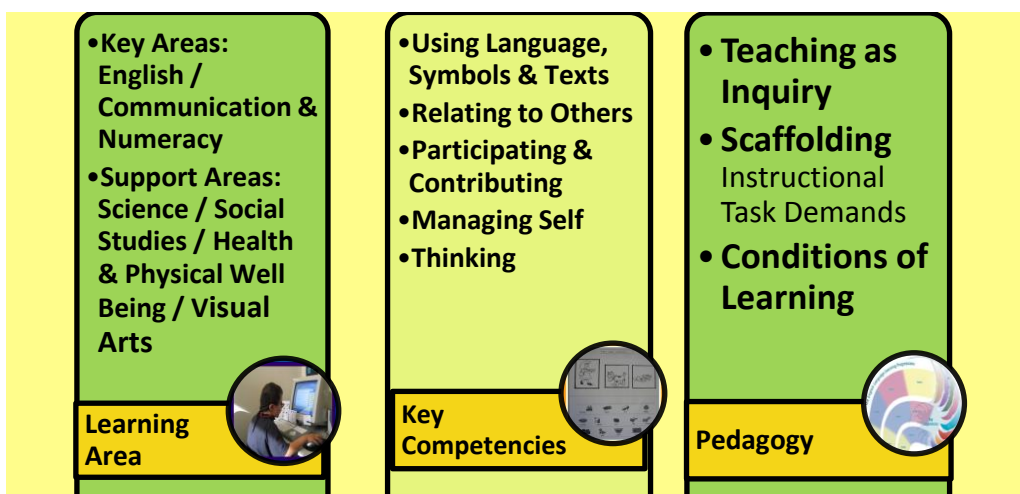
Pedagogical strategies that facilitate effective learning need to be implemented to enhance learning opportunities, and to provide for the diverse learning needs of Wilson School students.

It is essential that effective teaching and learning practice is seen as key in the design of teaching and learning opportunities. Effective Teaching and Learning requires educators to take into account the uniqueness of Wilson School's students' learning and how individual student need to learn. Given that all learners need to experience success with learning, educators are challenged to employ pedagogical approaches that assist in overcoming or reducing learners' difficulties.

Effective Teaching and Learning enables students to have:

- ❖ Focused instruction
- ❖ A range of teaching strategies that connect learning opportunities.
- ❖ Provision for the diverse learning needs of the students

Wilson School has identified three key pedagogical theories to guide teaching and learning practice



***Pedagogical direction sits alongside Learning Areas and Key Competencies with equal relevance in driving and directing learning opportunities.***

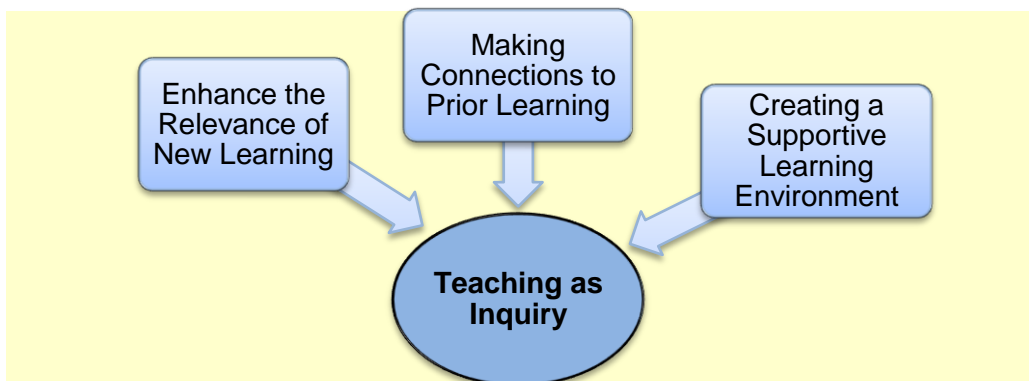
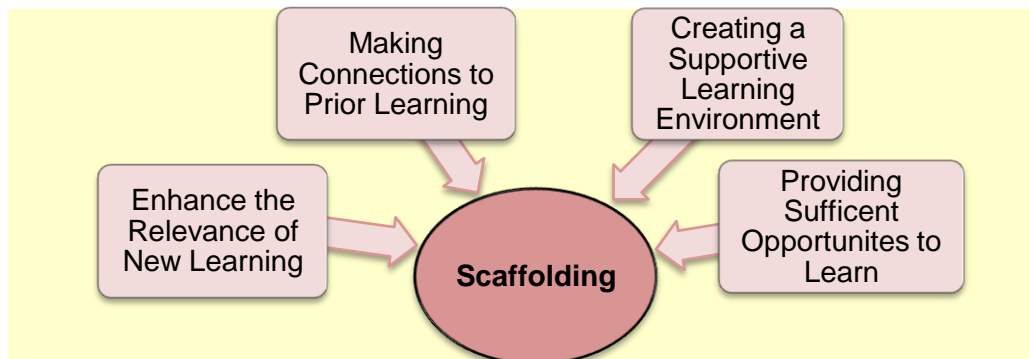
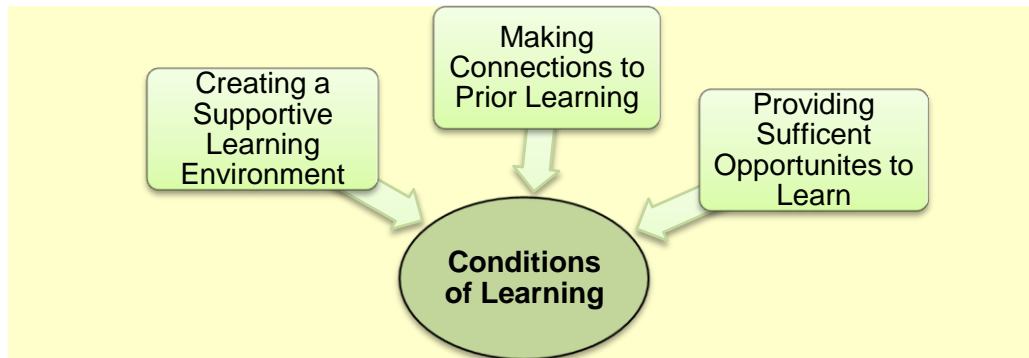
# Pedagogical Approaches

The **Principles** of Wilson School direct the foundation for teaching and learning, and support the platform to enable students to be involved in a curriculum that engages and challenges them. The pedagogical approaches identified as key to support learning are based on the:

**Principle: High Expectations**  
*where students can work towards learning and succeed at their own level.*

**Principle: Learning to Learn**  
*where students are encouraged to know how to learn, to work towards achieving incremental steps in their unique learning pathway.*

Wilson School Pedagogical Approaches Linked to Effective Pedagogy Practice



These key approaches support the ideals of *Effective Pedagogy* as described in the New Zealand Curriculum Document, as they strive to have a positive impact on student learning.

# Scaffolding

The Wilson School community is sensitive to each student's changing knowledge, and uses a scaffolded approach to support students to move towards a level of independence, within their teaching and learning opportunities.

The benefits of a scaffolded approach to learning are supported by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1) who believe that scaffolding enables students to carry out a task or to achieve a goal, which would be beyond their unassisted efforts.

The scaffolding process permits the students to concentrate on and complete elements of the task, and receive guidance and interactional support in the 'zone of proximal development' i.e. "the area between where the learner can accomplish unaided and the level the same learner can accomplish with assistance" Beed, Hawkins and Roller, (2).

For Wilson School students this approach can be achieved through techniques such as backward chaining, hand over hand, symbol support, and assistive technology. These techniques may enable students to be part of the learning process and support diverse learning needs.

By enabling students to be involved in learning through a scaffolded approach the Wilson School community can often accomplish more than just completion of a task. As students internalise the essence of thinking, knowledge or strategy, they are then encouraged to generalise tasks in different contexts and settings.



This approach signals the relevance of a key Wilson School

***Principle: Coherence***

*where students are able to explore in authentic and meaningful ways the skills and attitudes that can support their ability to be engaged and challenged in learning.*






# Instructional Task Demands

Wilson School students require support to negotiate task elements. Students are supported to develop awareness of the strategies required the task. The effects of strategic scaffolding of instructional task demands is viewed as a positive measure to facilitate and enhance learning, Brown and Campoine (3). A scaffolded approach to instruction assists in the internalisation of processes and gives students strategies to enable them to become more independent, Beed, Hawkins and Roller (4), Burkaffer (5).

In order for this to be achieved the Wilson School community considers the underlying skills required to successfully meet task demands. This approach is supported by Wood (6) and Westwood (7) and is achieved by adjusting the instructional intervention to match that of the student’s needs. Studies by Cullen (8) have shown that students experiencing difficulties with learning have responded successfully to explicit instruction in metacognition skills that promote understanding.

Metacognition is defined as knowing about knowing – the how. For Wilson School students this involves students’ awareness of the strategies and elements required to perform a task.

[Instructional task Demand Elements \(Tikunoff, 1985\)](#)

<p><b>Order</b></p>  <p>Knowing the order in which tasks will be completed</p>	<p><b>Pacing</b></p>  <p>Time allocation</p>	<p><b>Product</b></p> <p>What is to be done?</p>  <p>The kind of product expected</p>	<p><b>Participation</b></p> <p>Who can help?</p>  <p>Knowing if the task should be completed individually or in co-operation with others and the appropriate learning strategy</p>	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <p>What can be used?</p>  <p>Knowing what resources and materials to use</p>
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When instructional demands are broken into a sequence of smaller tasks, students are more able to access and engage in learning.

## Teaching as Inquiry

The pedagogy of 'Inquiry into Teaching and Learning Practice' is essential in the design of effective teaching and learning opportunities. The Wilson School community has a sound working knowledge of the varied and complex needs of students and the impact on learning opportunities.

This signals the relevance of the Wilson School

**Principle: Inclusion**

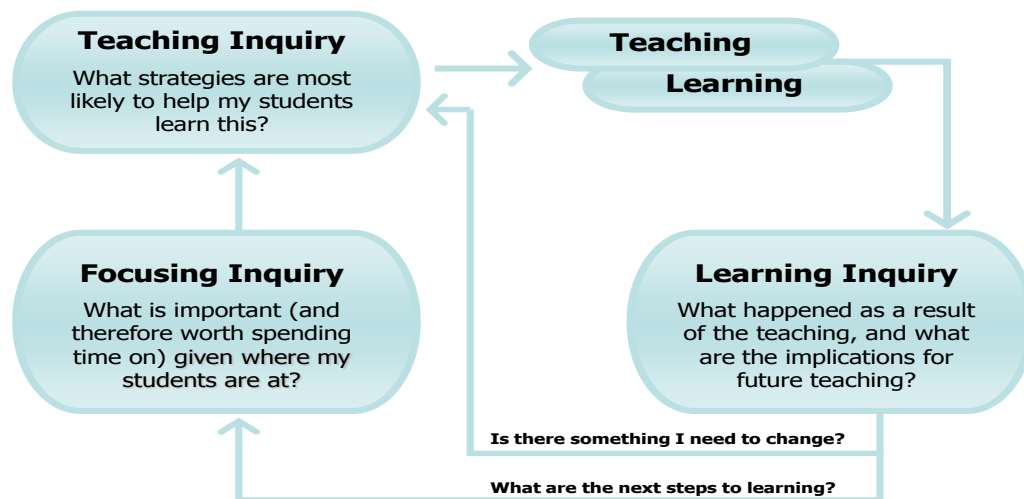
*where there is value placed on the individuality of students, and the need to have different approaches, strategies and goals to ensure learning opportunities can be accessed*

It is essential that there is a reflection on pedagogy as any teaching strategy employed can work differently in different contexts for different students. Wilson School endeavours to inquire into the impact of teaching on the students. The reflection on pedagogy signals that:



**The how of teaching and learning is every as bit as important as content**

The process of inquiry into teaching and learning practice is reflected in the following flow chart.



By supporting the Teaching as Inquiry approach, the learning outcomes for students can be enriched as it supports students to have:

- Focused instruction
- A range of teaching strategies that connect learning opportunities
- Provision for the diverse learning needs of Wilson School students

# Conditions of Learning

**Conditions of Learning** are considered essential in facilitating learning, Cambourne (9). This pedagogical approach provides a reference from which to consider the specific conditions viewed as being fundamental to all tasks to promote student learning.

The Conditions of Learning are:

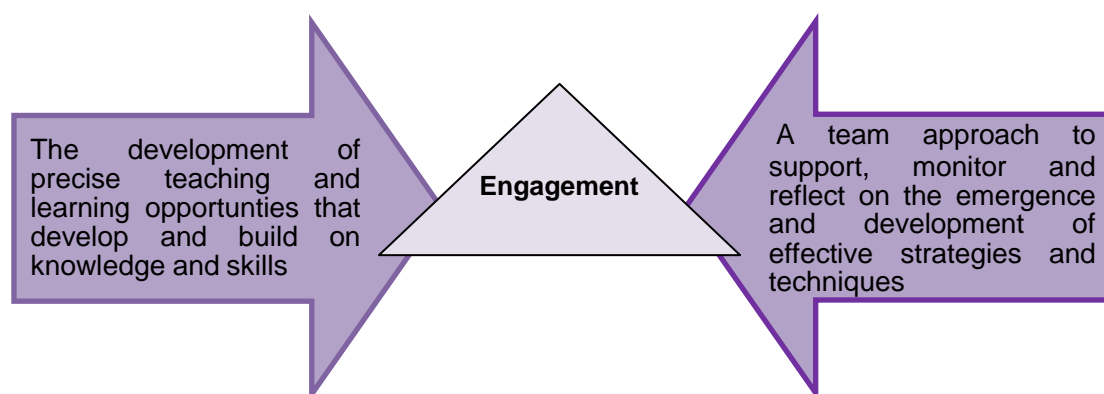
Students need to :

- Immersion** → be immersed in the learning process
- Demonstration** → have appropriate demonstrations of what they have to do
- Expectation** → be expected to learn, with guidance tapping into student potential
- Responsibility** → be expected to be involved in the learning process
- Approximation** → work with confidence and have a go with freedom of approximation
- Response** → receive feedback on how they construct learning
- Engagement** → have time and opportunity to develop and practice skills and knowledge in meaningful and purposeful contexts.

Of particular significance for Wilson School students is *Engagement*. Students need to engage or interact for learning to be achieved. It is essential in developing the potential of students.

The notion of *Engagement* is complex for Wilson School students. Their individual challenges are unique and affect the way they are able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

Wilson School supports students to show engagement in learning. This requires the following:



Both approaches are critical and need to work cohesively to enable students to work towards achieving incremental steps in their unique learning pathway.

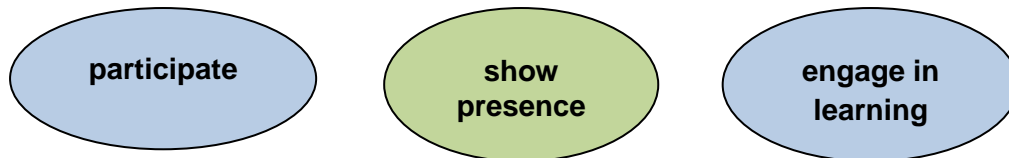
These elements may enable enables students to construct a learning disposition that reflects

**They are involved in the process and ultimately capable of learning. Where learning undertaken has POTENTIAL, VALUE and PURPOSE.**

# Assessment

The Wilson School community is challenged to capture the way in which students are involved in learning. It requires an understanding of how students learn, a precise approach to scaffolding skills and knowledge, and the incremental progressions linked to those capabilities.

It is vital that Wilson School assessment captures students' learning potential and need. Education and environmental supports and strategies will enable students to:



Wilson School community requires a richness of assessment information to more effectively capture capabilities and needs of students. This information is used to:

- Identify students achievement, determine need and establish 'where to next'
- Encourage reflective teaching and therapy practice and informed programme planning
- Provide information which will be able to be clearly communicated to parents / caregivers and support staff
- Explore the knowledge and experience students bring to learn a task
- Determine what learning is actually taking place

Wilson School views assessment as an avenue from which to derive specific knowledge about students. Knowledge and skills are defined within a structured framework. It is essential that the subtleties of the complex and varied learning styles that Wilson Schools student's bring to the teaching and learning dimension are recognised.

The collective assessment of all members of the teaching and therapy team informs the decisions enabling students to reach their potential.