

# **FAIRFIELD SCHOOL**

**Location** Dunedin

**Full Primary** (Years 1-8)

**Decile** 9

**Roll** 300

**Ethnicity:** Pakeha 90%; Maori 6%; Asian 4%

**Principal** Andy Larsen

## **History**

The current Principal has been at Fairfield School for seven years. Prior to his appointment nothing had been done to implement a values programme. The first step in the creation of a values programme occurred when Fairfield was “adopted” as a sister school to Weston School, Oamaru, by Weston’s then Principal, Rod Galloway. The communities of Weston and Fairfield, including Principals, staff and parent groups, worked together and as a result, the Fairfield Board decided to adopt the Weston School Character Education programme. The goal was to trial the programme for 12 months and then survey parents.

## **Systems**

- The programme used at Fairfield is based on the Cornerstone Values, of which there are eight. They work on a different value each term. The teachers are supplied with the eight books (a book for each value) as resources. This ensures clarity and consistency of method and shared language. Teachers have found the programme easy to implement and now have the skills to integrate the Cornerstone Values in a more informal way.
- Art Costa’s “Habits of Mind” and the de Bono “Six Thinking Hats” have been found to integrate well with the Cornerstone Values and provide additional useful material.
- Teachers take one lesson per term on the value for the term, ensuring that definitions are understood. Displays are created in classrooms and the Principal talks to students in assemblies.
- The library is set up as a safe place for students. The librarian runs a nurturing programme for students who require support.
- Behaviour management is linked to the Cornerstone Values, and is working well. Disciplinary intervention is rarely needed, and though the school has a detention centre it is not used.

## Results

- In accordance with the original plan the parents were surveyed after a trial period. The parents “raved” about the programme, their support based on a widely held feeling that it reinforced the parents’ values. There is evidence of parents taking an active interest and talking to their children about the programme.
- Relationships between the school and its community are stronger. The school is the focus of the community.
- Formal disciplinary procedures are rarely needed.
- A recent ERO report says that: “ 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.”

## Key Features

- The Principal is key to the success of the programme.
- The Board have taken an active interest from the beginning.
- There is strong support from parents.
- Overall the programme is well-established and low-key. The Cornerstone Values, Thinking Hats and Habits of Mind approaches have been intertwined, and well integrated into daily teaching and learning. The result is a highly effective programme that is working very well for Fairfield School and its community.