



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Education,  
Science and Training**

# **Implementing the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools**

## **Report of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1**

### **Final Report September 2006**



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Edited by Barbara Vaughan

This report is available on the Values Education Website at <http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/>.

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# Executive Summary

The *Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1* supported selected clusters of schools from across Australia to design and undertake projects that would identify and exemplify good practice in values education.

The aim was to demonstrate how implementing the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* could realise the vision for schools to provide values education in a planned and systematic way, and make it a core part of schooling. The 26 school clusters, involving 166 schools, worked from their own contexts and implemented many different types of values education projects.

This Final Report captures the key outcomes of their endeavours. It gives an account of their work and synthesises what their experience can tell other schools in Australia about what good practice in values education looks like and what type of outcomes such practice generates in schools.

The Executive Summary presents this material under the following headings:

- Key findings about the educational impacts of good practice values education in schools;
- Recommendations to Australian schools about the principles of good practice in values education;
- The Values Education Good Practice Schools Project;
- The structure of the report;
- Inferences about good practice implementation of the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools*.

## **Key findings about the educational impacts of good practice in values education**

The following key findings about the educational impacts of good practice in values education have been distilled from the *Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1* cluster school experiences and reports.

Project schools presented evidence of the impacts on many aspects of the school life, including student learning, student behaviours, teacher professional practice, relationships in school and school culture change. The outcomes and the types of evidence on which they are based are elaborated within the cluster school accounts in the body of this Final Report.

Not all schools necessarily experienced all or even any of these outcomes. The outcomes claimed varied according to the nature of the projects and are necessarily preliminary in the light of the short time frame of the Stage 1 project. They do provide indicators of educational impacts, which Stage 2 projects may

further explore and confirm or modify. The *Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1* demonstrated that good practice values education can:

1. lead to changes in teacher professional practice in classrooms and, in particular, in the way teachers relate to and communicate with their students;
2. produce calmer and more focused classroom activity;
3. enable students to become better self-managers;
4. help students develop greater capacities for reflection;
5. increase teachers' levels of confidence in their approaches to their work and their sense of professional fulfilment;
6. produce strong positive relationships between students and between students and teachers.

## **Recommendations to Australian schools about the principles of good practice in values education**

The set of inferences outlined above, together with the key messages included at the conclusion of each cluster report, can be distilled into the following set of principles of good practice to inform future thinking and work in each of the initiating, developing and consolidating stages of implementing values education in schools.

### **1. It is essential to reach agreement within the school community about the values that guide the school and the language in which they are described.**

Reaching agreement within the school community about the values that guide the school, and the language in which they are described, is a precursor to successfully embedding these values in the policies and practices of the school.

### **2. Values education is sustained over time only through a whole school approach that engages all sectors of the school community.**

The definition of what is meant by a whole school approach needs to be explored and understood by the school community. Involving more people in the enterprise takes more time but ensures deeper commitment, stronger consistency and durable continuity beyond personnel changes.

### **3. School leadership is critical in developing values education as a core part of schooling.**

Strengthening values education in schools often involves significant school change and reform. In this regard committed and inspiring leadership that models and articulates the values of the school as an everyday occurrence and provides the vision, energy and focus over time can make the difference. At a minimum, to be effective, values education initiatives require substantive support from school leaders.

### **4. Values must be explicitly articulated and explicitly taught.**

Values are intrinsic to all that a school does. The Good Practice Schools Project experiences support the conclusion that effective values education involves the explicit articulation and explicit teaching of the values. This means values

education is integrated with the 'mainstream' curriculum rather than being seen as an 'add on' or something separate to teach. It means the values spoken are the values modelled. It means creating opportunities for students to practise the values. And it means seizing the opportunities to reinforce the values in those 'teachable moments' offered in the unplanned incidents in everyday school life.

**5. It is critical to student learning that there is consistency and congruence between the values espoused and the values modelled.**

Values education is as much about *how* students are taught as *what* they are taught; hence the quality of teaching is essential. In this respect consistency and congruence between the values espoused and the values modelled and enacted in the teaching and learning exchange have a critical impact on student learning, understanding and adoption of the values. A number of cases from Stage 1 of the Good Practice Schools Project specifically illustrate the power of engaging students directly in the values education implementation process.

**6. Professional learning of all teachers is critical at all stages of the development of values education.**

Professional learning is critical at all stages of the values education process, and some of the best professional learning comes from the sharing that schools and clusters are able to promote. The Stage 1 projects reinforce the conclusion that teachers require and respond positively to explicit professional learning in values education. Some of the best professional learning comes from the sharing that teachers, schools and clusters are able to promote. If there is one consistent message from all 26 projects that are the subject of this report, it is the value of teachers sharing experiences, perceptions, issues and ideas about values education and the fact that such sharing is a powerful agent in promoting change in professional practice.

**7. Developing positive relationships in classrooms and schools is central to values education.**

At the very heart of building values-based schools is the development of positive relationships between students, teachers and parents – in classrooms and schools, and between schools and their school communities. This was central to much of Good Practice Schools Project Stage 1 work.

**8. Success is achieved when values education is integral to all aspects of school life.**

The greatest success is achieved when connections are made between values education and other initiatives and priorities of systems, sectors and schools. This helps to ensure that values education is integral to and not seen simply as 'additional' to other priorities and work.

**9. Schools working in clusters can foster effective professional development and quality teaching and learning as well as provide support for values education initiatives.**

As a method of fostering good practice in values education school clustering can be an important source of professional development, learning and support. That said, it also is the case that making clusters effective requires conscious attention and dedicated leadership and support.

#### **10. Supportive critical friends and mentors contribute markedly to professional development and the values education work of schools.**

Supportive critical friends and mentors can contribute markedly to professional development and the values education work of clusters and schools provided schools and clusters are clear about their needs and are open to critical feedback and advice.

### **The Values Education Good Practice Schools Project**

The *Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1*, the subject of this report (and which for ease of communication is also referred to as the Good Practice Schools Project), was funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), and managed by Curriculum Corporation. The project worked towards the vision as outlined in the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (the National Framework).

The vision is that all Australian schools provide values education in a planned and systematic way by:

- articulating, in consultation with their community, the school's mission/ethos;
- developing student responsibility in local, national and global contexts and building student resilience and social skills;
- ensuring values are incorporated in school policies and teaching programmes across the key learning areas;
- reviewing the outcomes of their values education practices.

The project funded 26 selected clusters of school communities to explore ways of improving their approaches to values education and identify effective ways of implementing the National Framework in practice in their schools.

One hundred and forty-two clusters applied to participate in the project. The successful 26 – which involved 166 schools and 70,000 students in the project – were selected on the basis of rigorous criteria including how their projects were aligned with the intentions for values education expressed in the National Framework.

The work of clusters and schools involved in this project centred on action research aimed at improving values education in their own particular contexts, with a specific focus on devising ways of successfully implementing the National Framework. Clusters subsequently used their action research and a range of other data such as accounts of their teaching experiences, patterns of student

achievement, records of student work and attendance records to develop case studies of their work. This material has been used to inform this report.

The principal aim of the project was to identify good practices that effectively applied the National Framework. With that in mind, Curriculum Corporation developed a Configurative Mapping exercise designed to help clusters implement the National Framework with their project. It also enabled them to collect information about the extent to which their values education projects improved the outcomes they sought by having the clusters systematically collect and collate evidence that indicated the nature and extent of that improvement. Most clusters found the tool useful for clarifying their project focus and subsequently making some assessment of what they had achieved.

Curriculum Corporation established a University Associates Network (UAN) to provide advice and assistance to clusters with a range of project activities and the Configurative Mapping exercise. According to the individual needs of clusters, members of the UAN, many of them deans of faculties or professors drawn from 17 Australian faculties of education, lent assistance with action research at the school level, and gave advice about values education, professional development and the process of case study writing.

The detailed outline of good practice that follows has been prepared to provide insight to those schools and their communities not directly involved in Stage 1 of the Good Practice Schools Project as to how cluster schools implemented the National Framework. The good practices are many and varied, which is both to be expected and consistent with the way schools were encouraged to treat the framework – as a framework and not as a cage.

## **The structure of the report**

Each of the 26 cluster projects that form the larger Good Practice Schools Project Stage 1 is unique. To give a lucid and authentic account of each project, this report needed a way of listing, grouping and labelling all of the projects. This was based on the major emphasis that each project set out with on its quest to implement the National Framework. As the National Framework makes clear, there are a myriad of ways of applying it. One might commence by auditing the school community's values. Others might plunge straight into a teaching programme focused on one or more of the nine core values expressed in the framework. The Good Practice Schools Project clusters confirm that there are many possibilities for implementing the framework and that for the clusters in this project these possibilities unfolded, grew and developed over time. To categorise the projects for this report we have adopted a loose taxonomy drawn from the language of the project proposals or the activities they anticipated undertaking. This includes the labels of:

- Guiding ethos and whole school approach – projects that roughly intended to follow Guiding Principle 3 of the National Framework (articulates the values of the school community and applies them) and Guiding Principle 4 (values

education that occurs in partnership with students, staff and families as part of a whole school effort) as well as Key Elements A (making school values explicit with the assistance of the school community) and C (whole school provision) of the National Framework;

- Something worthwhile to teach – consistent with Guiding Principle 7 (includes the provision of curriculum that meets the individual needs of students) and Key Elements E (support for students) and F (Quality Teaching);
- Teaching it well – consistent with Key Elements D, E and F (safe and supportive learning environment, support for students and quality teaching);
- Connecting to the community – consistent with Guiding Principle 4 (partnerships) and Key Elements A and B (school planning and partnerships within the school community).

However, this taxonomy is little more than a schema or set of thematic organisers for the report. As will become clear from a reading of what follows, each project developed its own pattern of evolution. In the process, each project gradually departed from its initial orientation and most transformed themselves into classroom activities concentrated on values education. This, too, is in keeping with the intention of the National Framework in that the Key Elements D, E and F and Guiding Principles 1, 5, 6 and 7 are all concerned with the provision of quality teaching and learning.

Moreover, professional learning is a feature of many of the projects. It is not included as part of the taxonomy but rather is absorbed into the discussion of each cluster project.

The structure of the report is therefore aligned with the guiding principles and key elements of the National Framework and uses the case studies of the projects to suggest good practice ways of implementing them, but not at the expense of providing insight into what actually happened in classrooms, which is, after all, the heartland of quality values education.

Table 1 sets out the allocation of clusters to categories as determined by the authors of this report.

**Table 1: Classification of school clusters**

Lead school	Cluster	Project focus
<i>Thematic organiser: Ethos and whole school</i>		
Chapel Hill State, Qld	Chapel Hill	Develop and embed values education in the policies and practices of the schools
Werribee Secondary, Vic	WITS	Learning how to be – values for learning and life
Airds High, NSW	Airds–Bradbury	Identification of core values to then reinforce and develop them
Norwood Secondary, Victoria	Maroondah North	Promoting relational learning through values education
St Charles Borromeo Primary, Victoria	Manningham Catholic	Implementing a whole school approach through Student Action Teams
St Peter’s College, NSW	Broken Bay Diocese	Embedding values education in the schools’ policies, teaching and practices
Hackham West Primary, SA	Noarlunga Centre	Embed restorative practices in the ethos and operations of the schools
<i>Thematic organiser: Something worthwhile to teach</i>		
Lightning Ridge Central, NSW	Bourke	Defining agreed community values leading to units of work
Longford Primary, Tasmania	Northern Midlands	Raising awareness of the National Framework and embedding it in schools
Brighton Secondary, Victoria	Brighton	Integrating values education into the middle years in all key learning areas
Domremy College, NSW	Sydney Catholic Schools	A ‘sense of the sacred’ curriculum units
Oxenford State, Qld	Gold Coast North	Implementing philosophy in the classroom aligned to national values
Calwell High, ACT	Calwell	Development of K–10 curriculum to support emotional literacy
Heights College, Qld	Central Qld Character Framework	K–12 character framework

Lead school	Cluster	Project focus
<i>Thematic organiser: Teaching it well</i>		
Modbury School – Preschool to Year 7, SA	SA Alliance of Schools	Pedagogy to support values education, resilience, higher order thinking and citizenship
Nerang State High, Qld	Nerang Alliance of State Schools	Teaching values education through social literacy to improve resilience and social capital
Canterbury College, Qld	Canterbury	Pedagogy of service learning in the middle years
Birrigai Outdoor, ACT	Birrigai Outdoor	Empowering students through cultural experiences to teach others
Henbury School, NT	Northern Territory Tribes	Explicit teaching of social skills and teamwork through Tribes TLC®
Sacred Heart Primary, NT	Catholic Education Schools	Training teachers in Tribes TLC® and building their capacity
Townsville Central, Qld	TEACH	Dissemination of Peer Leaders – Catch the Spirit project
<i>Thematic organiser: Connecting to the community</i>		
Spearwood Primary, WA	Fremantle	Building values-based and inclusive school communities
Merrylands High, NSW	Merrylands	A community approach to promoting values education, including home–school consistency
Mooroolbark Heights Secondary, Victoria	Red Earth Community	Engaging students in living their values in the community (through projects)
The Don College, Tasmania	Tasmanian State Secondary Colleges	Youth leadership and citizenship capacity building
Lance Holt School, WA	Children and Place Mapping Group	Attachment to place and active citizenship

### *Guiding ethos and whole school approach*

The National Framework suggests that quality values education programmes arise in part from schools and their communities identifying what the community values (its guiding ethos) and working together (whole school approach) to see it actualised. Several clusters envisaged that such things would be the emphasis of their efforts over the duration of their project. Some speculated that, building on the Values for Australian Schooling in the National Framework, they would pursue a particular, home grown set of values either as a whole school or by getting a 'critical mass' involved in the project. The following seven projects loosely fit into this part of our taxonomy.

- Developing values-based schools – The Chapel Hill Cluster (Qld) used an existing history of collaboration between the schools to ensure they each adopted a more conscious, whole of school values approach.
- Learning how to be: Values for learning and life – The WITS Cluster (Vic) saw teams of teachers working together to improve students' learning in the middle years, with a strong focus on developing social capacities to competently live in 'an exciting, diverse, increasingly uncertain and changing world'.
- My happiness ... My choice – The Airids–Bradbury Cluster (NSW) designed its values project to improve stakeholder engagement in the schools and build community social capital for students to succeed.
- Promoting relational learning through values education – The Maroondah North Cluster (Vic) sought to identify universally acceptable behaviours as the basis of implementing values education in the schools, with a particular emphasis on relationships in the learning process.
- Students taking the lead – Student Action Teams in the Manningham Catholic Cluster (Vic) led the investigation and implementation of values education by investigating the extent to which the nine national values are exhibited and then determining how to ensure they are seen, heard and felt in practice in the schools.
- Reconciling different approaches – The Broken Bay Diocese Cluster (NSW) sought to determine how the nine Values for Australian Schooling and their associated guiding principles can be incorporated with the ten overarching religious statements in the Diocesan Catholic Worldview Statement, as the basis for developing the more detailed policies and practices the schools adopt.
- Common values for improving student behaviour – The Noarlunga Centre Cluster (SA) explored how to embed values within the schools' practices as a means of aligning the values the schools espouse, restorative practices and social skills education to increase student empowerment and the application of these values to everyday behaviour and relationships.

### *Something worthwhile to teach*

Six cluster projects specifically focused on embedding values in the school curriculum and/or connecting to broader systemic curriculum frameworks that apply.

- The values we select – For the Bourke Cluster (NSW) the way to build values education into the curriculum in a planned and coherent way was to first get an agreed set of values and language to explain the values within the whole school community.
- Values for life – The Northern Midlands Cluster (Tas) pursued an integrated set of four Values for Life programmes linked to civic education teaching and the Essential Learnings framework in their State.
- Integrating values education into the middle years curriculum – The Brighton Cluster (Vic) used values education to develop students' social skills and overall responsibility in local, national and global contexts with inquiry learning as their key pedagogical approach.
- A 'sense of the sacred' in KLAs – The Sydney Catholic Schools Cluster (NSW) led the revision of existing resources for integrating values across the curriculum in light of the subsequent emergence of the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* and recently revised syllabuses in New South Wales.
- Philosophy in the classroom – The Gold Coast North Cluster (Qld) built on earlier work in cluster schools to embed philosophy in the classroom, to enable students to exercise judgement and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and make rational and informed decisions about their lives.
- Taking small steps towards the big picture of emotional literacy – the restorative practices approach was the centrepiece of the Calwell Cluster's (ACT) efforts to develop an emotional literacy curriculum that includes specific lessons to develop students' social skills.
- A K–12 character framework – The Central Queensland Character Framework Cluster (Qld) researched and developed a K–12 character framework to support a whole school approach to embedding and explicitly teaching values in the curriculum.

### *Teaching it well*

Teaching and learning were the prime focus of the work of seven project clusters.

- Modelling the values we espouse – With its long involvement in values education, the SA Alliance of Schools Cluster pursued a range of school-specific activities using a common model of whole school change with constructivist pedagogy at its core.
- Teaching for social action – The Nerang Alliance of State Schools Cluster (Qld) focused on using social literacy and student-led social action projects as the main vehicle for inculcating values education in all key learning areas.
- A pedagogy of service learning – The Canterbury Cluster (Qld) pursued the concept of service learning with students in the middle years of school.

- Teaching through cultural experience – The Indigenous Education Project coordinated by the Birrigai Outdoor School (ACT) enabled secondary students to explore both their own and cultural values as a prelude to teaching their own workshops in primary schools.
- Teaching social skills – The Territory Tribes Cluster (NT) used Tribes TLC® as the overarching framework for explicit values teaching with links to the Northern Territory’s EsseNTial Learnings and the National Safe Schools Framework.
- Tribes as the vehicle for values education – The Catholic Education Cluster (NT) also used Tribes TLC® as a primary means to pursue values education in their schools.
- Peer leaders ‘catch the spirit’ – The TEACH Cluster in Townsville (Qld) focused on developing peer support programmes as a means of shaping school ethos and values development in schools.

### *Connecting to the community*

Engaging the school community in values education and the development of young people as productive citizens and contributors to society was pursued by five clusters of schools.

- Building inclusive, values-based school communities – The Fremantle Cluster (WA) undertook a three-phase project to engage school communities in developing a set of guiding principles and values that could become embedded in the vision, policies, practices and teaching programmes of each school.
- A community approach to values education and home–school consistency – Building on prior work, the Merrylands Cluster (NSW) identified commonalities and differences between school community stakeholders as a means of working towards a more consistent whole school, and also home and school, approach to developing students’ social skills.
- Taking values to the community – The Red Earth Community Cluster (Vic) sought to develop good citizenship by practising values in community settings and having students engage in community service in a variety of ways.
- Developing youth leadership and stewardship – The Tasmanian State Secondary Colleges Cluster (Tas) sought to redress a perceived lack of student engagement in leadership and stewardship roles by identifying, developing and promoting civics and values learning opportunities available to its students.
- Using place to develop citizenship – The Children and Place Mapping Group Cluster (WA) was designed to draw out students’ ideas about what nourishes or sustains them in their local places, and what it is they care for and would take action about.

## **Inferences about good practice implementation of the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools**

At the end of each project case study, the Final Report lists the case study's key messages about how to interpret and put into practice the National Framework. Some key messages also list some educational impacts of the values education practice that the project case study has identified. In identifying what the case study is saying generally about successfully implementing the National Framework in terms of its guiding principles and key elements, the case studies also generate a number of quite specific good practices regarding the teaching and learning of values. These are consolidated in this section.

A major purpose of Stage 1 of the Good Practice Schools Project and of this report is to share what has emerged to be good practice in values education, mostly drawn from 'evidence-based' accounts of the individual cluster projects. Although readers are encouraged to make their own judgements from the project stories and use them to inform their practice, we have drawn inferences from the cases which we recommend to schools as ways of advancing the values education enterprise envisioned in the National Framework. The inferences are neither exhaustive nor definitive but they are strong indicators of what schools can do in practice to strengthen values education in their own particular contexts. They suggest some ways forward for others.

### ***Inferences about developing an ethos for and adopting a whole school approach to values education***

In a project designed to identify good practices for implementing the National Framework, communicating it to others and recommending that those people adopt them, one might reasonably anticipate such questions as 'What is the point?' and 'What difference will it make?' Some of the good practice stories provide persuasive answers.

At the outset, several schools were worried about the 'tone' or 'ethos' of their school. In some cases, these concerns provided the impetus to be part of the Good Practice Schools Project Stage 1. These projects set out to have their values education programme address issues about anti-social behaviour in the schools. Thus, some projects initially proposed developing a values programme around an off-the-shelf commercial education programme such as Tribes TLC®, Peer Support, You Can Do It!, or some other strategy such as restorative justice, in the hope it would change the behaviour of the children or young adults in the school. With the passage of time staff members in these project schools sometimes observed that their efforts were contributing to the school becoming a calmer, friendlier and more caring place.

In making a concerted effort to apply the values in the National Framework, the school was changing its tone and its ethos. Gradually respectfulness became more evident in school life and in the general character and tone of the schools. At least two clusters also began to postulate that there were connections between this emergent ethos and the patterns of improved attendance and improved academic performance. Thus, one answer to the question of 'What difference will it make?' that might be identified from the good practice case studies is that concerted efforts at values education might well reshape the general ethos within a school by making schools and classrooms more harmonious. It may also significantly improve the interpersonal relationships in schools if they approached values education using some of the strategies of the schools in the Good Practice Schools Project. And there is some evidence that it may well improve student engagement and academic performance as it did in some of the project schools.

There were some warning flags too. Some clusters experienced the inherent danger of beginning values education with off-the-shelf commercial programmes. There is a tendency for schools to focus on implementing *the programme* and lose sight of the big picture of placing values education at the core of school life. The National Framework provided a useful guide for cluster schools to re-focus their work on values education within the big picture.

For those cluster schools not experimenting with such commercial programmes the issue of school ethos highlighted the need for people to talk first about the ethos they wished to establish before engaging in any project activity. One school recounted:

*The cluster coordinators undertook a **philosophical journey** of their own, through the whole notion of a 'good life'. The philosophic and moral authenticity of the National Framework values needed to be validated by us before we could confidently move forward and genuinely and responsibly accommodate community input to the framework.*

Another suggests that one way of beginning to address the issue of ethos is to audit the values implicit in the teaching that goes on at the school and use that as a basis for further discussion.

In light of the stories of the clusters noted for adopting a whole school approach – namely the small community schools in Western Australia, some of the faith-based schools (including the group of Christian Colleges in Queensland) and Modbury School in Adelaide – we can infer that establishing a whole school approach to values education might occur in one of two ways. In some cases it is a natural occurrence and the values education programme tends to add to the solidarity of the cluster or school. Where it is not a natural occurrence, making it a reality requires orchestration as the National Framework implies. It requires someone (usually a principal) to initiate broad-based discussions about what values have support in the school community, articulate them and put them at the

centre of all school activity. As one of the principals in the WITS Cluster bluntly put it: 'Get your values right, make them clear and put them everywhere!'

In cases where there is less than whole school involvement in establishing the values education programme, the insights from the good practice schools suggest that it is wise to establish a strategically located critical mass around the values education enterprise and have the programme speak for itself from there. Several schools, for instance, located their project in the middle school or at particular year levels in the school. Project personnel were then able to draw positive attention to the programme by having the students who were immediately involved publicly celebrate the outcomes of the project. More than one project team advises that it is unwise to try to force a values education initiative on reluctant colleagues. Their consistent advice is to use an 'invitational approach'. Also, the good practice stories suggest that the path of least resistance to getting broader adoption of values education programmes is often to simply build on something that exists and is familiar. Several projects operated in this way. For instance, in one case a middle years environmental education project was reconceptualised in terms of the values in the National Framework, rebadged and implemented as the cluster's values project.

Finally, the experiences of many of the good practice schools suggest that developing a whole school ethos does not necessarily have to involve having as many of the school community as possible consider the meaning and relevance of the nine core values in the National Framework. Several clusters and schools focused on a refined set of 'core' values drawn from the National Framework. Thomas Chirnside School in western Melbourne, for example, concentrated on three: Respect, Responsibility and Relationships. Nonetheless, regardless of the number and nature of the values contributing to the ethos, many people point to the merits of having them documented in the school policies. An important aspect of this practice is the way it legitimises the values education programme.

### *Inferences about having something worthwhile to teach*

Many project coordinators expressed their frustration in their reports at their colleagues' unwillingness to participate in the project because of their perception that it would just add to their already 'too busy day'. The good practice schools that were able to overcome this perception often managed to do so by making the values programme part of existing practice. For instance, in one school where the inquiry method was the predominant approach to teaching and learning, the project coordinator worked with staff to show them how to reshape the questions they were using to frame their class inquiry into questions with a values focus. The values project was therefore subsumed into an existing well accepted and successful teaching and learning strategy.

Several clusters blended their projects into existing State or Territory curriculum frameworks. One in New South Wales adapted its project to the State's 'productive pedagogies' framework and in so doing legitimised it for parents,

teachers and students alike. A Northern Territory project dovetailed itself in the Territory's EsseNTial Learnings with similar effect.

Several projects adopted the strategy of making one of the nine core values in the National Framework the centrepiece of everything the school did for a period of time – sometimes a week, other times considerably longer. In this way regular practices were not disrupted but the substance of the school activity became much more values oriented.

### *Inferences about teaching it well*

There are numerous accounts from teachers in the good practice schools of how generalised they initially found the list of values in the National Framework. In such form, the values were unlikely material for teaching and learning. Over time, several good practice projects have successfully addressed this issue. Virtually all projects recount the importance of developing a 'shared language' for their values education programme – a language that is shared between all involved, teachers, parents and students. Sometimes the shared language is arrived at through good values education teaching and discussion with colleagues. At other times it comes from interrogating the National Framework so that it correlates with the language the school uses:

*Our job became clear: to use our 'comfortable' community language, but to also remain faithful to the framework values. 'My happiness ... My choice', our Values Project 'umbrella concept' emerged! The correlations were unambiguous. The community and the National Framework were not speaking different languages!*

Several projects point to the importance of a *staged* approach to teaching the values. By this they mean that first the values have to be taught explicitly. Commonly this involves using Y charts (a graphic organiser that requires the brainstorming of ideas around three dimensions: what a particular topic or situation 'looks like', 'sounds like' and 'feels like') to establish agreed meanings of the values. Second, it means the values have to be practised. In practice this translates as providing and seizing opportunities (sometimes referred to as 'teachable moments') for practising and modelling the values. This can mean a vast range of things in the school such as providing specific values-rich curriculum like 'Philosophy in the classroom' or service learning programmes. It might mean establishing and abiding by a code of classroom behaviour fashioned from the values. It might mean establishing a school or classroom policy whereby all negative behaviour is ignored, and as much behaviour as possible that is consistent with the shared meaning of the values is acknowledged and positively reinforced. The notion of trying to always emphasise the positive is a constant theme in the best practice schools stories:

*The Business Services teacher decided to institute similar practice to the Year 7 roll call meet and greet, in her class, as it was standard business procedure. Students entered and left the classroom with a handshake accompanied by appropriate phrases.*

*Many students had never encountered the skills of handshaking in the formal sense. This simple activity produced numerous **positive** spin-offs. Students all now knew and could demonstrate appropriate procedures. Many extended this activity to outside the classroom. The class settled into their work more readily, and conducted themselves in a more business-oriented manner during the class, maintaining the formalities instigated by the initial entry to the room.*

Several good practice schools report benefits when teachers model the behaviour that has been identified as consistent with the values in the National Framework:

*Values need to be taught and practised explicitly and that students identify the values [that are] prominent in a teacher's manner when interacting with students, and that students look to teachers for example.*

Improved interpersonal relationships in the classroom are frequently mentioned, especially in terms of how this occurs as a consequence of everyone trying to live the values. Some teachers also recount how their views on teaching and learning have altered as a consequence of their trying to live the values in their classrooms. For many of the good practice schools, making an effort to live the values extended to trying to 'really get to know the kids and them you'. Almost unanimously the advice from the schools is that student ownership of projects is vital.

### ***Inferences about connecting to the community***

One of the key benefits expressed by the good practice schools about community engagement is how it can provide for the students an overall sense of consistency which of course is so important in any quality teaching and learning circumstance. By enabling the school community to participate in identifying the values to be promoted by the school and then maintaining the sense of engagement and involvement, the aspirations for the children become more consistent, classroom to classroom and between classrooms and home.

Maintaining the connections between school and home was accomplished by the good practice schools in a number of ways. Some invested considerable time and effort in a regular newsletter that sought to engage family members in school life by explaining some of the details of the project and especially the ethos the school was concerned to establish, as well as the related aspirations it had for the children of these families.

Some projects formed project coordinating groups comprising teachers, parents and students and so found that connections with the community were strengthened.

One of the clusters that experiences very high rates of leadership and teaching staff turnover engaged parents to be a part of the leadership team, as opposed to

just being participants. This was their way of addressing the sustainability of values education in their school communities.

Community engagement was of particular significance for cluster projects working with Indigenous communities. In these cases the differences of language and cultural views needed to be explored in a deep way before the school community could attempt to move forward with a common understanding.

Finally, some cluster schools also make the point that community engagement can, in itself, provide a source of enormous positive reinforcement, not only for the values being promoted in the programme but also for the form of learning being encouraged and its outcomes. In one case, for example, the students were required to present their project to a panel of community experts. In the process, they were forced to articulate their understanding of the values and to give accounts of their application to the panel, thus reinforcing them for the students. The teachers here and elsewhere commented about how such activity promoted the growth of students' intellectual depth, communicative competence, reflection, self-management and self-knowledge – the very hallmarks of quality teaching.

### *Inferences about professional learning*

There is uniform agreement among the cluster schools about the extent to which professional learning contributes to best practice in values education. According to some schools, from a purely utilitarian viewpoint, the promise of professional learning to accompany the implementation of the project can be very persuasive in getting people to participate. In terms of its impact on the quality of the cluster project, cluster schools make two main points. First, professional learning that takes the form of colleagues discussing issues about classroom practice and collaboratively working on practical ways of addressing them has greatest impact. However, the stories also make clear that teachers in the project do not always single-handedly manage to produce good practice. Many schools talk about the importance of using outside 'experts'. Their value is at least twofold according to some best practice schools. On the one hand, they are sources of practical and insightful material on values education and related matters. On the other hand, because they are frequently able to influence the school culture in ways 'insiders' find difficult, they can get things happening.

### *Inferences about the common challenges schools and clusters may face*

Virtually all cluster schools observed that the implementation of a whole school approach to values education takes time, and cannot be achieved in only one year. By its nature, Stage 1 of the Good Practice Schools Project could not provide sufficient time to achieve the objectives of the National Framework; particularly since the project spanned more than one calendar year with attendant changes to personnel and student groupings in most of the schools. The implementation of values education is, rather, a long-term project that, as foreshadowed in the inferences about 'teaching it well', may need to be staged over time. This is particularly important if the implementation is to gain the support of the school community as a whole which is, as already noted, a precondition for success.

Seeing values education through over time in this way requires strong and consistent leadership at both the school and cluster level. Such leadership is essential if the focus is to be maintained and the values education goals and objectives are to be achieved. Good leadership at both the school and cluster level builds commitment to the task and empowers people, including students, to make a difference to the culture and practices of their schools. For integrating school-based activity, it is important to develop an ethos and adopt a whole school approach to values education, ensure there are worthwhile things to teach that in turn are well taught, and that the community is engaged at all stages along the way.

The importance of leadership in part reflects the fact that not all staff will necessarily come on board easily and accept the necessity of adopting something that is more than just a quick-fix programme. Not all staff embrace new initiatives with the same vigour as other 'early adopters', though persistent professional

learning support can help turn this around. More specifically, the experiences of the Good Practice Schools Project clusters suggest that less passionate teachers in the schools need to be supported and encouraged to take a more active interest in values education over time through professional development and sharing with colleagues who are taking the lead. In this context, schools found that the National Framework itself can serve as a means of engaging teachers in dialogue that can help overcome some of the negative attitudes that exist.

Similarly, schools often found it difficult to engage parents in values education activities in which their clusters were involved. Parent attendance at values education forums, for example, generally was poor, and much remains to be done to engage parents more in dialogue about values and values education in schools. This, as one cluster noted, does not necessarily mean parental enthusiasm or support is low, but rather that many parents prefer their involvement in values education to be via their children's classroom teacher instead of through formal meetings out of school hours.

The story of Stage 1 of the Good Practice Schools Project also offers some guidance if schools choose to work together to strengthen their approaches to values education. Although clusters clearly contributed markedly to values education success in individual schools, the effectiveness of clusters is neither automatic nor guaranteed. It requires a high level of commitment from all schools involved, good leadership of the cluster as a whole, and frequent communication between cluster schools, or else it can just become another layer of meetings and work. When these preconditions are met, however, cluster meetings become a source of inspiration and support, as evident in the case of one particularly effective group where meetings

*... always ran to an advertised agenda. Always had a minute taker (these minutes were distributed to everyone in our interest group), always provided time for all school coordinators to share the good, the bad and the ugly, always shared the financial update, always had a professional development component and always, and most importantly, had a lot of laughs.*

In a similar vein, the mere existence of a university adviser or other critical friend such as those engaged by project clusters from the UAN does not mean they will be used to good effect. A need exists to clearly define the role and expectations of the UAN or critical friend and be assertive about this relationship if time is not to be wasted on both sides. Only in that way will schools be assisted, as this same effective cluster explained, 'to develop professionally and to grow personally as we travelled the values journey'.

*End of Executive Summary*