

## Values Education School Forum reports from Western Australia – September 2006

Read reports from the following schools for a sampler of the variety of ways to conduct a school forum:

- Binnu Primary School
- Carine Primary School
- Carramar Primary School
- Girrawheen Primary School
- Mirrabooka Precinct Cluster
- Mount Tarcoola Primary School
- Morley Primary School
- North Balga Primary School,
- North Hampton District High School
- Wanneroo Primary School
- Western Australian Camp Schools

### **Binnu Primary School**

Clarification of the aims of the school and their connection to the community was the focus of **Binnu Primary School's** forum. Participants spent time identifying the many ways the school could support values education in the community and vice versa by opening lines of communication between all stakeholders.

Clarification of the school's position in the community and greater awareness within the community of the aims of values education at a social, emotional and intellectual level provided the common language for all stakeholders.

The process for open dialogue has been established through the introduction of the 'Quest4Values' programme (<http://www.quest4values.com>) as a whole-school approach to values education.

### **Carine Primary School**

Katie Hodson Thomas MLA attended a celebration assembly forum at **Carine Primary School** that reinforced what a great job the staff is doing to include values in a variety of ways across all curriculum areas.

Students, parents, teachers and visitors were provided with a meaningful way to embrace values through a workshop by an external provider, 'Circus Challenge'. During the forum teachers gained an understanding of which values parents and children consider important. Parents and visitors became aware of the *National Values for Australian Schooling Framework* and through a poster competition and classroom discussion children gained an appreciation and understanding of the nine Values for Australian Schooling.

The students and their families openly conversed in the language of values and each family was presented with a copy of the nine *Values for Australian Schooling* poster. It was a wonderful way to begin the term. The whole school was buzzing, with everyone working together in a very positive environment. The atmosphere was electric with ideas, which were expressed in participants' understanding of the 'Values We Share'. In taking on the challenge students, staff, and parents at Carine are now more mindful of how the community can work together to nurture students through values education.

### **Carramar Primary School**

The forum held in August at **Carramar Primary School** was open to all students, staff and parents and the wider community. The focus of the forum was on

explaining the values that informed both the Western Australian and national values frameworks. Using both the Western Australian Curriculum and the *National Values for Australian Schooling Framework*, participants examined the findings from a values education survey conducted with parents in June 2006.

The forum was facilitated by Steve Godden from Best Performance Pty Ltd. (<http://www.bestperformance.com.au/index.html>). The information he presented was well received by participants.

The forum provided the school with valuable information on community perceptions of how well the school is focusing on all aspects of the values frameworks. This information is being used to inform the next phase of planning for the school's pastoral care policy, which includes values education as a priority area.

The school has been in operation for only 18 months and it was extremely encouraging that the areas of values education they have focused on so far rated well in the survey. The survey also indicated that the school, through a whole-school approach, needs to educate the wider school community on the many aspects of school life that encompass values education.

### **Girrawheen Primary School**

Values education is an integral part of school life at **Girrawheen Primary School**. In semester two of 2006 the school held a number of special events to further develop the social skills of students, as well as a forum in two parts. Part one was on 30 August and part two on 20 September. Workshops by external providers were incorporated to improve social skills, particularly with regards to respect and responsibility.

### **Mirrabooka Precinct Cluster**

The three schools in the **Mirrabooka Precinct Cluster** include Mirrabooka Primary School, Mirrabooka Education Support Centre and Mirrabooka Senior High School. The purpose of their forum was to promote and celebrate the effort and hard work they have put in to values education through their whole of cluster programme. The precinct has linked the Western Australian five clusters of core shared values in the Curriculum Framework, the *National Values for Australian Schooling Framework* and the *National Safe Schools Framework* (<http://ncab.nssfbestpractice.org.au>). Using examples of values education from their precinct, the schools combined to report to the school community on the ongoing outcomes of their programmes and the positive effects of their project on student outcomes.

### **Morley Primary School**

**Morley Primary School**, as a whole staff, has commenced a 'series process' for its forum. The school wanted to work on the following areas:

- developing a plan to implement a policy for values education
- linking the *National Framework for Values Education* to the Curriculum Framework, and values education to their school plan
- plan for a community forum.

Morley devoted time at two of their pupil-free days in 2006 to professional development, including the opportunity to discuss values education and pre-plan forums. From this discussion they decided that the main focus of their forum would be on engaging the community and encouraging community involvement in their school programmes.

The next stage of the process involved devoting time at the monthly staff meetings to continue values exploration. They began by conducting a school and classroom audit of values education practice and programmes in their school and followed this with a review of school policies and governance documents. As part of the process

the deputy principal facilitated a workshop during which, as a whole school, they changed the school's behaviour policy to reflect a set of values and beliefs. Members of the school council have been invited to attend the next meeting, which will focus on whole of school planning.

### **Mount Tarcoola Primary School**

To raise awareness of 'Values We Share' for schooling and to assist in identifying models, strategies and programmes in the school that assist with the development of values, **Mt Tarcoola Primary School** initiated the cooperation and agreement of the whole school community to embark on a 'series process' for their forum.

To begin this process a survey of staff, parents and students about the perceptions of school was conducted at the beginning of semester 1, 2006. Discussion and feedback at parent and citizen meetings, school council meetings and student council meetings about the data collected from the survey confirmed that the school was providing many opportunities for the development of values, combining several whole-school programmes and events.

A school forum was then held. This influenced school policies and practice in a variety of ways. It identified the concerns of parents, students and staff about how much more needed to be done in order to provide more opportunities for the development of values. Using an ANZAC focus for the forum and motivated by the establishment of the connection to a 'Buddy School' in the Philippines, the school has implemented a whole-school programme promoting shared values using the 'Friendly Schools and Families' (<http://www.friendlyschools.com.au>) programme.

### **North Balga Primary School**

When **North Balga Primary School** held their forum they had the largest turnout of people the principal could remember at a school gathering! More than 300 students, staff, parents and community members joined together to share in a whole-school discussion and find a common understanding of current and new school policies and programmes. There are fewer than 200 students at the school.

The forum allowed the school community to celebrate their past successes and future commitment to the importance of ensuring that shared values are embedded in every aspect of the school and community. The whole school community now has a better understanding of the school's values policy and programmes and is committed to developing a whole school and community approach to develop a culture of respect.

### **North Hampton District High School**

All the staff, students and community members were surveyed at **North Hampton District High School**. The result of the survey was to implement the Tribes™ as a whole-school approach to behaviour management, with a focus on the secondary students. A team structure was put in place for the whole school on the first day of the school term. A code of conduct was developed in consultation with staff and students. Students were especially concerned about the reciprocity of respect between themselves and staff. This entailed an agreement on the modelling of appropriate behaviours by staff and students and has proven to be a very successful strategy, particularly in the secondary section of the school.

Following the forum the school developed a new code of conduct with input from parents and students. The focus is on the value of '**respect**' across the primary and the secondary classes, and this is working very effectively.

### **Wanneroo Primary School**

With the amalgamation of two schools, Wanneroo Primary School and Junior Primary School, a committee of teachers and people was formed to develop a school vision and a shared set of school values.

Through a collaborative process involving the whole community, meetings were held regularly over a period of several months to ensure that both schools' cultures were respected. Numbers attending varied from meeting to meeting; however, meetings were well attended by a mix of staff, parents, students and other community members.

As part of the process surveys were sent to every school family. As a result of this process the school has established a special emphasis on values through the inclusion of a values curriculum, the development of a new school vision and a school behaviour management policy.

The collation of the information from the values education forums and survey determined the new school's vision, shared values and the direction and implementation of values into the school development plan for 2006–2007. These shared values and policies were then implemented in the school through the teaching and learning programmes of the Virtues Programme. The school's shared values and vision are displayed on a new sign at the front entrance to the school and information has been disseminated through the school newsletter to parents and the wider community.

### **Western Australian Camp Schools**

The seven **Western Australian Camp Schools** recently held a forum. Schools across the State use camp school facilities throughout any school year and some schools have standing bookings for every year with the same camp school.

The coordinator of the forum, Marg Holmes, who is Acting Manager for Bridgetown Camp School, was amazed at the level of enthusiasm shown by the other managers. All of the managers were keen to work on a 'whole-schools' approach as the focus for values education. In her report she indicated that the forum went very well.

Participants agreed on:

- which values are inherent in the camp school experience;
- how the values can be demonstrated and modelled;
- developing a rubric for visiting teachers to use to assess the outcomes on camp.

The Camp Schools' network decided to pool its grant money to use for the promotion of values education in camp schools. This will be done by:

- advertising in School Matters,
- posters to display in the camps,
- a DVD presentation to take into schools and
- a double-page article for School Matters.

They also worked on how to ensure that all of the external providers that the camp school network use to deliver programmes to students remain consistent with their whole of schools values approach.