

**The Cornerstone Values Approach to Character Education  
in New Zealand Schools**



**New Zealand Foundation for Character Education Inc.**

**July 2009**

The purpose of this paper, compiled by John Heenan, Director, New Zealand Foundation for Character Education Incorporated, is to answer three broad questions.

1. What is the purpose of the Cornerstone Values approach to character education?
2. Where can the Cornerstone Values approach to character education be seen?
3. What comments have been made about the Cornerstone Values approach to character education?

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## **The Cornerstone Values approach to character education in New Zealand schools**

### **Introduction**

*“The best values teaching inspires students by making them keenly aware that it is their own character that is at stake.” Christina Hoff Somers*

The Cornerstone Values approach to character education was developed by John Heenan, a former school principal and published by the New Zealand Foundation for Character Education Inc.

Others, particularly Rod Galloway, principal of George Street Normal School, Dunedin and chairman of the New Zealand Foundation for Character Education, have built upon Heenan’s original publication by producing teaching resources which facilitate the implementation of the approach.

There is no need for the busy teacher to reinvent the wheel.

This indigenous approach to character education is being implemented in an increasing number of New Zealand schools.

### **Cornerstone Values**

Cornerstone Values are a comparatively small set of objective values which inform and direct our actions and behaviour. They have only positive outcomes.

These universal values produce behaviour that is beneficial to individuals, others and the community. They enhance the well being of all; prevent harm to individuals and society; are the essence of healthy relationships and the foundation of a just, caring and civil society.

The eight cornerstone values are consistent, constant and transcultural and have been held in common by all cultures and civilizations throughout history. They are:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Honesty and truthfulness
- Consideration for others
- Compassion
- Kindness
- Obedience [to rightful authority]
- Duty [obligation.]

These eight objective values are the cornerstones of character formation.

Because they reproduce themselves as they are practised, cornerstone values are powerful in transforming school culture and in changing student behaviour.

Honesty, for example, reproduces itself as trust, respect and loyalty. These traits of character are gained as they are given and given as they are gained.

### **Historical goals of education**

Throughout history education in countries all over the world has had two great goals:

- To help young people master the skills of literacy and numeracy
- To help young people develop good character.

The traits of character are needed to achieve both goals.

Young people need character qualities such as diligence, a strong work ethic, and a positive attitude in order to do their best in school and succeed in life. They need character qualities such as honesty, respect and fairness to live and work with others.

### **Character**

Character is that inner form that makes anyone or anything what it is - whether a person, a wine, or an historic period. Character is distinct from such concepts as personality, image and reputation.

Applied to a person character is the essential “stuff” that one is made of, the inner reality in which thoughts, speech, decisions and relationships are rooted.

Character lies deeper than philosophies, convictions and accomplishments, even deeper than virtues. Character expresses most deeply what constitutes a person as a unique individual. As such, character is inextricably linked to behaviour.

Indeed, character determines behaviour just as behaviour demonstrates character.

In essence, character can be defined as knowing the good, desiring the good and doing the good.

Character is important in leadership. It provides the leader’s deepest source of being and strongest source of restraint.

Character is a leader’s first prompting to do “good” and last barrier against doing “wrong.”

Character is both the leader’s motivation and final restraint.

### **The demise of character education**

Character education is the process which fosters character in the young and helps them become good people and therefore responsible citizens.

From the 1960’s character education, or character training as it was called in the New Zealand curricula of the day, was replaced by values education. While the purpose of

“Cornerstone Values is teacher friendly, parent friendly, easy to implement and cost effective.” 4  
Peter Moyle, Principal, Taupo nui-a-Tia College, Taupo

values education was never defined it was primarily concerned with the quality of students' thinking.

In contrast, character education has always been concerned with the quality of student conduct and behaviour.

Character education is not an addition to the school curriculum. It uses all areas of the curriculum and the school culture to teach, endorse, advocate and model the eight cornerstone values.

Character education informs and influences everything that happens in a school whether in the classroom, the playground, the principal's office or the relationship between the home and the school.

### **The teaching content of Cornerstone Values**

The teaching content of the Cornerstone Values approach to character education is remarkably small. It consists of:

- The definitions of the eight cornerstone values
- The law of consequences [Cause and effect - nothing happens by accident, something causes it to happen. What happens at the beginning determines what happens at the end.]
- Rational decision making [A three-step process: Consider all the possible alternatives. Examine all the possible consequences of the alternatives. Accept responsibility for the consequences of the decision.]

While the teaching content is consistent throughout the school the resources and methodology change to remain age appropriate.

Most schools cover one cornerstone value per term which means that the eight cornerstone values are covered each two-year cycle.

Cornerstone Values is a whole-of-school approach.

### **The cost of implementing Cornerstone Values**

The total cost to each school for all the current resources needed to implement the Cornerstone Values approach to character education is \$463.85 plus postage.

These resources support a two-year cycle of intentional character education at a cost of \$58 per term.

It would be difficult to name any expenditure on a teaching resource that has more significant and compounding outcomes for a school and its community than Cornerstone Values resources.

## **Purpose of New Zealand Foundation for Character Education Inc.**

The New Zealand Foundation for Character Education Incorporated, a non-profit organization without religious or political affiliations, was established in 1993 to fund the preparation, publication and promotion of character education resources.

Over the sixteen years of its existence the Foundation for Character Education has:

- Published “Building Character through Cornerstone Values” and supporting teaching resources
- Produced publications and research to support schools
- Held presentations, seminars, and conferences attended by over 1,000 principals, teachers and trustees
- Sold resources to over 200 schools
- Sponsored research among participating principals on the effectiveness of the Cornerstone Values approach to character education in their schools
- Establish a website to support schools to implement the approach
- Awarded ten schools the use the Foundation for Character Education’s registered trade mark
- Supported two principals to attend character education conferences in America
- Built significant expertise in character education within New Zealand schools

All these have been achieved with a modest income derived from grants, donations, and the sale of character education resources.

Voluntary service has made a major contribution to the production of the resources and the success of the project.

Before each project is undertaken the Foundation for Character Education has to raise the required funds. This often takes longer than the time required to complete the project.

The greatest barrier to funding has been the perception of charitable trusts and prospective donors that the work undertaken by the Foundation for Character Education should be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

## **Secondary Schools**

Until the last three years interest in the Cornerstone Values approach to character education was overwhelmingly from primary schools. This was probably because it is widely recognized that core values are learned at a young age.

Intentional character education in secondary schools was comparatively rare at the very developmental stage when the need is arguably the greatest.

The success of Taupo nui-a-Tia College, the first secondary school to be awarded the use of the Cornerstone Values registered trade mark, has been influential in alerting secondary schools to the importance of intentional character education.

“Cornerstone Values is teacher friendly, parent friendly, easy to implement and cost effective.” 6  
Peter Moyle, Principal, Taupo nui-a-Tia College, Taupo

Deteriorating student behaviour which challenges school management and compromises the quality of teaching and learning has contributed to a growing interest among secondary schools in character education.

This increased receptivity encouraged the New Zealand Foundation for Character Education to hold its first National Symposium for secondary schools in November 2008.

The symposium was attended by representatives of twenty, or 8% of secondary schools. These schools had a combined roll of 17,700 students and were representative of secondary schools in terms of school size, type, geographic location and decile classification.

The symposium's presenters were all from secondary schools that were implementing the Cornerstone Values approach to character education.

An indication of the response to the gathering can be gleaned from this sample of written comments.

- Very positive and motivating
- Good variety of what schools are doing
- Of great help as we start to implement values/character education in 2009
- A good range of case studies so could select those most applicable to our situation
- Most valuable, need a whole-school approach embedded into the culture of the school
- Great to see an organization acting in the interests only of a better society
- Seeing what other schools are doing and how it is connected to the key competencies
- It was encouraging to hear that others have made such a huge change to their school culture

Many participants commented on the urgent need for age appropriate resources for secondary schools.

### **Westbridge Residential School, West Auckland**

Westbridge is a specialist school catering to the needs of children who display significant emotional, behavioural, social and learning difficulties that cannot be managed within their own community.

The school caters for the bottom 1% of deviant behaviours in the upper North Island.

The principal, John Rutherford, has developed a simple and effective strategy that encourages students to examine their behaviour and its consequences in terms of the formation of their own character.

The strategy centres on a simple "think sheet" which John Rutherford developed when deputy principal of the former Hibiscus Coast Intermediate School.

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Peter Moyle, Principal, Taupo nui-a-Tia College, Taupo

When John Rutherford moved from the high decile intermediate school to a decile 2 specialist school he did not know if his simple behaviour modification strategy would work.

He soon found that it did.

The New Zealand Foundation for Character Education considered his work so important that it published the strategy in a booklet entitled “Character and Behaviour - the “Think Sheet.”

Rutherford’s “Think Sheet” has potential for further development particularly for parenting, counselling and correction.

Contact details for Westbridge Residential School are provided on page 30.

## **Research**

The NZ Foundation for Character Education recognises the importance of research to the ongoing development and validation of the Cornerstone Values approach to character education.

Research projects that have been undertaken include:

- Parent/ caregiver survey

This study was undertaken by the Business Studies Department, Southern Institute of Technology, Invercargill to provide qualitative information from parents and caregivers of a school’s students concerning:

- The type of person they would like their child/ren to be
- The importance placed on the teaching of character by the school
- The values to be emphasised in a character education programme
- The inclination to send children to a school because of its character education programme

The Survey results [<http://www.cornerstonevalues.org/question.html>] show an overwhelming support for character education in schools and for the eight cornerstone values.

Parents/caregivers ranked honesty and truthfulness as the most important quality that they would like their child/ren to possess.

- **The effectiveness of character education in New Zealand Schools**

Two surveys, the first in 2004 and the second in 2007 into the effectiveness of character education in New Zealand schools, were supervised by Dr. Gael McDonald, then Professor of Business Ethics at Auckland Unitec.

Both studies were of the perceptions of school principals who had implemented the Cornerstone Values approach to character education in their schools.

The 2004 study concluded that schools that have had character education as part of their curriculum for over two years, show notable improvements in the school learning environment. These improvements include:

- Improved relationships between staff and students and between students
- Improved student behaviour
- Fewer discipline actions
- Enhanced the school as a caring community
- Increased staff stability
- Increased student attendance

Teachers acknowledged the advantages and satisfaction of teaching in a school with overt, proactive, specific character education.

[The full report is available on <http://www.cornerstonevalues.org/gael.html>]

The results of 2007 survey in which 34 schools participated confirmed the findings of the 2004 study and showed that:

- The primary instigator of character education is, predictably, the principal
- The decile classification of a school does not appear to influence or be an impediment to the adoption of character education
- 50% of the schools noticed a 'significant' improvement in teaching effectiveness since the implementation of character education
- Improved behaviour allows for more focussed teaching and that students appear to show more responsibility to learn and incorporate the cornerstone values into most aspects of planning and learning
- Parents/caregivers intrinsically believe in values and are very supportive of Cornerstone Values

The study also found that character education has a notably positive effect on:

- Relationships between staff and students and between students
- Student classroom and playground behaviour - less stand downs
- Incidence of vandalism - The majority of schools noticed that having cornerstone values has resulted in a decline in vandalism by 60 - 75%
- School being perceived as a caring community
- Staff morale - by creating a positive environment where the focus for a teacher is on teaching and learning and not behavioural issues - more cooperation between staff members
- ERO reports - positive comments directly attributed to character education
- Need for specialist services - a decline in the need for external specialist services

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- Management of schools - 75% of the schools considered that character education had made them easier to manage
- Teaching effectiveness - better student behaviour allows for greater focus on teaching and learning

The study concluded that the presence of character education enhanced many qualities within a school but most importantly enabled schools to have a greater focus on teaching and learning rather than behavioural issues

The full report is available on <http://www.cornerstonevalues.org/nzschools2.html>

### **Schools using the Cornerstone Values approach to character education**

One of the strengths of the approach is that once a school understands the rationale and has established a framework for delivery and created an appropriate school culture there is little need, other than for new resources, for external support.

For this reason the Foundation for Character Education does not know how many schools are using Cornerstone Values resources or implementing the Cornerstone Values approach to character education.

However, there is reason to believe that the number is significant.

This view is supported by the 2005 Ministry of Education, Literature Review on Values in the Curriculum which states, “This programme [Cornerstone Values] has been very influential in a considerable number of schools, although the number of schools using this programme is not known.”

“The Cornerstone Values Programme clearly influences many schools, as was evidenced by mention of the programme by many of the schools represented at the regional consultation meetings.”

[Ministry of Education, Values in the New Zealand Curriculum - A Literature Review on Values in the Curriculum, Paul Keown, Lisa Parker and Sarah Tiakiwai, July 2005]

There are three levels at which schools may participate in the Cornerstone Values approach to character education.

1. Include Cornerstone Values resources with the school’s other values teaching resources
2. Implement the Cornerstone Values approach to character education
3. Implement the Cornerstone Values approach and apply to become a registered user of the Cornerstone Values registered trade mark

### **Registered users of the Cornerstone Values trade mark**

To date ten schools have been accredited as registered users of the Cornerstone Value’s registered trade mark.

The trade mark symbolizes the school's commitment to the building of character through teaching, advocating and modelling honesty and truthfulness, kindness, consideration and concern for others, compassion, obedience, responsibility, respect and duty.

The award follows an accreditation process that includes the board of trustees and principal meeting criteria for effective character education, written statements from visitors to the school and an independent character education review undertaken by a school principal from outside the region.

In terms of the Cornerstone Values approach to character education the ten accredited schools are considered to be the best practice schools known to the Foundation for Character Education.

The schools accredited to use the registered trade mark are:

Waianiwa Primary School, Southland  
George Street Normal School, Dunedin  
Musselburgh Primary School, Dunedin  
Weston Primary School, Oamaru  
Spring Creek Primary School, Blenheim  
Bellevue Primary School, Newlands, Wellington  
Taupo nui-a-Tia College, Taupo  
Kaharoa Primary School, Rotorua  
Malfroy Primary School, Rotorua  
Te Awamutu Primary School, Waikato

The details of the accredited schools are provided in Appendix III (Pages 28 - 30)

### **Comments on Cornerstone Values**

Rod Galloway who is principal of George Street Normal School, Dunedin and chairman of the NZ Foundation for Character Education has played a leading role in the implement of Cornerstone Values in New Zealand schools.

The Foundation for Character Education has published two reports by Rod Galloway:

- “Character in the Classroom - A report on how New Zealand's changing social values are impacting on student behaviour and how schools can meet new challenges” 2007
- “Making Sense of Managing Self - Teaching Responsibility to Improve Student Learning and Behaviour in New Zealand Schools” 2008

Rod Galloway is presently overseas on a Woolf Fisher Fellowship. While in the United Kingdom he will present a paper at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference at Manchester University.

His paper will detail research that backgrounds character education in New Zealand schools and the implementation of the Cornerstone Values approach as a successful, up-to-date and significant model for good practice.

Rod Galloway has provided the following comment on his experience of the Cornerstone Values approach.

“As a school leader for the past ten years I have experienced the Cornerstone Values approach to building character.

During this time I have come to regard the Cornerstone Value’s philosophy, strategies and day-to-day implementation as the most important and successful influence on our school culture. Despite being a big and busy school I regard Cornerstone Values as our number one priority. This is because character development is so important and because Cornerstone Values works so well.

At George Street Normal School we can measure the success of Cornerstone Values in the quality and improvement of our relationships between children, staff and parents. This happens because the approach is resourced, understood, overt and led by senior staff.

Teachers at George Street Normal School speak highly of the improvements in behaviour, engagement and the advantages in having a school-wide approach. The ‘Value of the Term’ is such a logical cycle for each level of the curriculum - eight values over the eight terms of each school level. This allows intentional teaching that provides positive foundations for learning and behaviour.

In addition to this I have had nothing but praise and thanks from our parents, encouragement and support from boards of trustees and a number of statements of appreciation from community leaders.

At the end of each year we ask our graduating students about the most important learning they have achieved during their time with us. Overwhelmingly, the lessons of getting along with others and becoming the best person they can be, as expressed in the eight Cornerstone Values, is the answer given.

Needless to say, I regard the Cornerstone Values approach to building character highly. I have found it easy to implement and cost effective with simple, clear links to the revised New Zealand curriculum.

While much of this approach is common sense, it does require committed leadership and a school community that is willing to actively model and embrace a vision for creating a more positive and contributing society.”

Comments from others can be found in Appendix I (Pages 14 - 19)

## Conclusion

Over a period of sixteen years Cornerstone Values, New Zealand's only indigenous approach to character education, has developed to a stage where it merits greater support and recognition from Government.

There are a number of reasons for this:

1. Like all genuine reforms, the Cornerstone Values approach to character education is a grassroots initiative which is implemented school by school. There is no call for the approach to be imposed on schools and their communities.
2. Schools have found that it works on many levels - in the classroom, the playground, the sports field, within the staff and between the school and the home.
3. The outcomes are good for the individual, the family, the school, the community and the nation.
4. The approach addresses the problem of disobedience, which is the greatest reason cited for New Zealand's 24,000 annual school suspensions.
5. Provides a context for the management of behaviour.
6. Schools that have implemented the Cornerstone Values approach to character education find that they become more focussed on the quality of teaching and learning and less preoccupied with the management of behaviour.
7. It is inexpensive to implement and does not add to the curriculum.
8. There are clear and easy links to the revised curriculum.
9. It draws on the best practices of the past and provides models for the future.

The recent Ministry of Education Behaviour Summit concluded that any solution to the growing problem of behaviour in schools had to be a whole-of-school approach and evidence based. The Cornerstone Values approach to character education meets both criteria.

Perhaps Peter Moyle, principal of the Taupo nui-a-Tia College sums up the experience of many principals who have implemented Cornerstone Values when he observes, "Its teacher friendly, parent friendly, easy to implement and cost effective."

Because schools are busy places with endless demands on principals and teachers competent principals would not waste time implementing the Cornerstone Values approach to character education if it did not work.

Character education is a reform that will work. Other reforms may work but high standards of behaviour and conduct do work and nothing else works without them.

Character education offers hope of what schools and their communities could be.

It is a reminder of what is important.

It places first things first.

## **Appendix I - Comments on the effectiveness of the Cornerstone Values approach to character education**

A careful study has been made of your publication and a small sub-group with which I am working at the moment has a brief to come up with ideas for a wide debate on core values and ethos in schools in Belfast [Northern Ireland.]

Everyone in the group has been very impressed by the quality and lucidity of the document and its underpinning rationale. We have searched widely in the United Kingdom and further afield but have found little which addresses the issues in the way that Cornerstone Values does.

**- Noel Hunter, Belfast Education & Library Board, Belfast, Northern Ireland**

I was delighted by the depth and breadth of your character education work. Your Foundation has placed the development of character education on par with the leading work elsewhere in the world. It is my hope that your progress and model will be shared with educators in the United States and other interested nations.

**- Charles Elbot, Director, Office of Educating for Character, Denver Public Schools**

The greatest benefits of the Cornerstone Values approach at Kaharoa School have been.

- They underpin all that we do at the school and give us a clear foundation for all our decisions and actions across all levels of the school, for staff, pupils and community. We have represented the character values in our curriculum development as the foundation that holds everything together.
- We have a shared language
- Though behaviour wasn't a major issue at Kaharoa School we have still seen an improvement in children's behaviour. This is particularly obvious in the ability to honestly own up to a mistake
- We now promote expectations of behaviour rather than enforcing rules and this is reflected in our policies.

Quite simply Kaharoa School is a great place to be. Teachers enjoy teaching there and students enjoy learning in a safe and secure environment that has clear consistent expectations.

**- Warwick Moyle, Principal, Kaharoa School, RD 1 Rotorua**

Judy Jones, a National Schools of Character evaluator and site visitor [USA] recently visited Kaharoa School and concluded an article she had written for publication by the Character Education Partnership, Washington DC with this observation.

“Could Kaharoa be a model for any school in America? Of course. What this tiny school of 200 children ages 5 - 12 in a rural community has accomplished could be compared to a large, well-funded suburban school within the United States. Kaharoa

“Cornerstone Values is teacher friendly, parent friendly, easy to implement and cost effective.” 14  
Peter Moyle, Principal, Taupo nui-a-Tia College, Taupo

School's "Can Do" spirit and vision, combined with ingenuity and hard work, has made it all happen."

**- Judy Jones, National Schools of Character, [USA] Evaluator and Site Visitor**

We continue our character education programme using Cornerstone Values and we are now in our ninth year of the programme. With the character education teaching programme and having the eight values embedded in our school's learning and behaviour we know it has a strong affect on all.

We have chartered Cornerstone Values as the values that Waianiwa School will embed into the curriculum. We have considered what they mean in each learning area.

When we asked our students what they wanted to be when they grew up, the strongest focus by far, was not vocation related but character related.

We were amazed at the programme's impact. This reflects the learning they are doing through Cornerstone Values about strong character and being the best we can be.

**- Sue Walker, Principal, Waianiwa School, Southland**

"I needed to drop you an e-mail just to comment on the success that the Cornerstone Values has had on our school.

We are a decile 2 West Auckland School with a roll of 461 students.

Prior to my appointment as principal, Pomaria had a problem around bullying.

My deputy principal and I attended the conference down in Wellington (2007) and brought the concept back to our staff.

We did some staff development around the introduction of the cornerstone values and tied them with the values which we have in our school - Whnaungtanga, Turangawaewae, Manaakitanga and Matauranga.

All staff, including support and auxiliary staff, has bought into this and as a result it has filtered into classrooms as part of our integrated approach to learning. The community have also taken on these values which are communicated through newsletters, assemblies etc.

I am attaching a copy of a needs analysis around the impact that these values have brought to or school and how they have impacted on behaviour, stand downs etc.

We have been through an ERO review at the start of term two this year, ERO has commented positively around the values of the school and how children, staff and community are able to verbalise and practice these values.

Thanks once again for a fantastic programme.

**- Kevin Choromanski, Principal Pomaria Primary School, Henderson, Auckland**

"Cornerstone Values is teacher friendly, parent friendly, easy to implement and cost effective." 15  
Peter Moyle, Principal, Taupo nui-a-Tia College, Taupo

I am so excited by some very important things I've been working on regarding the place of character education and the important place it has in achieving the learning intentions in the key competencies but more importantly in influencing people's actions through their thinking.

We also use intervention as an important part of our social development programme and when addressing the key competencies stress the critical role of moral reasoning in reframing the logic pathways for "right" decision making.

I have been doing a huge amount of speaking recently. Cornerstone Values are a critical element of my themes, especially in building capacity in the home-school partnership.

- **John Rutherford, CEO and Principal, Westbridge Residential School, West Auckland**

Over the past three years the staff of Musselburgh School has been actively and explicitly teaching the Cornerstone Values Programme. Within this time we have seen a significant change within our school culture, children's behaviours and community involvement.

The first part of the process was our community consultation. A survey was sent home to each family to ask which values they thought were the most important to them. From this survey we chose eight of the most requested values.

The teachers have integrated the values programme into their classroom programmes allocating a part of the week where explicit teaching is done: what the specific value looks like, sounds like and feels like. Examples are discussed and displays are made and referred to throughout the day to reinforce positive behaviours.

Musselburgh School prides itself in the nurturing, safe and caring environment we provide for our students. We foster everyone's strengths and give our children opportunities to grow academically as well as socially and emotionally to become the very best they can be. The Cornerstone Values Programme has been the foundation on which we have built our philosophy and practice."

- **Debbie Smith, Principal, Musselburgh School, Dunedin**

Our school's decision to introduce the Cornerstone Values approach to character education was deliberate and timely. It was the need to improve student conduct and behaviour that lead us to Cornerstone Values.

As a result the board and staff focussed on student conduct. Students, staff and parents have noted a significant reduction in issues surrounding conduct.

The teaching strategies and vocabulary of the Cornerstone Values approach has resulted in an observable improvement.

- **Andrew McFarlane, Principal, Spring Creek Primary School, Marlborough**

Malfroy School is a medium sized primary school located in Rotorua's central suburbs. Students know their teachers care for them and they enjoy a range of rich learning experiences. The cornerstone values of respect, responsibility, kindness, compassion, honesty, consideration, duty, and obedience are apparent in all aspects of school life.

We are proud to be a Cornerstone Values school!

- Nicky Brell, Principal, Malfroy School, Rotorua

Bellevue School has been implementing the Cornerstone Resource for two years with all staff, children and families fully embracing all eight values. The school climate, behaviour and individual character of children is positive and healthy and often commented on by outside contacts. We are pleased with our success with character education and hold our accreditation with pride.

- Angela Johnston, Assistant Principal, Bellevue [Newlands], Wellington

Taupo-nui-a-Tia College has been an accredited Cornerstone Values School for over six years. The College is committed to the building of character through advocating, modelling and teaching the values of responsibility, respect, kindness, honesty and truthfulness, compassion, obedience, duty, consideration and concern for others.

Cornerstone Values have had an extremely positive effect on the culture of the school and influences *how we do things around here* on a daily basis.

- Peter Moyle, Principal, Taupo nui-a-Tia College, Taupo

#### **A Student's Perspective on Cornerstone Values**

Peter Moyle, principal of Taupo nui-a-Tia College, asked the College's 2008 Head Boy, Jed Armstrong, to meet with an assistant principal from a visiting high school and talk about Cornerstone Values from a student's perspective.

Without prompting Jed wrote the following essay over night.

I'd like to begin with a quote. Albert Einstein, the great German physicist, whose life was punctuated with achievement and accomplishment, implicit with respect, prestige and, above all success in life, spoke the words "Try not to be a man of success, but rather a man of value."

To me, this quote exemplifies the philosophies of the Cornerstone Values system. Education in character as well as in intellect produces not only complete, successful students, who thrive in a school environment, but overall human being, who are capable and competent in the real world.

This quote ties in nicely with a quote by Juanita Kidd Stout. "A man educated in mind but not in morals is a menace to society." The morals that can be instilled among the malleable minds of students are a vital part of our educational career, however, for such an important aspect of life, both in school and indeed in general, character education is often given too small a value in the school curriculum, a problem which Cornerstone Values attempts to remedy.

Instead of being a clip-on, an extra addition to the curriculum, the philosophies of the New Zealand Foundation for Character Education are taught as part of school life, implicit in the minds of the students, the underlying themes throughout all areas of our educational career. Cornerstone Values can be thought of more as a teabag, infusing a positive feeling throughout the school, to help shape

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constructive, helpful students, and less of as an espresso machine, where the students are forced through a values system, and can emerge bitter and steaming, or worse, opposed to the system, taking no gain from the opportunities it presents.

I believe that this “teabag method,” is a much more effective way of distributing the Cornerstone Values message, and that the methods with which the information is put across have improved greatly since the Foundation for Character Education was founded in 1993. In today’s age, generally, focus is put onto one of the eight cornerstone values - Honesty and Truthfulness, Kindness, Consideration and Concern for Others, Compassion, Respect, Duty, Responsibility and Obedience - per term, allowing for a two year cycle. This encourages the students to think in an in-depth way about each value, for an extended period of time, normally about two months.

The value of the term is presented to the school at the first assembly of the term, generally accompanied with a story or real life example of the value at work in the world. Subsequent assemblies are endeavoured to relate to the theme, and again examples of the value working within the school are provided.

An illustration of this has been our recent Athletics Sports Day. As our Cornerstone Value this term is Honesty and Truthfulness, our principal, Peter Moyle, commended the honesty and truthfulness shown by numerous students on Athletics Day, who handed in valuable items of lost property to the school office for collection by the rightful owner.

But as well as the obvious, surface displays of Cornerstone Values at work within the school are the deeper, more implicit positive feelings that show the values system at work. Whenever asked to speak on the aspect of college life that make Taupo -nui-a-Tia so great , many students will respond with regards to the school’s spirit and the general feeling of community shared by the students. Bullying, put-downs and intimidation by students are nearly unheard of in college life here, which I believe shows the influence of the Cornerstone Values.

The respect, responsibility, compassion, kindness, and consideration for others that have been instilled within Taupo nui-a-Tia students have helped to create a positive environment for all to carry out their studies. The pinnacle of this encouraging feeling can be seen in Taupo nui-a-Tia’s famed “Spirit Week,” in which all students of the college participate in a range of activities, including themed mufti days, physical challenges and house competitions.

Many of the activities on offer require large amounts of school or house spirit, what some call courage and shamelessness, including the mufti days entitled Fashion Crimes, or perhaps mostly the Boy-o-Boy competition, which pits male talent in varying states of undress from each house against each other in a pageant style contest. However, despite the levels of near certain embarrassment associated with the various activities, vast numbers of students raise their hands to have a go for the benefit of the house. No matter how bad the joke in the Bad Joke competition is, or how many people come to school dressed as a toilet on T themed mufti day, they are treated with huge amounts of respect and kindness from the student body.

The spirit shown by the students throughout the week, and indeed the entire year, models the benefit of the Cornerstone Values. Students treat each other with respect and compassion, as taught by the system, which helps to generate the overall feelings of closeness and moral confidence many secondary schools attempt to create.

The students feel that it is our responsibility to demonstrate the Cornerstone Values on a daily basis, which has had highly beneficial results in our school, results that would be the envy, or if achieved, the boast of most schools around the country.

I believe that any school around the country would benefit from the introduction of the Cornerstone Values, to create a positive environment in the school, the community, and eventually, the world.

**- Jed Armstrong, 2008 Head Boy, Taupo nui-a-Tia College, Taupo**

12 December 2008

Mr Peter Moyle  
Taupo-Nui-a-Tia College  
Spa Rd  
TAUPO

Dear Mr Moyle

On Tuesday and Wednesday this week, my friend Rebecca and I, walked the Queen Charlotte Track in the Marlborough Sounds. When we arrived at Punga Cove we realized the small groups of young boys and girls that had passed us on the track were part of a larger group from your college.

As you might imagine, after a hard 7 hour tramp in the rain, our hearts sank at the thought of sharing the pool, spa and general facilities with several over-enthusiastic 14 to 15 year olds!

I am delighted to be able to tell you that our somewhat negative assumptions about your students' behaviour were completely incorrect. Each child we met or passed by greeted us politely, we did not hear one use of bad language (and Punga Cove by definition offers a natural amphitheatre) and by 9.30pm there was not a sound to be heard from anyone.

The next day we played "tag" along the track as the bikers (and indeed most of the walkers!) took turns to pass us and to wait as they caught up with their buddies. Again, the behaviour we witnessed from your students was impeccable, and by late afternoon as we all descended on The Portage, Rebecca and I found ourselves actively looking out for your students to ask how their day had been. The young boys and girls we (briefly) spoke with happily engaged with us to share their experiences of the day.

Over a much needed latte at the end of the day, we spoke with one of your teachers and told him how impressed we had been by the polite self assuredness of the students and I promised him I would write this letter.

These students and their teachers are of tremendous credit to you and your college. The core values you promote at Taupo-Nui-a-Tia College are very obviously at work amongst the boys and girls and the teachers that we met.

Rebecca and I would be very grateful if you would pass this letter in whole or in part, on to those who walked and rode the Track with us this week. Positive affirmation can only serve to enhance the already mature attitude of tomorrow's leaders.

Merry Christmas and kind regards,



Diane Giurioli and Rebecca Clouston

## **Appendix III - Sample of Education Review Office [ERO] comments**

The following is a sample of comments on the Cornerstone Values approach to character education by the Education Review Office

### **George Street Normal School, ERO Report July 2008**

George Street Normal School staff members have worked hard to build a positive and inclusive school culture. This review found:

- Respectful and caring relationships between students, teachers and support staff
- Purposeful teaching of positive attitudes, values and behaviours
- Parents and teachers working in close partnerships to support children's learning.

In the area of teaching and learning, ERO found that students receive a very good quality education. The review team noted high levels of student engagement in each class.

#### School Culture

##### Background

Over the last three years, senior managers have implemented a character education programme. This links into the school's vision that students gain a strong sense of self worth and gain an understanding of and can demonstrate the values that are central to character education. Last year, senior managers looked at how character education and key competencies fit together. Each year, an aspect of the programme (for example, showing respect) is identified as a target and reported on. The principal leads the character education programme.

##### Areas of good performance

*Relationships.* Students benefit from respectful and supportive relationships. ERO observed consistently respectful and caring interactions between teachers, support staff and students. Teachers and support staff work closely together to best meet students' needs. Teachers listen carefully to students and value their ideas and opinions. Teachers model respectful behaviour and constructive ways to resolve differences. Students spoken with told ERO that teachers care about them and their learning.

*School culture.* The positive and inclusive school culture promotes students' learning and sense of wellbeing. ERO observed students from diverse backgrounds working and playing effectively and happily together. These students are valued members of the school community.

High-needs students are meaningfully included and supported in their classrooms and in whole-school activities. For example, teachers and students learn and use sign

“Cornerstone Values is teacher friendly, parent friendly, easy to implement and cost effective.” 20  
Peter Moyle, Principal, Taupo nui-a-Tia College, Taupo

language so that they can support a hearing impaired student. At reading time, a classmate reads and signs the story. Teacher aides, who work with high needs students, intentionally include other students in their learning.

*Focus on values.* Throughout the school, there is a strong focus on values and character building. The principal has taken a key role in implementing this. ERO observed explicit teaching of positive values, attitudes and behaviours. Teachers integrate related key competencies and skills, as outlined in the revised New Zealand curriculum. They also maximise incidental opportunities to talk about values and the relevance of these to everyday situations. Values and character education are highly visible in the school, for instance, in classroom displays and newsletters.

*Partnership with parents.* The school has very effective processes for engaging parents as partners in their children's learning. There is regular communication between the school, teachers and parents. The school operates an open-door policy that welcomes parents' questions and ideas. Parent-teacher interviews focus on developing and reviewing individual learning goals and how these may be achieved. Newsletters and information/workshop evenings inform parents, for example, about learning initiatives. Teachers provide parents with detailed information on classroom programmes and how they can support their child's learning, for example, in reading and with homework.

### **Rangitaiki Independent School - August 2006**

Cornerstone Values underpin teaching and learning. These values which are practised during daily interactions and programme delivery are promoting positive, healthy relationships and building a sense of community.

### **Taupo-nui-a-Tia College November 2003/2008**

Staff and students demonstrate pride in their school. They articulate strong values of respect and consideration for others. Accreditation as a Cornerstone Values School has affirmed the established culture and provided a sound theoretical foundation for maintaining a positive and inclusive school climate.

School culture with an emphasis on cornerstone values (CSV)

#### **Background**

In March 2002 the board and senior advisory team identified that the existing school culture was sufficiently developed to work towards accreditation as a Cornerstone Values School.

The programme was adopted to emphasise and formalise the further development of a positive school culture and accreditation was achieved in March of 2003. The board requested ERO's evaluation and recommendations for continued developments in school culture.

#### **Areas of good performance**

"Cornerstone Values is teacher friendly, parent friendly, easy to implement and cost effective." 21  
Peter Moyle, Principal, Taupo nui-a-Tia College, Taupo

*School-wide focus:* The school has adopted and applied a structured approach to the CSV programme. By introducing a chosen value each term and promoting the programme through year level and whole school assemblies, CSVs are being introduced into the school culture in an organised and focused way.

*School climate:* The school climate is inclusive and valuing of all students. They are proud of the school and able to articulate that they feel safe and well supported. Their strong sense of identity and ownership of school values is evident. A positive school spirit and culture is a significant feature of a school that is valued by students, staff, parents and whanau.

*Student leadership:* There are significant opportunities for students to experience and develop leadership skills at all levels of the school. The well-structured and effective student government system allows students to be involved in making decisions, developing their ideas and making a meaningful contribution to the school. Many of these young leaders are highly appropriate role models for other students.

*Pastoral care:* There is a well-developed network of programmes and personnel that effectively promotes student emotional safety and wellbeing. Student pastoral care needs are identified through timely monitoring allowing appropriate intervention strategies to be put in place. Teachers consistently respond to student requests resulting in high levels of mutual trust and a genuine belief that teachers care about their students.

*Behaviour management:* Parents and teachers set high expectations for student learning and behaviour. There are many opportunities for positive, appropriate behaviour to be affirmed and celebrated. Behaviour management systems are structured, transparent and fairly implemented resulting in expectations being clearly understood by students.

*Adult role models:* Staff members consistently model high standards of behaviour, presentation and attitudes that are in keeping with the qualities expounded in the CSV curriculum.

2008 Update

Cornerstone values continue to be promoted throughout the school and are contributing to settled classroom environments, and a school culture where success, mutual respect and personal responsibility are acknowledged and valued.

### **Gate Pa School - May 2007**

*Cornerstone virtues:* Students are developing a good understanding of the school's philosophy related to the cornerstone virtues and their implementation. These virtues are reinforced through initiatives, school programmes and behaviour management systems. Students are settled and have opportunities to learn within a supportive and positive learning climate.

## **Te Awamutu Primary School - September 2003/2007**

A culture of care and concern permeates the school. It has been accredited as a Cornerstone Values school in recognition of the values programme developed under the guidance and leadership of the principal. Staff, students and parents enjoy the positive, settled atmosphere that has been created.

### 2007 Update

#### Areas of good performance

*Interactions:* The positive and respectful relationships evident in the school effectively support the delivery of class writing programmes. The school's well-established Cornerstone Values programme consistently underpins teaching and learning across the school. Students articulate their clear understanding of the expectations that arise from these values. Students and teachers work in a settled environment that contributes to student progress in writing.

#### Areas of good performance

- **Positive culture:** A culture of care and concern permeates the school. Staff demonstrate strong collegiality and a sense of pride in the school. Playground interactions are inclusive, with students managing their social behaviour with increasing effectiveness as they progress through the school.
- **Ownership of values:** The school was accredited in 2002 as a Cornerstone Values school in recognition of the programmes that are being implemented. A set of values has been adopted by the school after a period of development, consultation and refinement. This process has resulted in a high level of ownership by staff, students and parents.
- **Leadership for culture:** The principal is strongly committed to the ongoing development and implementation of a values orientation into the school culture as a strategy for character development. He presents the focus value for the week at school assemblies, emphasising practical examples to illustrate the value in action. His stance effectively sustains the high profile of values in all aspects of school life.
- **Classroom climate:** Staff and students enjoy the positive, settled atmosphere evident in all classrooms. Teachers model the values they are aiming to impart to students. There is evidence that students are adopting responsible attitudes and maintaining positive relationships. These attributes are contributing to high levels of on-task behaviour and focused learning.

**Parent partnership:** The school maintains a valuable partnership with parents. The open door policy encourages parents to establish close communication with classroom teachers and school management. Regular sharing of the current value through newsletters supports parents to reinforce the value in out-of-school settings. The values orientation initiative is a 'point of difference' valued by parents and used as a criterion when choosing to enrol children at the school.

### **Kaharoa School - February 2008**

The board has systems in place to provide a safe and supportive emotional environment that enhances student confidence and participation. As a 'Cornerstone Values' school, key values form the foundation for all aspects of school operations. School-wide systems, practices and strategies incorporate these values, which during 2007 include respect, honesty, responsibility and consideration. Students enjoy coming to school and care for one another. Maori students are well supported in their education and achieve at levels comparable to their non-Maori peers.

*Values:* As a Cornerstone Values school eight key values form the foundation for all aspects of school operations. School-wide systems, practices and strategies incorporate these values, which during 2007 include respect, honesty, responsibility and consideration. Students appreciate the positive interactions they have with their teachers and peers. They enjoy coming to school and show respect and genuine care for one another's wellbeing. The school provides a safe and supportive emotional environment that enhances student confidence and participation.

### **Greerton Village School - December 2004**

The school philosophy, based on cornerstone values, underpins all aspects of school life, teaching and learning.

### **Te Atatu Intermediate School - October 2004**

The board has a comprehensive and well articulated behaviour management system that incorporates the core values and beliefs of the school. The effectiveness of the system is evident in the positive climate for learning that prevails in every classroom. Because discipline is not an issue, teachers can focus on teaching.

### **Tongariro School - January 2006**

Cornerstone Values: Values exploration is a key component of the middle school social studies programme. Teachers model and students learn about and practise values, including respect, responsibility, kindness, honesty and truthfulness. The values of other societies are also explored and analysed. Participating in this programme encourages students to learn in a mutually respectful environment and should assist them to participate positively in society.

### **Ngakuru Primary School - June 2005**

Cornerstone Values: The whole school community shares a commitment to supporting the school's endeavour to instil a culture of responsible citizenship. A planned approach to developing the system has engaged students to take an increasing responsibility for their learning and behaviour in and out of the classroom.

### **Spring Creek School - February 2007**

Students are challenged, motivated, engaged and focused on their learning. They are well mannered and articulate. The school's focus on character and values education promotes the development of social skills and emphasises students taking responsibility for their own choices regarding learning and behaviour. This has been an important factor in creating a cooperative, supportive culture, based on respect. The positive tone and settled classroom environments support student learning.

The board and management acknowledge that bullying behaviour is a risk to be managed and have appropriate policies and procedures to support the creation of a safe learning environment. The principal and staff describe the school's culture as being supportive, caring and friendly. There is a clear focus on encouraging respect and treating students as individuals. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Positive interactions between staff and students and amongst the students themselves are a feature of the school.

The following strategies have been used to help prevent bullying in the past three years:

- Promulgation of character education, The Creekie Way, which emphasises students taking responsibility for their own choices regarding learning and behaviour. Central to this is a school-wide focus on developing the core values of concern for others, honesty and truth, respect, kindness, compassion, duty, responsibility and obedience.

### **Solway Primary School - December 2005**

A Cornerstone programme, which promotes key values such as respect and honesty, has been implemented, and this is reflected in the settled and friendly behaviour of the students.

### **Mayfield School - May 2007**

The behaviour management plan promotes students taking greater responsibility for themselves and others and they are given a range of leadership opportunities. The recently introduced 'cornerstone values' programme is likely to strengthen this direction.

### **Malfroy Primary School - August 2005**

Areas of good performance

The promotion of Cornerstone Values together with a positive behaviour management programme has significantly improved interactions and relationships between students and teachers.

"Cornerstone Values is teacher friendly, parent friendly, easy to implement and cost effective." 25  
Peter Moyle, Principal, Taupo nui-a-Tia College, Taupo

### **Wyndham School - April 2007**

The board, principal and teachers aim to create a positive learning environment. They recognise that effective relationships with each other, and parents/whanau and students are essential to achieving this. The principal and teachers have put in place programmes that support and encourage students to behave in positive ways towards each other. These programmes include:

- ‘Cool Schools’ peer-mediation programme;
- cornerstone values programme;
- positive-reinforcement programmes in the classrooms; and
- kia kaha programme.

Positive reinforcement and regular affirmation of students’ effort and achievement encourages students to strive for their personal best. As a result, students are meaningfully engaged in their studies and teachers are able to focus on the teaching task.

### **Fairfield School - April 2004**

The board, principal and staff have established a school culture where the emphasis is on student learning. Students demonstrate respect and a warm appreciation of their teachers. Teachers establish positive relationships with their students and focus on meeting their physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs. The school motto of Independence through Responsibility underpins school activities and is meaningful to students. The Cornerstone Values programme permeates both staff and students’ thinking and actions.

### **Weston School - August 2003/2006**

Weston School plays a lead role in the promotion and support of Cornerstone Values education. 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 relationships between students and between staff and students.

Areas of good performance

*Classroom management practices.* A shared understanding of values and behavioural expectations among staff and students creates positive working relationships. Clear standards for behaviour are set and met. Most students demonstrate high levels of on-task behaviour and independent learning. The teachers’ appropriate management practices enable them to focus on learning rather than behaviour.

2006 UPDATE

Areas of good performance

“Cornerstone Values is teacher friendly, parent friendly, easy to implement and cost effective.” 26  
Peter Moyle, Principal, Taupo nui-a-Tia College, Taupo

*Classroom management.* Most teachers have effective classroom management strategies. In their classrooms, ERO observed respectful and productive interactions between students and between students and teachers. Resources are well organised and accessible, and teachers are well prepared. Students know the classroom routines and their teacher's expectations. Students make quick and orderly transitions between activities and learning areas.

The school has put in place the following to prevent bullying in the past three years:

- Classroom programmes, including Cornerstone Values and Keeping Ourselves Safe that look at building positive relationships.

## **Appendix III - Schools accredited to use the Cornerstone Values registered trade mark**

### **Waianiwa Primary School, Southland**

Postal address: Waianiwa-Oporo Road, RD4, Invercargill, 9521  
Ministry of Education Institution no. 4034  
Type: Contributing  
Contact: Sue Walker, Principal  
Phone: 03 235 2858  
Email: [office@waianiwa.school.nz](mailto:office@waianiwa.school.nz)  
Website: [www.waianiwa.school.nz](http://www.waianiwa.school.nz)  
Roll: 64  
Decile: 8

### **Musselburgh Primary School, Dunedin**

Postal address: 34 Marlow Street, Dunedin, 9013  
Ministry of Education Institution no. 3762  
Type: Contributing  
Contact: Debbie Smith, Principal  
Phone: 03 235 2858  
Email: [office@musselburgh.school.nz](mailto:office@musselburgh.school.nz)  
Website: [www.musselburgh.school.nz](http://www.musselburgh.school.nz)  
Roll: 155  
Decile: 5

### **George Street Normal, Dunedin**

Postal address: 989 George Street, Dunedin, 9016  
Ministry of Education Institution no. 3740  
Type: Contributing  
Contact: Rod Galloway, Principal  
Phone: 03 474 0825  
Email: [office@georgestreet.school.nz](mailto:office@georgestreet.school.nz)  
Website: [www.georgestreet.school.nz](http://www.georgestreet.school.nz)  
Roll: 331  
Decile: 9

### **Spring Creek, Marlborough**

Postal address: Ferry Road, Spring Creek, Blenheim 7202  
Ministry of Education Institution no. 2995  
Type: Contributing  
Contact: Andrew McFarlane, Principal  
Phone: 03 570 5514  
Email: [office@springcreek.school.nz](mailto:office@springcreek.school.nz)  
Website: [www.springcreek.school.nz](http://www.springcreek.school.nz)  
Roll: 60  
Decile: 4

### **Bellevue School, Newlands, Wellington**

Postal address: Bancroft Terrace, Newlands, Wellington, 6037  
Ministry of Education Institution No. 2806  
Type: Contributing  
Contact: Angela Johnston, Assistant Principal  
Phone: 04 478 7037  
Email: [principal@bellevue-newlands.school.nz](mailto:principal@bellevue-newlands.school.nz)  
Website: [www.bellevue-newlands.school.nz](http://www.bellevue-newlands.school.nz)  
Roll: 269  
Decile: 8

### **Taupo nui-a-Tia College, Taupo**

Postal address: Spa Road, PO Box 549, Taupo, 3351  
Ministry of Education Institution no. 167  
Type: Secondary (Year 9 - 15)  
Contact: Peter Moyle, Principal  
Phone: 07 376 1100  
Email: [mail@taupocollege.ac.nz](mailto:mail@taupocollege.ac.nz)  
Website: [www.taupocollege.ac.nz](http://www.taupocollege.ac.nz)  
Roll: 905  
Decile: 6

### **Kaharoa Primary School, Rotorua**

Postal address: RD 2, Rotorua, 3072  
Ministry of Education Institution no. 1756  
Type: Full Primary  
Contact: Warwick Moyle, Principal  
Phone: 07 332 3444  
Email: [principal@kaharoa.school.nz](mailto:principal@kaharoa.school.nz)  
Roll: 196  
Decile: 9

### **Malfroy Primary School, Rotorua**

Postal address: 196 Malfroy Road, PO Box 5030, Rotorua West, 3044  
Ministry of Education Institution no. 1796  
Type: Contributing  
Contact: Nick Brell, Principal  
Phone: 07 348 8588  
Email: [office@malfroy.school.nz](mailto:office@malfroy.school.nz)  
Roll: 348  
Decile: 3

### **Te Awamutu Primary School, Waikato**

Postal address: 401 Teasdale Street, Te Awamutu, Waikato, 3800  
Ministry of Education Institution no. 2002  
Type: Contributing  
Contact: Gareth Duncan, Principal  
Phone: 07 871 5378

Email: [office@taps.school.nz](mailto:office@taps.school.nz)

Website: [www.taps.school.nz](http://www.taps.school.nz)

Roll: 465

Decile: 5

While there are many schools that have implemented the Cornerstone Values approach to character education the accredited schools and their principals are known to the leadership of the New Zealand Foundation for Character Education. For this reason they are the schools that are recommended to visitors.

Although, not yet an accredited Cornerstone Values school, Westbridge Residential School in West Auckland is significant because it is special school where strategies have been developed that enable students to link their unacceptable behaviour with the formation of their own character.

Westbridge Residential School

Postal address: PO Box 79 056, Royal Height, Auckland, 1230

Ministry of Education Institutional no 4157

Type of school: Special

Phone: 09 832 4918

Contact: John Rutherford, Principal

Email: [ceo@westbridge.school.nz](mailto:ceo@westbridge.school.nz)

Website: [www.westbridge.school.nz](http://www.westbridge.school.nz)

Roll: 60

Decile: 2