The Lighthouse Research Project: Whole School Change for the Middle Years of Schooling

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This paper discusses the current implementation and findings of the "Lighthouse Schools Research Project", a three-year longitudinal research project focussing on middle years change in five Victorian government schools, funded by the William Buckland Foundation and administered by the Education Foundation.

The five schools for the 'Lighthouse Schools' Project were chosen based on the interrelated mix of challenging and engaging curriculum, developmentally appropriate teaching/learning practices, and responsive structure and organisation that the schools' proposals reflected. Some common features of the school models include the use of flexible timetabling and teacher teams, the development of curriculum and the places where it is delivered to meet the physical, educational, psychological and social needs of young adolescents, and the establishment of extensive links with the community beyond the school.

The paper will outline the vision of each of the schools, the nuts and bolts of implementation, the problems and the successes, and the lessons learnt from this investigation into long-term, holistic middle schooling reform.