

CHARACTER EDUCATION  
at  
WESTON SCHOOL

**An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of  
Implementing Delivery Strategies**

**1999 – 2004**



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## □ RATIONALE

*“Moral education is not a new idea. It is in fact as old as education itself. Down through history, in countries all over the world, education has had two great goals: to help young people become smart and to help them become good.”*

(Lickona, 1991, p.6)

In recent times, schools have been required to teach the Attitudes and Values requirement of the 1993 New Zealand Curriculum Framework, enable students to develop the values needed to become full members of New Zealand’s society as directed by the first National Education Goal and nominate agreed values in revised charters. These requirements have led to discussion and debate on the purpose, scope, responsibilities and implementation of what has been known as values education within New Zealand schools. For principals and teachers, these requirements signal an invitation to become formally involved in a more holistic approach to education and for some, are the essence, challenge and privilege of a career working with children. Travel by the writer to six countries in 2001 revealed growing international interest, engagement and discourse about schools and their role in developing the values young people will live by, being described as ethics, citizenship, social capital and the increasingly used and accepted term, character education.

With this in mind, questions should be asked as to what successful character education involves and how New Zealand state schools with diverse and pluralistic communities can fully participate.

At Weston School, a U4 decile 8 full primary, where the writer is principal, 20 character education strategies have been trialled and implemented over five years. While the school has received praise<sup>1</sup> for character education initiatives, these strategies have been borrowed or adapted from different countries and contexts or created specifically to fulfil a need, without evaluation.

This management project sets out to background and evaluate these strategies with the intention of providing useful evidence of how successful character education might best continue to develop in the writer’s school and be of assistance to others.

## □ INTRODUCTION

*“Pay attention to the young and make them as good as possible.”*

(Socrates as cited in Lynch, 2002, p.16)

Student behaviour in schools researched by Dr. William Kilpatrick in the early 1990s, reflected the accumulating evidence of American moral decline, first in society and then among the nations youth (Lickona, 1991). In comparing what teachers identified as the greatest threats to the educational process in 1940 and 1990, Kilpatrick notes the following changes:

<b>Teachers concerns in order of greatest threats to the educational process</b>	
<b>1940</b>	<b>1990</b>
1. Talking in class	Drug abuse
2. Chewing gum	Alcohol abuse
3. Class noise	Pregnancy
4. Running in corridors	Suicide
5. Pushing in line	Rape
6. Incorrect uniform	Robbery
7. Littering	Assault

(Kilpatrick, 1992, p.100)

<sup>1</sup> Character education was the nominated special project in Weston School's success as the Runner Up in the 2002 Goodman Fielder School of the Year competition

*“It is clear”, suggests Vincent (1996), “to anyone who has been in education for any length of time that children are now acting differently in school and in the community than children did 20 to 30 years ago” (p.10).*

Former principal John Heenan (2002) describes this as a quiet revolution that he had taken part in during his 40 years in New Zealand education, but claims that such findings as above are only *“indicators of a more deep seated change”* (p.12). This change he argues, is in beliefs about concepts of right and wrong, good and bad, and whose responsibility it is to develop the knowledge, desire and willingness to act out ethical behaviour.

If schools have moved away from a traditional role in equipping the next generation to participate in a just, caring and orderly society, there are now signs of another quiet revolution.

Brown, Bereznicki and Zbar (2003) note the *“perception that traditional sources of authority and influences for inculcating values have lost their mandate with our children”* (p.1). Now it is schools they claim, who face the challenge of how to increase student engagement, tackle violence, foster improved relationships, build student resilience as an antidote to youth suicide and substance abuse and reform whole school cultures.

Various political, societal and educational influences are described in this management project that are impacting on a refashioning of moral education for the children, teachers and parents within this country’s state school communities to meet a variety of needs in a modern age.

The recent Australian Values Education Study (2003) cites Taylor in a literature review who notes that *“we still have only limited information about how schools approach values education, how their provision supports their stated values, why and how they choose certain curricular approaches and teaching strategies and what professional support is needed”* (p.8).

Backgrounding, describing and evaluating various character education implementation strategies at Weston School and discussing these within the contexts of community consultation, professional development and the provision of a teaching and learning framework are intended to share one school’s journey.

## □ LITERATURE REVIEW

Three themes have been selected that relate to this management project and provide a useful summary of the books, articles and research selected to review.

The chosen themes of

1. Values Education or Character Education?
2. The purpose and place of Character Education in New Zealand Schools
3. How is Character Education best taught?

will background the analysis and discussion of the findings contained in this project.

### 1. VALUES EDUCATION OR CHARACTER EDUCATION?

*“A proposed framework of key competencies needed by everyone for a good life and well functioning society.”*

(Ministry of Education, 2004, p.2)

A number of writers and researchers such as Lickona (1991), Heenan (2002) and Brookes and Goble (1997) have felt it important to trace the history of teaching ethics, morals, values, virtues and character in schools. Their common discovery can be summarised by what Stephen Covey (1989) also claims, after conducting an extensive review of American thought, over the 200 years prior to writing his book *‘The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People’*.

In attempting to find out *“what a free and democratic people considered to be the keys to successful living”*, Covey found that *“almost all the literature in the first 150 years or so focussed on what could be called the ‘Character Ethic’ as the foundation of success”* (p.18). During this period it would have been very unlikely, claims Covey that success in business or in the community could happen without good character. In the last 50 years however, style, asserts Covey has replaced substance and image has often been at odds with reality in portraying a person’s real character.

It was also about 50 years ago that traditional views of a school's role in the development of good character began to change in New Zealand (Henderson, 2002). Values education was popularised firstly in the early 1960s with a values clarification movement and then moral dilemma discussion strategies that many American, Canadian, British, Australian and New Zealand teachers used during the 1970s (Heenan, 2002 and Brown, Bereznicki and Zbar, 2004).

These and other similar strategies arose from a fundamental philosophical shift in the place and purpose of teaching ethical behaviour. Much of the values education movement from this time and still evident today is associated with a strong resistance to instructing which values people adopt and is more to do with how a set of values can be developed. Ethical maturity is encouraged with a starting premise that there are no right or wrong answers to questions of value (Brooks and Goble). Such programmes do not promote any particular view and the ideology of moral relativism, that right and wrong are merely personal values always dependent on time, place and circumstance, guide all classroom practice (Heenan, 2002).

The recent comprehensive Australian Values Education Study (Brown, Bereznicki and Zbar, 2003) provides an example of a definition that captures this movement’s emphasis on cognitive development, without any necessary judgement or behavioural implications as an *“explicit conscious attempt to teach **about** values”* (writer’s emphasis) (p.2).

Character education, an American term that has become widely used since the late 1980s, by contrast, according to Milson (2000), is *“the long term process of helping young people develop good character . . . and acting upon core ethical values”* (p.2). One of the world’s foremost writers on character education, Dr Thomas Lickona, is insistent that character

education must consist of “*operative values – values in action*” (p.51). Heenan (2002) agrees with Lickona that the developing of good character is made up of the three corresponding attributes of knowing the good (judging what is right), desiring the good (caring deeply about what is right) and doing the good (acting out what is right).

The distinction between morally neutral cognitive development without any intended behavioural outcomes in values education and a specificity of what is desirable and would actually result in character education may best differentiate these approaches (Brown, Bereznicki and Zbar, 2004).

A number of writers such as Aspin (2003) and Henderson (2002) and researchers such as Leming (1993) and Christenson (as cited by Brooks and Goble, 1997) claim that much in values education has failed because of the lack of any intended and actual outcomes. Brown, Bereznicki and Zbar’s Values Education Study (2003) cites the work of Titus (1994) in their literature review. Titus suggests that “*the common features of schools that seem to have a positive impact on the development of student values include **participation**, encouragement to **behave responsibly**, provision of an orderly school environment and clear **rules** that are fairly enforced*” (writer’s emphasis) (p.9).

Aspin (2003) comments . . . “*it is not sufficient for people to merely clarify the things they value and approve of, to desire those things, accept them, prefer them, incline towards them and even seek to emulate them . . . there has to be an action sequence that makes a difference to us and everyone else*” (p.2).

Henderson (2002) agrees in his description of neo-classicists as people committed to outcomes, describing them as “*moral athletes not given to spending time on the psychiatrist’s couch*” (p.150), in a clear reference to a perceived endless and pointless pondering about subjective moral choices promoted in values education. Hymowitz (2003) is of the opinion that many educators have returned to a more traditional role in teaching character with an emphasis not only on the quality of thinking but also a clear difference between what is desirable and undesirable and expectant behavioural outcomes in response to the results of an increasingly obvious moral vacuum within schools and society. Many aspects of the values education movement he claims were an “*experiment in moral deregulation*” (p.2) in which schools could ignore the importance of promoting quality relationships, focusing too heavily on academic outcomes (Greenfield and Juvonen, 1999) and even tolerating extreme views with sometimes disastrous results. He cites the case of the two teenagers from Columbine High School wearing “Serial Killer” tee shirts without school comment before their views were actioned and became a horrific reality.

While for some, values and character education may mean the same thing, many writers would claim otherwise. In their purest forms, one only seeks to develop students’ moral judgements and values clarification from a neutral position, the other, a more prescriptive approach on what constitutes ethical behaviour accepts a responsibility for teaching and instilling societal values with expected actual behavioural outcomes (Brown, Bereznicki and Zbar, 2004).

## 2. THE PURPOSE AND PLACE OF CHARACTER EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND SCHOOLS

“*No schooling is values free.*”

(Ministry of Education, 1993, p.21)

A recent feature article in the *Christchurch Press* described unprecedented roll growth in the city’s integrated (most of which have a Christian ethos) schools. This popularity, which has seen enrolments increasing at three times the rate of state schools in the past eight years is the result, the article claims, of non preference parents seeking a ‘values-based’ education (Brooker, 2004).

Although since the early 1990's there has been a rising groundswell of interest in values based education, it is of course not a new idea. Forms of character education can be traced back to the inception of the New Zealand Curriculum in 1877, reappearing as 'moral education' in 1904, 'character training' between 1929 and 1961, values orientated objectives in the syllabuses of the 1950s and 1960s and then the Attitudes and Values statements from the 1993 'Curriculum Framework' which shape current delivery (McGee, 1997, Henderson, 2002).

*"Whether we like it or not,"* claims Patrick Lynch, Chairman of New Zealand's UNESCO Education Commission, *"values education is not a fad that will come and go. Coming to grips with it as school leaders is fundamental to having a successful school and properly preparing young people for life."* (Lynch, 2003, p.10)

What is new perhaps is a generation that has struggled more than any other according to Heenan (2003), to know how to transmit it's cultural values without ongoing debate over which values, whose values and the fear of indoctrination. While QPEC (2000) argues that the principle of pluralism means that no religion or value system should have a monopoly in values education, Henderson (2002) sees New Zealand society's embracement of pluralism as hazardous, confusing for schools and potentially unprofitable in terms of actual outcomes. An added complexity to the 'whose value' question is a dual richness in western and Maori tradition. Ritchie (1992) makes the point that *"values are, so to speak, the truths which people hold to be self evident, basic and unquestioned"* (p.66). While nominating 15 Maori values which Ritchie depicts as tools of cultural interface, Heenan (2002) provides a way forward by describing and embracing these in the transcultural nature of eight universal objective laws he calls Cornerstone values. (See appendix 8).

In an area that generates as much interest from politicians, parents, social analysts and the church as it does from educationalists, it is hardly surprising that words such as values, virtues, character, citizenship, moral training and social capital create a confusing picture for the besieged classroom teacher. It is helpful then to consider a number of writers and official publications that offer a rationale for the purpose and place of character education in New Zealand schools through three arguments.

### **An Official, if somewhat vague, Requirement**

Although the New Zealand Curriculum Framework and the first National Education Goal direct schools to reflect, reinforce and develop values, current Minister of Education Trevor Mallard admits that *"it is not an easy thing to meet the obligation to include Attitudes and Values"* (Mallard, 2000, p.1). While the Attitudes and Values statement in the New Zealand Curriculum Framework instructs schools to *"reinforce the commonly held values"* (Ministry of Education, 1993, p.21), there is little specificity over actual requirement. Similarly, the first Education Goal instructs schools to enable students to *". . . develop the values needed to become full members of New Zealand society"* (Ministry of Education, 1993, p.1), but fails to provide the Education Review Office with any benchmarks of expected delivery to monitor outcomes. With little support to assist implementation, it is hardly surprising that the Ministry's own Curriculum Stocktake of 2002 identified Attitudes and Values interpretation and implementation as deficient (Ministry of Education, 2004).

Henderson (2002) contends that while a generic national character education content *prescription* would not be welcome, a *description* of good practice and minimum implementation would guide better practice in many New Zealand schools.

### **The need to help shape Character for the Present**

Lickona (1993) writes that every school requires certain levels of honesty, kindness, respect and responsibility to function successfully. The recent release of New Zealand primary school stand-down and exclusion figures has prompted once again, comment and discussion as to why New Zealand schools remove so many students for breaches in these basic character traits.

Citing Ministry of Education figures sought under question time in Parliament, the New Zealand media describe a significant increase in the number of stand-downs and exclusions and the reason for them, in the period 2000 – 2003. For primary schools, these include:

- 31% increase in stand-downs and exclusions
- 25% increase in alcohol consumption
- 40% increase in physical assaults on staff
- 33% increase in physical assaults on other students
- 21% increase in sexual misconduct
- 59% increase in theft

(Stewart, 2004)

The current Government (Ministry of Education, 2004) is quick to point out that during the same period, school rolls have increased, stand-downs have become a much more used strategy, some reasons for stand-downs and suspensions have been reduced and the majority of New Zealand schools report no stand-downs or suspensions. Despite the various claims made by interpreting this data, Brooker (2004) reports that 23,656 New Zealand students were still removed from their school temporarily or permanently in 2003, interrupted their right to an education and quotes Member of Parliament Bernie Ogilvy who suggests the *“need for parents and schools to instil values in children . . . each school needs to have some sort of character education programme in place”* (p.1).

Heenan (2002) believes there to be a clear, immediate and urgent need to restore and conserve desirable ethical student behaviour in New Zealand schools.

### **The need to help shape character for the Future**

A number of writers provide data, trends and analysis of the way in which a current character deficit in New Zealand will impact on a future society. These include:

- New Zealand has the world’s second highest rate of single parent families (Dunne, 2003)
- Fatherlessness is regarded as the biggest predictor of delinquent youth (Lickona, 1991)
- Divorces have doubled in the last 30 years while marriages have fallen 60% (Dunne, 2003)
- The number of children being raised on a benefit has doubled in the last 15 years to be currently one third of all New Zealand children (Dunne, 2003)
- Child assaults are up almost 200% in the last decade and 40% of our criminals are aged between 14 and 18 (Lynch, 2002)
- Violent acts screened on state owned New Zealand television has tripled since 1995. Childrens Sky channel Nickelodeon, shows 13.4 violent incidents per hour (Courtney, 2004)
- It is estimated that by the age of 16 children have seen 200,000 acts of television violence (Lickona, 1991)
- Bullying incidents in New Zealand schools are amongst the highest in the world (Lynch, 2002)

Heenan (2002) observes that although New Zealanders are living longer, healthier lives in a nation that is wealthier and more technologically advanced than most, there have been profound changes in the values systems of the community that are now of enormous economic and social cost. Heenan adds that while it is parents who must accept the role as first teachers of character, schools have historically played an important part in

supporting social development. Gerritsen (2000) quotes Jan Kerr of the New Zealand Independent Schools Council in emphasising that there is still a great need for this to happen because *“there is no point in schools producing highly educated and qualified students if they cannot relate well to other people”* (p.1).

### 3. HOW IS CHARACTER EDUCATION BEST TAUGHT?

*“Only when everyone is singing from the same song sheet will values education be successful.”*

(Lynch, 2003, p.15)

#### **Role Models**

The idea that adults working in schools have a special responsibility to model desirable character traits is well covered by many writers. Snook (2003) makes the point that this begins at the top, Heenan (2002) describes the key role of the principal, while Chief Education Review Officer Karen Sewell (2003) claims character education can only be taught in *“an environment where you live it and model it”* (p.1). One of the key findings of Neilson’s (2002) New Zealand research was that from his review of the literature and participants in his study an *“all encompassing nature where the adults within the school modelled the values, was an essential component in the effectiveness of any such strategies”* (p.100). Weissbourd (2004) contends however, that a teacher’s influence as a good role model is not enough and promotes a wider responsibility of what adults in a school bring to their day to day relationships with students that count the most.

Heenan (2002) makes the point that role models can also be those outside the school whose example can be admired in a regular focus of heroes.

#### **Literature**

Leming (2000) claims that virtually all character education approaches give a special place to the role of literature. This is true to a greater or lesser extent for the commercially available programmes and approaches in New Zealand such as Cornerstone Values, Kiwi Can, Cool Schools, Living Values, Character Education Programme of New Zealand, Skills for Living, The Virtues Project, Mates, Kia Kaha and Programme Achievers who use language activities as a central strategy. Huffman (1996) reports that in his study, literature based approaches work best. Vitz (1990) also contends that stories are effective in educating for character because they teach by attraction rather than compulsion, invite rather than impose, capture the imagination and touch the heart. Leming (2000) quotes MacIntyre’s (1981) influential work supporting this notion claiming *“the telling of stories has a key part in educating us into virtues”* (p.1). Other effective language based activities suggested by various writers include:

- Role play (Brynildssen, 2002)
- Moral reflection through writing, discussion and debate (Lickona as cited by Dent, 1996)

#### **Integration and Separate Delivery**

Another important strategy in the successful implementation of character education is reported to be a comprehensive delivery. Milson (2000) considers the most important and lasting character education centres around a combination of *“teachers who model the traits they espouse and when students have an opportunity to practice good character through classroom activities, service learning or conflict resolution”* (p.5). Huffman (1995) recommends integrating values into the existing curriculum wherever possible as well as delivering a separate course. Gilness (2003) warns of the failure of character education when it is treated solely as a separate discipline.

#### **Other Whole School Approaches**

- Milson (2000) quotes the work of Lickona (1991), Kilpatrick (1992), Wynne (1997) and describes the influence of Vygotsky (as cited by Berk and Winsler, 1995) in claiming

that character education is most effective *“within a positive school climate and students have opportunities outside of the classroom to practice good character through service programmes, classroom decision making, co-operative learning and peer tutoring”* (p.2).

- Milson also recommends a one value at a time focus in a school (ie: value of the week, month or term).
- Research conducted for the Australian Values Education Study (2003) suggests, *“the influence of parents in values formation is of far greater importance than that of the school. This reinforces the importance of a partnership approach between schools and their local community”* (p.9).
- Vincent (1996) and Heenan (2002) suggest the use of school assemblies as a useful reinforcement strategy.

Heenan (2002) in citing the Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education published by The Character Education Partnership, claims that there is no single script, only important basic principles and that the best character education integrates moral development into every aspect of school life.

## □ RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW THEME LINKS

### **Definition**

Character education is the chosen philosophy for this project and is defined as any explicit and/or implicit school based activity that promotes student understanding, desire and performance of core ethical values.

### **Hypotheses**

1. That the purpose and place of character education in the project school be to fulfil official requirements, provide and pursue an ethical framework for expected behaviour and work in partnership with the community to develop desirable societal values.
2. That a variety of strategies can be used to effectively deliver school wide character education through precept, example and reinforcement.

## □ METHODOLOGY

### **Subjects**

All of the 12 teaching staff at Weston School took part in this case study. While not all of these teachers have been at the school during the full case study period (1999 – 2004), everyone had implemented character education as part of a whole school initiative for at least three terms. Six of the 12 teachers have been delivering some of the nominated strategies for the full period of the case study.

Seven of the 12 teachers are experienced teachers, with the remaining five having between two and five years' experience. Three males and nine females are represented in the sample.

In many respects this sample, with the exception of perhaps a greater male representation, would reflect a typical range of ages, experience and abilities that would be found in many New Zealand primary schools.

All teachers and the acting principal have given their permission for the survey.

### **Design**

Consultation with the acting principal, staff and the supervisor for this project resulted in the creation of a two-part survey (see Appendix 16). Most of the surveys were completed by teachers themselves, others by interview and observation.

Part 1 of the survey is intended to firstly gather data showing if a nominated character education implementation strategy has been used by each teacher and if so, how effective it was rated. Effectiveness is defined in this survey as the extent to which childrens' understanding, desire and/or performance of core ethical values has been increased and/or reinforced. If the strategy had not been used, teachers were asked to specify whether this has been due to age appropriateness, a lack of time (or forgot) or by choice. It was hoped that this data would generate a clear indication as to which strategies are used, found to be effective and why some are not used. This part of the survey was intended to be easy and quick to fill out with a number in the box format. Quantitative and qualitative analysis is intended from the given responses.

Part 2 of the survey allows teachers the choice of answering simply with one word (yes, no, same, increased or decreased), or a more descriptive comment. These responses are intended to provide background to the implementation of the strategies in the areas of community consultation, professional development, level of involvement and philosophical agreement.

A greater analysis on qualitative responses is intended from Part 2 of the survey.

It is intended that the design of the survey would enable the collection of data allowing connections to the research, readings, discussion and conclusions presented in this case study.

### **Data Analysis**

Survey responses in part 1 will be collated and then processed to provide a percentage of staff using or not using each strategy. In addition, an effectiveness rating will be calculated for each strategy used.

The reasons for not using each strategy will be expressed as a percentage of the total number not using the strategy.

A summary of what is used and found to be effective should be easily generated with trends identified and conclusions reached. High percentages of usage and effectiveness

(more than 70%) would be used as a benchmark to gauge perceptions of successful achievement.

Survey responses in part 2 will be expressed as percentage ratings of those agreeing or not and a selection of pertinent comments included. This should allow impressions to be gained as to the general success of the manner in which strategies have been introduced, agreed upon and supported. A high percentage of agreement (more than 70%) supported by a majority of positive anecdotal comment would be used as a benchmark to gauge success.

### **Limitations**

It is acknowledged that this small case study relies heavily on a survey that gauges teacher perception and a foundational survey of parent perception within one school setting. While this only allows for tentative conclusions to be reached and generalisations made, the writer suggests that the professional judgement of this group of teachers over a period of five years, provides a valid addition to the body of existing knowledge in this field.

# Character Education Implementation Strategies

## SURVEY RESULTS

### Part 1

- . Use and effectiveness of each character education implementation strategy
- . Non use and reasons for each character education implementation strategy



## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 1 (Appendix 1)**

### **SCHOOL JOURNAL STORIES, ARTICLES, POEMS AND PLAYS**

#### **Description**

All School Journals, 1980 – 2004 have been read by two Weston School teachers and various contributions have been selected for their relevance to one of the eight Cornerstone Values. The 'Learning Media' database, Journal Search, does not unfortunately list any of these contributions by the character trait being reinforced.

#### **Possible Implementation**

It is intended that teachers who wish to utilise New Zealand journals for a variety of language activities would use this list to quickly locate relevant material to reinforce the value of the term.

#### **Actual Implementation from Survey results**

1. Used  
92% of teachers make use of this strategy and of those, a 72% effectiveness<sup>2</sup> rating was given
2. Not Used  
8% of teachers do not use this strategy  
100% because of a lack of time

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 2 (Appendix 2)**

### **LIBRARY BOOKS**

#### **Description**

All relevant school library books have been sorted by character trait. Each of these books is clearly labelled on the cover with the value, eg: Kindness, and contain a précis of the story, how the value is portrayed and possible class activities. Each term, all the relevant value of the term books are placed in the staffroom for easy location by staff.

#### **Possible Implementation**

Teachers have been encouraged to use this literature in a variety of ways. However reading these books aloud to the whole class is the most frequent and favoured approach.

#### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
100% of teachers make use of this strategy and of those, an 86% effectiveness rating was given

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 3 (Appendix 3)**

### **FOCUS ON A ROLE MODEL**

#### **Description**

Teachers either use material supplied that was developed by the writer (for example Appendix 3) or nominate a person who they consider to be an example of someone who demonstrates or has demonstrated the value of the term. This person could be a member of the class, or in the local community and not necessarily famous.

#### **Possible Implementation**

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<sup>2</sup> Effectiveness is defined in this survey as the extent to which childrens' understanding, desire and/or performance of core ethical values has been increased and/or reinforced. Maximum rating per teacher was 3 (very effective).

A variety of possible social studies/language activities using the person's example as a focus is suggested.

### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
58% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a 72% effectiveness rating was given
2. Not Used  
42% of teachers do not use this strategy  
60% because of age appropriateness  
40% because of a lack of time

### **Character Education Implementation Strategy 4 (Appendix 4)**

#### **DISCUSSION OF NEWSLETTER CONTENT**

##### **Description**

Early each term a school newsletter editorial is written to introduce and background the value of the term. In addition to this, a weekly 'hot tips for parents' section inside the front cover provides a quote, helpful hint or a description of a current topic as an aspect of the value of the term.

##### **Possible Implementation**

Teachers could use the information in the newsletter to generate a class discussion or related language, art or social studies activity.

### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
58% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a 67% effectiveness rating was given
2. Not used  
42% of teachers do not use this strategy  
80% because of a lack of time  
20% because of choice

### **Character Education Implementation Strategy 5**

#### **FOLLOW UP FROM ASSEMBLY**

##### **Description**

Assemblies are held every Monday morning and fortnightly on a Friday afternoon. The Principal prepares a thought, some advice or a small story to introduce or reinforce an aspect of the value of the term.

##### **Possible Implementation**

Teachers would build on whatever is said and relate various class activities to the assembly content.

### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
25% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a 67% effectiveness rating was given
2. Not Used  
75% of teachers do not use this strategy  
88% because of a lack of time  
12% because of choice

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 6**

### **CHILDREN EMAILING THE PRINCIPAL**

#### **Description**

All children in the school are taught how to send an email. At any time before lunchtime of the fortnightly assembly day, children can email to the Principal the name of a child whom they would like to nominate for an award because of their demonstration of the value of the term. The nominee's name is followed by the nominator's name. Only two names are required as the content of the email. After three of these emails are selected at random, the nominator is called from class to background the nomination to the Principal who then awards the recipients at assembly with a McDonald's voucher. Parents are also welcome to email the Principal.

#### **Possible Implementation**

Teachers remind children to email the Principal and even allow time to do this. Children are encouraged to look for the good in others and of course attempt to be nominated.

#### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
33% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a 67% effectiveness rating was given
2. Not Used  
67% of teachers do not use this strategy  
24% because of age appropriateness  
38% because of lack of time  
38% because of choice

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 7 (Appendix 5)**

### **CHARACTER CHECK UP**

#### **Description**

Students are asked to rate themselves on a *never, sometimes* or *always* scale in answer to an action that is linked to a character trait. Sub scores for each value and an overall score can be generated. This strategy was adapted to fit a New Zealand setting by the writer.

#### **Possible Implementation**

This activity is not intended for whole class participation. The responses from an individual child could be the starting point for a student, teacher and possible parent conference following undesirable behaviour.

#### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
17% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a 67% effectiveness rating was given
2. Not Used  
83% of teachers do not use this strategy  
20% because of age appropriateness  
80% because of lack of time

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 8 (Appendix 6)**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

#### **Description**

A list of rules and expected behaviours in the school reinforces the eight Cornerstone Values and includes a pupil friendly 'touchstone' (a one sentence school purpose summary).

#### **Possible Implementation**

Display in the classroom is encouraged with the intention of keeping this code in front of children. Enlarged laminated copies are provided for this. Reinforcement through discussion and making copies of the code for those who forget its content are possible.

#### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
83% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a 70% effectiveness rating was given
2. Not used  
17% of teachers do not use this strategy  
50% because of age appropriateness  
50% because of a lack of time

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 9 (Appendix 7)**

### **CHARACTER SONGS**

#### **Description**

For each Cornerstone Value, a song that captures an aspect of the value has been found or written for classes to sing during the term when that value is focussed upon. Songs are issued on an 'Assembly Songs' CD each term along with three other school songs as a teaching resource.

#### **Possible Implementation**

Classes sing these songs as part of their music programme, at the start of the day and during participation in assembly.

#### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
100% of teachers use this strategy and of those, an 81% effectiveness rating was given

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 10 (Appendix 8)**

### **CORNERSTONE VALUES WORDS AND DEFINITIONS**

#### **Description**

Each Cornerstone Value is described as a word, or a few words. The provided definitions have been adopted school wide. The value of the term and its definition are provided on coloured card for display.

#### **Possible Implementation**

Teachers should use the Cornerstone Value word and definition as the basis for the 'value of the term' teaching and reinforcement. For some younger classes a more age appropriate definition is discussed, promoted and displayed as well.

#### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used

100% of teachers use this strategy and of those, an 89% effectiveness rating was given

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 11 (Appendix 9)**

### **THINKING SHEET**

#### **Description**

This is a written activity adapted by the writer for those who need to explain an undesirable behaviour, recognise the consequences, consider alternatives and promise compensation. A connection is made to the eight Cornerstone Values.

#### **Possible Implementation**

Students who have behaved inappropriately are asked to fill this sheet in, during a 'time out' situation.

#### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
42% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a 67% effectiveness rating was given
2. Not Used  
58% of teachers do not use this strategy  
57% because of age appropriateness  
43% because of a lack of time

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 12 (Appendix 10)**

### **A STORY ABOUT BECOMING THE BEST PERSON I CAN BE**

#### **Description**

This is a "copy and answer" activity developed by the writer that explains and reinforces the eight Cornerstone Values for children who have not done the right thing.

#### **Possible Implementation**

Teachers should be able to select amounts of this story to be completed depending upon the child's age. The first paragraph could be appropriate for 5 or 6 year olds for example. This activity could be seen as an alternative to more meaningless copying punishments or time out without any work.

#### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
33% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a 67% effectiveness rating was given
2. Not Used  
67% of teachers do not use this strategy  
25% because of age appropriateness  
63% because of a lack of time  
12% because of choice

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 13**

### **CLASSROOM DISPLAYS**

#### **Description**

Related children's art or language work, along with the value of the term and definition are prominently displayed in classrooms and corridors for the term when the value is the focus.

### **Possible Implementation**

Teachers provide a physical focus for the results of their related activities that are visible, referred to and act as a reminder to all who come into the room of the value of the term and some of what has been taught.

### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
100% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a 92% effectiveness rating was given

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 14 (Appendix 11)**

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

#### **Description**

Each of the eight Cornerstone Values has suggested teaching and learning objectives that allow the teacher to be quite specific about increasing the understanding of the definition with examples, ideas and explanations.

#### **Possible Implementation**

Teachers use the teaching and learning objectives to create and deliver a lesson on the value of the term.

### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
92% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a 76% effectiveness rating was given
2. Not Used  
8% of teachers do not use this strategy  
100% because of a lack of time

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 15**

### **RELATED LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES**

#### **Description**

A variety of activities are suggested to assist understanding of the value of the term that includes written, visual and oral language.

#### **Possible Implementation**

Poems, posters, debates, fables, letters and stories about student's understanding of doing the right thing are completed and where applicable, displayed.

### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
67% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a 79% effectiveness rating was given
2. Not Used  
33% of teachers do not use this strategy  
50% because of age appropriateness  
50% because of lack of time

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 16**

### **RELATED VISUAL ART ACTIVITIES**

#### **Description**

A variety of activities are suggested to reinforce understanding of the value of the term that include painting, drawing, construction and digital photography.

#### **Possible Implementation**

Children's art works depicting themselves or others doing the right thing are completed and displayed.

#### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
100% of teachers use this strategy and of those, an 81% effectiveness rating was given

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 17 (Appendix 12)**

### **QUOTES, SAYINGS, STATEMENTS, FACTS AND FIGURES**

#### **Description**

A collective of information giving brief ideas about the value of the term from a variety of historical, societal and literary points of view is gathered by the writer and supplied to teachers.

#### **Possible Implementation**

Teachers can use the quotes, sayings, statements, facts and figures to illustrate a point, initiate a discussion, ask students to reflect upon or use for handwriting (eg: quote of the week).

#### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
50% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a 79% effectiveness rating was given
2. Not Used  
50% of teachers do not use this strategy  
50% because of age appropriateness  
33% because of a lack of time  
17% because of choice

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 18**

### **COMMUNITY CLASS PROJECT**

#### **Description**

Teachers are asked to consider adopting a practical community focussed project as an example of the value of the term that would allow children to practise first hand the reality of helping others.

#### **Possible Implementation**

A variety of organisations such as Save the Children, Red Cross, Blind Foundation, Salvation Army, World Vision, Fire Brigade, Food Bank and District Council have been recipients for goods and services as well as class fund raising projects for worthy causes.

#### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
50% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a

79% effectiveness rating was given

2. Not Used  
50% of teachers do not use this strategy  
67% because of a lack of time  
33% because of choice

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 19**

### **CERTIFICATES**

#### **Description**

Templates of certificates recognising behaviour that reflects the value of the term are provided for teachers use.

#### **Possible Implementation**

Teachers can identify and acknowledge right behaviour reflecting the value of the term by awarding a certificate as often as they wish.

#### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
42% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a  
53% effectiveness rating was given
2. Not Used  
58% of teachers do not use this strategy  
57% because of lack of time  
43% because of choice

## **Character Education Implementation Strategy 20**

### **PRINCIPAL'S REINFORCEMENT**

#### **Description**

The Principal actively seeks opportunities to interact formally and informally with children reinforcing the value of the term.

#### **Possible Implementation**

Playground duty, regular time with each class reading and discussing a value of the term book, an annual birthday discussion and treat for every child in the school and small group and individual conferences can be requested.

#### **Actual Implementation from Survey Results**

1. Used  
67% of teachers use this strategy and of those, a  
71% effectiveness rating was given
2. Not Used  
33% of teachers do not use this strategy  
50% because of a lack of time  
50% because of choice

**SECTION ONE RESULTS SUMMARY TABLE 1**  
**Usage and Effectiveness (from most to least)**

<b>STRATEGY TITLE</b>	<b>NO.</b>	<b>USAGE %</b>	<b>EFFECTIVENESS %</b>
Displays	13	100	92
Words & Definitions	10	100	89
Library Books	2	100	86
Songs	9	100	81
Art	16	100	81
T & L Objectives	14	92	76
Journals	1	92	72
Code of Conduct	8	83	70
Language	15	67	79
Principal	20	67	71
Role Model	3	58	72
Newsletter	4	58	67
Quotes	17	50	79
Project	18	50	79
Think Sheet	11	42	67
Certificates	19	42	53
Email	6	33	67
A Story	12	33	67
Assembly	5	25	67
Character Check Up	7	17	67

**SECTION ONE RESULTS SUMMARY TABLE 2**  
**Reasons for Non-Use (from most to least)**

<b>STRATEGY TITLE</b>	<b>NO.</b>	<b>NON USE %</b>	<b>AGE APPROPRIATENESS %</b>	<b>LACK of TIME %</b>	<b>CHOICE %</b>
Check Up	7	83	20	80	0
Assembly	5	75	0	88	12
Email	6	67	24	38	38
A Story	12	67	25	63	12
Certificate	19	58	0	57	43
Think Sheet	11	58	57	43	0
Quotes etc	17	50	50	33	17
Project	18	50	0	67	33
Role Model	3	42	60	40	0
Newsletter	4	42	0	80	20
Principal	20	33	0	50	50
Language	15	33	50	50	0
Code of Conduct	8	17	50	50	0
T & L Objectives	14	8	0	100	0
Journals	1	8	0	100	0
Library Books	2	0	0	0	0
Songs	9	0	0	0	0
Words & Definitions	10	0	0	0	0
Displays	13	0	0	0	0
Art	16	0	0	0	0

# Character Education Implementation Strategies

## SURVEY RESULTS

### Part 2

- . Responses to questions relating to professional development, resources, original initiative, support from senior management team and philosophical agreement



## Results of Section Two – Responses to questions 22 – 28

### Question 22

*Is there sufficient Professional Development to support these strategies?*

92% agreed there was

8% left this question blank

Comments included:

- the importance of the once a term staff meeting to remind teachers about possible strategies, new resources and sharing good practice.

### Question 23

*Are there sufficient resources available to assist your delivery? What else do you need?*

75% indicated that resources were sufficient

Suggestions for additional resources included more picture books and puppets.

### Question 24

*Can you suggest any other ways in which the Principal, BOT or senior teachers can support this implementation?*

50% suggested nothing

Comments included:

- Having a school wide reward system
- Encouragement
- Maintaining and sustaining the development

### Question 25

*Do you have any general comments to make on why the strategies you chose to use are successful or not?*

Comments included:

- Age appropriateness
- Relevance to child's world
- Displays that can be revisited
- Anything visual

### Question 26

*Do you consider the original development initiative (eg: training, parent surveys, sponsorship, BOT involvement) to have been appropriate and/or successful?*

All those on staff at this time agreed that the original development was appropriate and successful.

Comments included:

- Very well done, has led to a school branding
- Good grounding and understanding
- Fine
- Good 'buy in' from the community

### Question 27

*Do you think there should be a continuation of character education at a decreased level, same level or greater level at Weston School and why?*

92% agreed that the same level was appropriate, mostly because it was working well

8% were uncertain

### Question 28

*What general comments would you make about the implementation of the Cornerstone Values approach to building character in children at Weston School? (eg: benefits to teachers, connection to learning and/or behaviour, partnership with parents, attitudes and values delivery)*

Comments included:

- Excellent referral for childrens' behaviour.

- Clear understanding of expectations for both students and parents.
- Newsletter helps remind parents and gives opportunity for further discussion.
- I wouldn't say that childrens behaviour is any better because of character education. They may well be more aware of what the value means, but I don't see them adapting their behaviour accordingly.
- A particular 'word' or 'definition' is useful for teachers/parents, as it gives us a focus for discussing standards of behaviour and expectations of behaviour. It makes the idea concrete. Whether a child will ever attain to that standard may well depend more on home models and family life. But at least a standard has been set.
- Through the teaching of and constant reinforcing of the values the children are more aware of others in the wider community and how they can contribute.
- Children are also able to display positive behaviour and attitudes, which makes for a more positive atmosphere in the classroom.
- Not all homes were promoting basic values as parenting skills were lacking. So in a way school is giving them a point to refer to.
- The values programme formalises and makes sure all classes are covering particular values – using stories and role models are for me the most powerful tools.
- When talking with children, great reference!
- Providing a structure for the teaching and learning of values.
- I like the Cornerstone Values approach because the values were decided for us not what our beliefs are.
- The lesson each term is important, it's like setting the scene and it is always good to fall back on later in the term.
- I think what we are teaching now will have benefits for the children long-term, not necessarily now. When our children leave Weston School and grow into adults will be where the true assessment of the programme comes.

## □ DISCUSSION

*“Character education creates the climate for all learning and caring in schools.”*

(Lickona as cited New Zealand Foundation for Character Education, 2003, p.2)

The results of the teacher survey are discussed as they relate to the themes of community consultation, professional development and a teaching and learning framework.

### **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

#### **Background**

Over a period of two terms in 1999, parents and caregivers at Weston School were given the opportunity to consider and comment on a new major character education initiative. Following a two afternoon presentation by the New Zealand Foundation for Character Education attended by Board of Trustees and members of staff, the following consultation process was implemented:

- Agreement by staff and the Board of Trustees that on the condition there was community support, a whole school character education project be developed and implemented.
- Information on the Ministry of Education’s Attitudes and Values requirement was provided to all parents and caregivers.
- Parents were issued with a character education survey (Appendix 13) asking such questions as *“What sort of an adult do you want your child to grow up to be”* and *“Would you be more inclined or less inclined to send your child to a school which taught character education?”* A very satisfactory 42% return rate was recorded.
- The survey results were published (Appendix 14) and the invitation to a parent meeting was given.
- Results of the survey were discussed at the meeting. Parents viewed and discussed the eight Cornerstone Values (see Appendix 8) and voted unanimously to proceed with implementing the approach using the results and discussion of the survey and the Attitudes and Values requirement as a mandate.
- Annual written surveys, a phone survey conducted by the Board of Trustees and two strategic planning questionnaires have provided regular feedback from the community as to their views on character education at Weston School during the case study period. These have been overwhelmingly positive.

#### **Related Survey Findings**

Staff are often aware of what parents and caregivers perceive as working or not working in a school. Comments from this survey such as *“good buy in from the community”* (question 26) and *“not all homes were promoting basic values as parenting skills were lacking, so in a way school is giving them a point to refer to”* (question 28), indicate a satisfaction with the level and relevance of community support from the staffs’ point of view.

#### **Links to Literature Review and Hypothesis**

The debate over whether values or character education is more relevant in schools, the writer suggests, has been of more interest to teachers than parents. Parents and caregivers are interested in behavioural outcomes, do want good discipline in schools (Maxim Institute, 2004) and are more readily accepting of a list of values, particularly if they are well researched and presented with a robust rationale, that many may suspect. As Brooker (2004) notes in her coverage of the roll increases in Christchurch schools delivering ‘value-based’ education, there seems to be an ever increasing interest, acceptance and embracing of what may have been feared or rejected ten years ago.

The Australian Values Education Report’s (2003) conclusion that *“The influence of parents in values formation is of far greater importance than that of the school”* and that *“This reinforces the importance of a partnership approach between schools and their local*

*community*" (p.9), provides a significant implementation direction for any school as it did, and continues to do so for Weston School.

The philosophical agreement on character education at Weston School reached quickly by staff, Board of Trustees and community continues to be transparent and problem free. Part of the writer's hypothesis that the purpose and place of character education is to work in partnership with the community to develop desirable societal values, is supported by the Weston School consultation process and the results of the staff survey carried out.

### **Implications**

In recognition of the importance of partnership with a community in character education, schools should seek regular opportunities to ask, inform, remind and involve parents in a variety of ways, timetabling such a process in a strategic manner.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Background**

Following the introductory presentation by the New Zealand Foundation for Character Education to the Weston School Board of Trustees and staff, a pattern of professional development utilising the first staff meeting of each term has been observed during the case study period. During these sessions, the 'value of the term' is introduced by the Principal, new resources shared and a reminder of some key understandings restated. Teachers are then given a short time to plan together team approaches, selecting one or more of the 20 strategies outlined in this case study to implement with their classes.

### **Related Survey Findings**

Most (92%) of teachers in the survey agreed that the level of professional development was sufficient. Resources were also regarded as sufficient (75% satisfaction) with requests for more picture books and puppets made. Few teachers could nominate how the senior management team or Board of Trustees could further support the project, although noting that continued encouragement to maintain and sustain the development was always necessary. A school wide reward system was suggested for consideration.

### **Links to Literature Review and Hypotheses**

Lynch's (2003) encouragement is for all staff to sing "*from the same song sheet*" (p.15). School wide consistency will only be achieved through professional development that is carefully structured, has ongoing monitoring and receives the active support from senior management that Snook (2003) writes about.

The writer knows, that to sustain any successful, school wide, long-term development, regular professional development is required. Only then will this project's hypothesis of effectively delivering character education through precept, example and reinforcement be consistently achieved.

### **Implications**

Regular and structured professional development needs to be planned and resourced in order for successful character education to be sustained at Weston School.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK**

### **Background**

Once a school has answered the questions of justification and content of character education in consultation with its community, the focus turns to delivery, with a number of issues for teaching staff.

At Weston School some key implementation decisions were made that have evolved to create a comprehensive delivery of character education. These included:

- The adoption of the Cornerstone Values approach to teaching character emphasising eight core values. It was decided to implement a 'value of the term' focus, thus creating a two year cycle, allowing the depth of a ten week coverage (as opposed to a

value of the week or month) and provide links to other events on the school calendar by considering the order of the values.

- The development of teaching resource folders that would contain a variety of ideas connected with each value of the term for teachers to choose from. These folders were restocked with additional strategies during the period where they were not in use. Cornerstone Values teaching and learning objectives were included in each folder (Appendix 11).
- The employment of a 'Taskforce Green' worker to read the school's library books and sort them by character trait. Literature was nominated at the beginning of the development as a potentially key delivery strategy.
- An agreement among teaching staff that a consistent delivery was desirable and everyone would aim to teach a 'value of the term' lesson with a related art or language activity early each term.

### **Related Survey Findings**

Results from the teacher survey shows the high usage and perceived effectiveness of some essential elements in a teaching and learning framework (Figure 1). The implementation of the Cornerstone Values words and definitions (100% usage and 89% effectiveness), and the teaching and learning objectives (92% usage and 76% effectiveness), suggest that consistent and meaningful pedagogy has been developed. Literature and language based strategies feature highly in the results with library books, songs and journals judged useful and successful by teachers. The implementation of class displays and their effectiveness in reinforcing the understanding of the 'value of the term' was scored the highest by teachers (100% usage and 92% effectiveness).

One seemingly negative response to Question 28 casts doubt on any improvement of behaviour as a result of character education. However, Heenan's (2002) description of a conservation model of character education where the restoration (or the improvement) of desirable behaviour is less prominent than reinforcing and retaining the good that is already present is true at Weston School and may explain this response.

### **Links to Literature Review and Hypothesis**

Many of the results from the survey that relate to a teaching and learning framework are supported by the thoughts and research of various writers. Vitz (1990) and Heenan (2002) describe the importance of literature in assisting character development and Leming's (2000) research evaluating literature based character education programmes provides evidence that students at all levels who were exposed to this strategy "*demonstrate higher levels of ethical understanding than comparison students*" (p.6).

Milson's (2000) argument that a one value at a time focus has benefits supports this strategy at Weston School.

The successful and popular implementation of one core value word, its school wide definition and teaching and learning objectives per term is well supported by Huffman (1995) and Gilness (2003) who argue for a structured separate and integrated approach.

The writer notes that three highly used and effective strategies (displays, art and songs) are not well supported by other writers or research. The writer suggests that this may be due to the fact that these ideas have evolved and developed into strengths at the Weston School through staff ability and enthusiasm and one or more of these may pose some potential for further formal investigation.

The results of the teacher survey indicates that at least 50% of staff use 70% of the implementation strategies with an overall average effectiveness rating of 74.1% which supports the writer's hypothesis that a variety of strategies can be used to effectively deliver school wide character education through precept, example and reinforcement.

### **Implications**

It is difficult to reach many conclusions about strategies that rated lowly in the survey as shown in Figure 2. Some are relatively new and had not been trialled by all teachers (eg: Strategies 3, 7, 11 & 12), a number are intended as consequences for undesirable behaviour and often not needed (eg: Strategies 7, 8, 11 & 12) and others could be viewed as supporting strategies to a more central delivery, to be used as and when required (eg: Strategies 4, 5, 6, 17, 19 & 20).

The writer also notes however that some teachers are claiming a lack of age appropriateness in a few strategies that others appear to use with simple adaptation. This could become the focus of some professional development.

## □ CONCLUSION

*“Character education is not a single course, quick fix programme or a slogan posted on a wall; it is an integral part of school life.”*

(New Zealand Foundation for Character Education, 2002, p.1).

The following findings of this project support the notion that character education has a rightful place and worthy purpose within the New Zealand education system.

### **Survey results from teachers at Weston School reveal that:**

1. There has been a high degree of philosophical agreement by all parties that character education with its implications of expected behavioural outcomes to an agreed set of values fulfils legal obligations, is justified, desirable and important to both the school and wider community.
2. The average effectiveness rating given by teachers for the 20 character education strategies was 74.1%. Despite some teachers not using some strategies, the judgement that most strategies are very effective in increasing and/or reinforcing children’s understanding, desire and performance of ethical behaviour is considered by the writer to be significant. If teachers are finding this collection of strategies to be fulfilling this purpose then consolidation and continuation of their development should be pursued.
3. With 70% of the strategies being used by at least 50% of the teachers in the case study, and 35% of strategies by nearly all teachers, consistent delivery is evident. This is supported by the following observation from a recent Education Review Office Report that stated *“Student learning is strongly supported by the explicit and purposeful teaching of values, both as a separate curriculum area and integrated into other learning areas. The principal and teachers consistently model a culture of mutual respect and the identified values are reinforced through the behavioural expectations of teachers. These values are evident in the positive relationship between staff and students”* (2003, pp 2-3).
4. The most used strategies fall into three categories:
  - The foundational philosophy and teaching framework provided by the Cornerstone Values approach to teaching character through the eight values and definitions and related teaching and learning objectives. This is the structure that allows teachers in the case study to guide their delivery knowing a sound rationale underpins their practice and does not require additional research or extensive planning. Related reinforcement activities and behavioural expectations stem from these objective, researched, provided and agreed reference points.
  - Reinforcement activities that are literature or language based are dominant in their use and well supported by research.
  - All teachers use pupil art works and subsequent classroom and corridor displays. An attractive physical reminder of what is important in the school, seen in all pupil areas is recognised as a powerful cognitive development tool.
5. Some of the reasons for non-use could be overcome with professional development aimed at sharing ideas of how to adapt strategies to be more age appropriate. For example, the failure to use role models by a number of teachers because of a perceived lack of age appropriateness could be overcome by not confining this strategy to those who are famous or even an adult. Nominated children within a new entrant class who have demonstrated good character could simply be the role model example in that class.
6. Despite a greater overt, pro-active, deliberate and specific delivery of character education at Weston School than many schools, all teachers surveyed at Weston School describe this current profile as being at the right level.
7. There is potential for more implementation of class community or service projects requiring greater participation of children to have real responsibilities in a learning-by-doing approach that develops all three aspects of character – knowing, feeling and doing.

8. One highly used and rated effective implementation strategy, character songs, may be worthy of further investigation. The writer found no reference to the use or effectiveness of learning memorable, fun and virtue reinforcing songs in his literature review despite teachers in the case study survey rating this as one of the best strategies. The writer believes there is potential for further development and implementation once this strategy is analysed and interpreted from a theoretical or conceptual frame of reference.

**The original hypotheses of the project that:**

1. the purpose and place of character education in the project school be to fulfil official requirements, provide and pursue an ethical framework for expected behaviour and work in partnership with the community to develop desirable societal values, and

2. a variety of strategies can be used to effectively deliver school wide character education through precept, example and reinforcement

are supported, the writer believes, by these tentative conclusions. Although this evidence is only within one school's experience, representative of a small sample of teachers and the result of a limited investigation, the writer believes the validity of this investigation lies in providing a snapshot of used and effective strategies that could well work in many educational settings. One of the recommendations of the Australian Values Education Study (2003) was that *"schools co-operate in gathering values education material and resources developed by schools so they can be shared with other schools as appropriate"* (Brown, Bereznicki and Zbar, p.18).

This collection of implementation strategies, their perceived effectiveness and the school culture in which they have or are becoming embedded in, may provide a useful starting point for further research confirming for other schools and the staff, Board of Trustees and parents at Weston School, that comprehensive, successful and undisputed character education is achievable.

## □ EVALUATION

*“Great learning and superior ability are of little value unless honour, truth and integrity are added to them.”*

(Adams as cited by Cortes, 2002, p.6)

When the anxious mother of a 10-year-old boy sat in the writer’s office apologising and offering to pay for the damage her son had caused in the school during a previous weekend, the discussion turned to an interesting question.

What puzzled the mother was that her son seemingly, had shown little remorse for something he didn’t recognise as wrong. How could he be confused about what was to his mother clearly bad and illegal behaviour? Where do children get values messages from and how do these shape a child’s character, wondered the mother?

While the answer to these questions may lie in the complex societal changes indicated earlier in this project, the good news for this parent was that Weston School has a comprehensive character education approach in place.

When a school can clearly state what it stands for, what it values and what children should be able to do by the time they leave that school, a clear focus and framework has been provided for learning communities to work towards. At Weston School such a philosophy has actively embodied itself in 20 character education implementation strategies that require students to consider their choices within an agreed ethical framework.

The writer’s research and reading for this management project has formalised the intended use of these strategies and provided data of perceived effectiveness that will be useful in further implementation. The methodology used in this project has proven to be effective in gauging the perceptions of teachers although nominating evidence of conserved or restored behaviours may have added increased validity.

Because character potentially affects everything that happens in a school, there are numerous implications in this project for those who manage school culture. For the writer, as principal of the case study school, this means:

1. Being mindful that successful leadership in character education rests upon vision, inclusiveness and example. This affects management style and practice.
2. Continually and actively encouraging school wide consistency in modelling and teaching the eight Cornerstone values.
3. Resourcing and promoting literature as a key character education teaching strategy.
4. Recognising the potential of pursuing a further collection of quality and fun character education songs for all levels.

An American school principal once reminded his staff of their mission by writing, *“I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness. Gas chambers built by learned engineers; children poisoned by educated physicians; infants killed by trained nurses; women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates. So I am suspicious of education.*

*My request is, help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing and arithmetic and all that schools seek to do are important only if they serve to make our children more human”* (Pring as cited by Heenan, 2003, pp8-9).

Because many have recognised, since the time of Plato (Lickona, 1991), that smart and good are not the same, character education implementation strategies such as shared and evaluated in this project are needed to assist school communities in teaching our children to know, desire and do what is right.

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## □ APPENDICES

1. Example List of School Journal stories, articles, poems and plays
2. Example list of Library Books
3. Example of Role Model focus
4. Newsletter example
5. Character Check Up
6. Code of Conduct
7. Example of a Character Song
8. Cornerstone Values Words and Definitions
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11. Example of Teaching and Learning Objectives
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