

High Performance Learning
World Class School Award
Re-accreditation Feedback

School name	Sacred Heart High School		
Peer Assessor	Jane Gandee	Date of visit	6 June 2024
Strengths: (List three)			
<p>Sacred Heart High School is restless, reflective and single-mindedly committed to providing an environment that supports learning for all students. HPL has been married extremely effectively with the five Sacred Heart goals to give both a sense of purpose and a framework. The emphasis on research and on implementing evidence-based approaches is also notable, as are the high expectations that staff have for themselves and their students. The work on feedback to feedforward is a good example of the above.</p> <p>The commitment of the SEN and the behaviour and inclusion departments to ensuring that students do not have barriers to their learning is impressive. HPL principles and language are embedded in the work of these departments. There is no cap on achievement and this is reflected also in the non-prior attainment teaching groups.</p> <p>Pupils are highly impressive. Staff described them as having ‘a reverence for learning’, ‘high standards for themselves’, and being ‘ambitious’, ‘enquiring’, ‘kind’ and well-behaved’. I noted all those aspects from the student leaders, in the lessons that I observed, in the corridors, in assembly and whilst they were handing in Yondr pouches. As Janet Erskine Stuart said ‘Our education is not meant to turn the children out small and finished but seriously begun on a wide basis.’ ‘Seriously begun’ is evident throughout the school.</p>			
Areas for improvement to form next Road Map: (Specific objectives - list no more than three)			
<p>Sacred Heart High School is already working on ensuring that students are clear about the meaning of the subcategories and that they are comfortable with using the language of HPL themselves.</p> <p>Following the work on the curriculum intent and embedding HPL within schemes of work, the intention is to build HPL deliberately into the extensive enrichment programme.</p> <p>Much progress has been made with engaging parents and more engagement is planned such as encouraging them to read ‘Great Minds and How to Grow Them’ and drip-feeding them HPL principles and examples.</p>			
General comments to include any good practice observed or materials developed within the school that can be shared:			
<p>It was an absolute pleasure to visit Sacred Heart High School and to meet students and staff. I was particularly struck by the wide-spread commitment by staff to the idea that every student can achieve. This was encapsulated by the comment from one teacher that the ‘belief in every girl being able to achieve is a moral driver for staff’. The removal of prior attainment groupings has been a ‘gamechanger’ according to staff and has made students more self-confident across all subjects. It was notable that the recent Ofsted report identified the particularly good progress made by SEN and Pupil Premium students, reflecting and illustrating the belief that everyone can achieve. I spoke to a teacher who joined Sacred Heart High School in September 2023 and who had noticed and welcomed the fact that ‘there is no cap on performance’. In drama, every student who wants to take part in a play is encouraged to do so unlike some schools where there is a strict selection process. Students rise to the challenge and produce high-quality work. A recent</p>			

promenade performance had a cast of 120 whilst the performance of 'Antigone' incorporated suggestions from the cast about technical aspects of the play.

Heads of department have worked hard on developing their curriculum intent, which has had the effect of further embedding HPL in each subject area. Next steps are to spread this deeper understanding of HPL to all colleagues in a department.

It was interesting to hear from an early career teacher. At Sacred Heart High School, new members of staff receive explicit instruction in HPL and ECT teachers are given the opportunity for deliberate practice in their development of HPL teaching techniques. This mirrors the delivery of HPL for students and therefore reinforces HPL principles.

The quality of feedback was very high and it was clear to students what they needed to do to improve. This reflected a successful 'feedback to feedforward' project led by a small working party of four who then introduced effective feedback principles to the rest of the staff body. As one member of the working party put it, we offer 'principles not prescription' so that each subject can adopt feedback to feedforward methods that are most appropriate. It was clear that there were high levels of trust in staff.

I was impressed by the Janet Erskine Stuart Centre where the behaviour and inclusion team, and SEN work together with purpose to ensure that students get the support that they need and that they get back into class as soon as possible. The emphasis on being 'work-place ready' is powerful. It means that staff can explain why behaviour is unacceptable to students in a way that looks forward and is relevant. 'You can't answer back – that's not ok in the work-place' 'Would you expect this behaviour if you were a boss? What would you expect from an employee?' At the same time, staff also ask 'but why are you behaving like that?' This identifies underlying issues so that a student can receive help where necessary. The learning mentors (classroom assistants) work in the same way and with the same principles. The school is calmer and Ofsted described the atmosphere as 'harmonious'. All members of staff in the Janet Erskine Stuart Centre are trying to remove barriers to learning and increase students' self-regulation so that they can consistently be in class. Students who show improved attendance are eligible for the 'lucky draw'.

Sacred Heart High School's sense of purpose – 'it's the essence of who we are', 'it's the why beneath the what' – is very clear and married to HPL it makes an exceptionally strong framework and heart to the school that provide the conditions in which students can flourish.

The students are impressive. In lessons they were keen to study and to learn, and they were able to explain how teachers' feedback gave them the information that they needed to improve moving forward. The student leaders were eloquent in explaining their roles, what they had learnt from them and how they had managed to change things at Sacred Heart High School. They were proud to have worked with students from different year groups, to have given pertinent feedback to staff and to have improved their ability to speak in public. Their range of activities was notable: First Give, Topical Talks, the international evening, Eco Committee and Diversity Committee etc.

They were also clearly proud of their school. As one of them said, 'we are a community, but we are all individuals. Each of us is special.'

There is imaginative and compelling CPD in which principles are shared with departments and they are then trusted to implement those principles as best suits their subject area. There is a strong philosophy that all staff should want to improve their practice, and clear leadership to encourage individual research and professional development to sit alongside group INSET sessions. I could see that staff were committed to improving their practice so that they can better support their students.