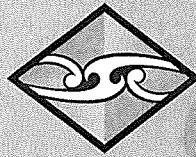


DIOCESE OF
PALMERSTON NORTH



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SPECIAL CHARACTER COMMUNITY REPORT

Sacred Heart Girls' College is an authentic Catholic faith community where Gospel values are central, and where excellence in faith is being nourished. The community is welcoming, supportive of each other and marked by its commitment to one another. Staff and students are proud of their college.

The Principal and Director of Religious Studies have a strong faith based vision for the college. The Principal (appointed 2014 and new to Catholic education) has warmly and confidently embraced the college's Catholic character. The Director of Religious Studies is focused on looking for new opportunities to develop a strong Catholic culture and has instigated several new initiatives that are examples of best practice.

The individual and communal spirituality of the whole college has been an area of strong development since the last review. The college is encouraged to continue to develop sacramental opportunities especially to those who are not baptised. Many students are actively involved in the New Plymouth Pastoral Parish especially the youth group.

Through its strong service to one another and in the community the college lives out the principle of preferential option for the poor and vulnerable.

Pastoral care is a strength of the college and the dignity of each person within the community is respected. Relationships are strong and where there are break-downs the college actively seeks to find solutions in a restorative way. Programmes are run to assist identified students with well-being issues. Staff and students stated they felt affirmed.

The college is encouraged to find ways to incorporate cultural aspects that celebrate and affirm the importance of the ethnic groups within the college, for example within signage, use of greetings and in Masses and liturgies.

The Director of Religious Studies provides strong leadership and sound management in Religious Education. She is organized and very supportive of her teaching staff. The faculty is rigorously reviewed as part of a college wide self-review programme. Evidence from this assists the faculty in setting goals for development. It is an example of best practice.

Teachers within the faculty are authentic witnesses to the Catholic faith and are enthusiastic about the teaching of Religious Education.

The *Understanding Faith* curriculum is being delivered effectively with a variety of teaching and learning styles used, ranging from strongly teacher directed lessons, co-operative activities to interactive and technology based lessons. Student engagement is high and relationships between teachers and students are positive.