

Sacred Heart Grammar School Newry

SCHOOL PROSPECTUS 2025 - 2026



Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank-you for taking the time to read our 2025/26 prospectus. Hopefully your child is reading it alongside you, and you are getting an opportunity to be introduced to our wonderful school.



The school was founded by the Sisters of St Clare and first opened in 1930. As a recently appointed principal I have been overwhelmed by the caring atmosphere in this school. The students in Sacred Heart School are enthusiastic, respectful, caring, and ambitious. The staff are hardworking and dedicated to the development of the whole child, intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically.

Our ethos is informed by the teaching of our patrons, St Clare and St Francis, and we strive to create a warm and friendly atmosphere. It is our belief that children learn best when they are happy, and their welfare is our primary concern.

We are situated on a beautiful site with calming outdoor spaces as well as excellent modern teaching facilities. We have a long tradition of success in music, sport, and the arts, along with enduring high performance in public examinations. Students in Sacred Heart are encouraged, supported and challenged to excel, whatever their interests are.

As a Catholic school we are welcoming and inclusive, and it is our hope that children leaving our school will have developed their own personal faith, a respect for others and a strong sense of morality. As they make their way into adulthood, further study and employment we want them to be confident, hopeful young people, who will lead fulfilling and happy lives.

Making the choice of post-primary school is a huge decision for parents/guardians and pupils.

By reading this prospectus and by visiting our website <https://www.shsnewry.com/> we hope you will be better informed about Sacred Heart Grammar School and what we stand for.

For the future, we hope that you and your child make the best choice of post-primary school and that their experience there is enriching and enjoyable.

Mr S Comer
Principal



SACRED HEART GRAMMAR SCHOOL
10 Ashgrove Avenue, Newry, Co Down, BT34 1PR

Telephone: (028) 3026 4632

Website: www.shsnewry.com / Email: info@shsnewry.com

PRINCIPAL: Mr Shane Comer

CHAIRPERSON BOARD OF GOVERNORS: Mrs Posey Gilsenan

Admissions Number: 120

Enrolment Number: 879

Sacred Heart Grammar School is a voluntary day grammar for girls aged 11 – 18. Established in 1930 by the Sisters of St. Clare, the school has maintained its long established links with the Order and the Newry community.

The curriculum of Sacred Heart Grammar School is designed to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of the students, and to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Our Aims are:



to provide a Christian environment where students can grow in an appreciation of their Catholic faith and in the knowledge and love of God



to maximise the academic and creative potential of the students through the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum



to provide students with the necessary skills and advice relevant to their lifestyle and future career



to encourage students to appreciate and respect their natural environment.

Our objectives are to transmit the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare by fostering a friendly and caring atmosphere in the school and encouraging students to:

- respect the dignity of the human person
- care for and protect their environment
- work for peace in their country and throughout the world
- grow in their personal relationship with Christ
- make informed decisions on relevant moral issues
- achieve high academic standards.



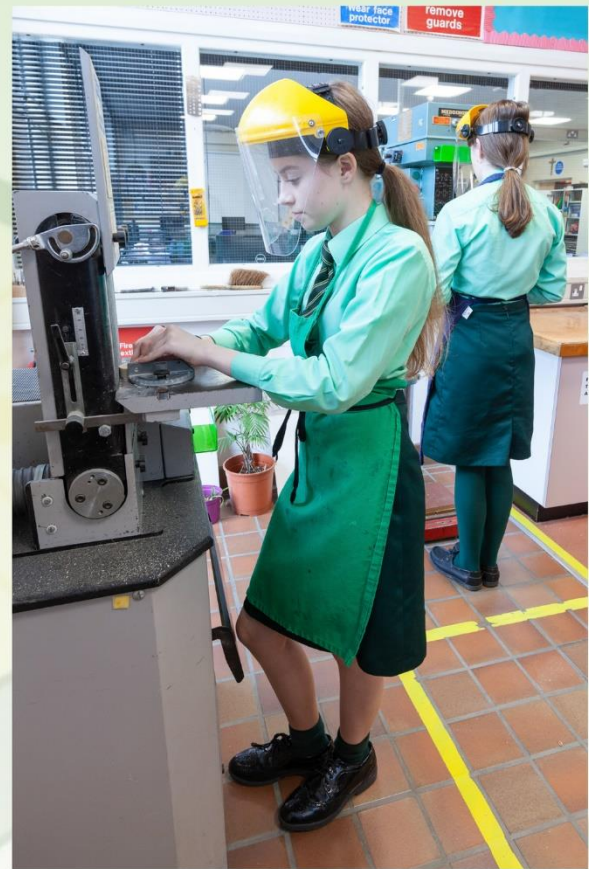
In Sacred Heart Grammar School, we value the importance of:

- home/school links and encourage parents to play an active role in the education of their children
- giving students experience and appreciation of the aesthetic arts
- students making an appropriate choice of vocation and encouraging them to do what is necessary to attain their goals
- students participating in activities which will develop an awareness of their own cultural heritage and an understanding of other traditions and cultures
- encouraging students to participate in extra-curricular activities and learn how to use and enjoy their leisure time.



The Curriculum

The curriculum in Sacred Heart Grammar School is concerned with values and attitudes as well as knowledge and skills. It is designed to help students to become independent learners and take responsibility for their own learning. Curriculum planning is guided by current statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. The school is on target to fulfil the requirements of the Entitlement Framework. Classes are un-streamed except for Mathematics classes, which are grouped by ability in Years 11 and 12.



Key Stage 3 Subjects

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|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art and Design• Biology• Chemistry• Coding• Drama• English• French | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Science• Geography• History• Home Economics• ICT• Irish• Learning for Life and Work | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mathematics• Music• Physical Education• Physics• Religious Studies• Spanish• Technology |
|--|---|---|

Key Stage 4 Subjects

The school offers a broad range of subjects at GCSE:

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|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art and Design• Biology• Chemistry• Business Studies• Design and Technology• Digital Technologies• Double Award Science• Drama | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economics• English• English Literature• Food and Nutrition• French• Further Mathematics• Geography• History | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Irish• Learning for Life and Work• Mathematics• Music• Physical Education• Physics• Religious Studies• Spanish |
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Key Stage Four students will also have classes in:

- Careers
- Learning for Life and Work
- Personal Development
- Physical Education (non-exam).



Area Learning Community

Sacred Heart Grammar School is a member of Newry & Mourne Area Learning Community (ALC). Collaborating with 16 other local schools and learning-providers, the ALC strives to offer greater choice and flexibility for all post-primary learners aged 14 and above. Sacred Heart has in recent years extended its curriculum provision at GCE AS and A Level by collaborating with the Abbey Grammar School to offer students a broader curriculum so that they can choose a blend of courses which best meets their needs, aptitudes, aspirations and interests.



AS / A Level Subjects

The school currently offers an extensive range of subjects for AS/A Level. Year 13 students normally choose 3/4 subjects at AS Level.

Some subjects are taught in collaboration with The Abbey Grammar School (indicated by *).

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|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art and Design• Biology• Chemistry• Business Studies• Design and Technology*• Digital Technology• Drama and Theatre Studies• Economics | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• English Literature• French• Geography• Government and Politics• Health and Social Care• History• Irish• Mathematics | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Music• Nutrition and Food Science• Physical Education• Physics• Religious Studies• Sociology• Spanish |
|---|--|---|



School Uniform

School regulations require every student to have a full school uniform. Students are encouraged to take pride in their uniform and their general appearance. The school uniform consists of:

- School blazer with school crest
- Regulation knee length green skirt or regulation full length black trousers
- Light green shirt and clip-on school tie
- Bottle green school jumper
- Green knee length socks or tights
- Plain black leather flat heeled shoes.
- School coat (optional)

The PE uniform consists of:

- School jersey
- School half-zip
- School shorts or plain black SHS leggings



The School Day

The school day begins with Assembly & Registration. Students are in school from 8.55 a.m. - 3:20pm. Registration also takes place in the afternoon.

The Dining Hall provides a variety of healthy choices for lunch or dinner and also accommodates those students who wish to bring a packed lunch. Breakfast is available in the Dining Hall from 8.15 – 8.55 a.m.

Pastoral Care

Sacred Heart Grammar School is committed not only to the intellectual development of students but also their personal and social development. An excellent Pastoral Care Programme, incorporating Personal, Social and Health Education, ensures that this goal is realised.

All staff members contribute to the delivery and development of pastoral care. Special attention is given to Year 8 students to help them settle into their new surroundings. In addition to the pastoral care provision by teaching staff, two members of the school's Student Support Team are available for individual counselling.

Role of the Form Teacher

A Form Teacher is assigned to each class from Years 8 -14 and meets the students as a Form Class group each day. Form Teachers monitor attendance, punctuality and academic progress. They also deal with any difficulties that a student may experience.

Role of the Year Head

The Year Head occupies a key role in the pastoral care programme. He/She works with the Principal, Vice Principal, Heads of Key Stage, Form Teachers, and other staff to encourage the personal and academic development of students and to actively promote the aims and objectives of the school within the year group. The Year Head who is assigned to each year group leads and supports the Form Teachers in their role.

Role of the Head of Key Stage

Four members of the school's Senior Leadership Team oversee Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. The Heads of Key Stage advise the Senior Leadership on all matters relating to their Key Stage. They develop a strategic vision for each Key Stage, lead and manage the various Pastoral Teams, ensure continuity and progression across the Key Stages and, primarily, they verify that the pastoral and academic needs of each and every student are met.

Role of the Vice Principals

The Pastoral Programme is coordinated by the Vice Principals. They lead the Safeguarding Team and are the Designated and Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection. Along with the Principal, they have overall responsibility for the pastoral care of staff & students and curriculum provision.

Further details regarding pastoral care provision can be found in the school's Pastoral Care Policy, available on the school website and app.



Positive Behaviour

Good behaviour creates the conditions for effective learning and helps to develop in students responsible attitudes and values for life. Teachers consistently encourage high standards of behaviour within the school and beyond, in the interest both of the student and society. There is an excellent relationship between students and teachers. Good order is maintained, not simply by a regime of sanctions and rewards, but by encouraging self-discipline. Teachers endeavour to create an environment where constructive and purposeful activity can take place. Full details of the School Rules can be found in the Student Planner.

School Trips

KS 5 Geography - Italy



KS 5 French - Paris



KS 5 Ski Trip



KS 3 - Emerald Park



KS 4 & 5 Spanish - Madrid



Religious Education

All students in Years 8-12 attend timetabled Religious Education classes each week. In addition to the formal Pastoral Care Programme, Sacred Heart Grammar School provides opportunities for each student to grow in an appreciation of the Catholic faith and in the knowledge and love of God. This is achieved by providing experiences for the spiritual growth and development of each student through the following:

- the Eucharist
- Morning Prayer/reflection
- the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Stations of the Cross
- School and Class Masses
- Prayer Services
- Retreats
- Carol Services
- Liturgy Committee
- Spiritual Direction from the School Chaplain.



Careers Education

Employability is incorporated into the Learning For Life and Work Programme for Years 8 – 11. Students from Years 12 –14 are timetabled for Careers Guidance and are also given specific guidance based upon personal interviews with their career guidance teacher. The work of Careers teachers is supplemented by the Careers Officer from the local Careers Service, who visits the school regularly.

The Careers Department offers the following opportunities for students:

- Open Day visits to Universities and Institutes of Further & Higher Education
- a variety of careers talks for different year groups, including visits and talks by representatives from the world of work, including the S.T.E.A.M. industries
- the opportunity to attend a UCAS Higher Education Convention
- Work Experience in Year 13
- Mock Interview Programme for Year 13
- Medical Debate.

Physical Education

Sacred Heart Grammar School provides an extensive range of sporting activities for students. All year groups, from Years 8 –12, have two periods of P.E. per week. Students in Years 13 & 14, assisted by P.E. staff, devise a Personal Exercise Plan for the school Fitness Suite.

The top quality facilities include a fully equipped Sports Hall and large modern Fitness Suite, an Assembly Hall equipped for gymnastics, changing areas and showers, two grass pitches, two all-weather pitches, four tennis courts and two netball courts.

Students have numerous opportunities to participate in sporting activities and competitions within school and through extra-curricular provision.

- **Athletics**
- **Badminton**
- **Basketball**
- **Boxercise / HIT sessions**
- **Camogie**
- **Dance**
- **Gaelic Football**
- **Gymnastics**
- **Health Related Fitness**
- **Netball**
- **Rounders**
- **Table Tennis/ Tennis**
- **Uni-hoc**
- **Volleyball**
- **Walking**
- **Yoga**



Sacred Heart - U20B Ulster Football Champions 2024.

Study Facilities and Reading Room

Sacred Heart is equipped with two study facilities - our Year 14 Centre and the Assisi Room. Each room is resourced with computer access, linked to a high quality printer/scanner/photocopier. The Assisi Room is available to students after 3:20pm for after school study.

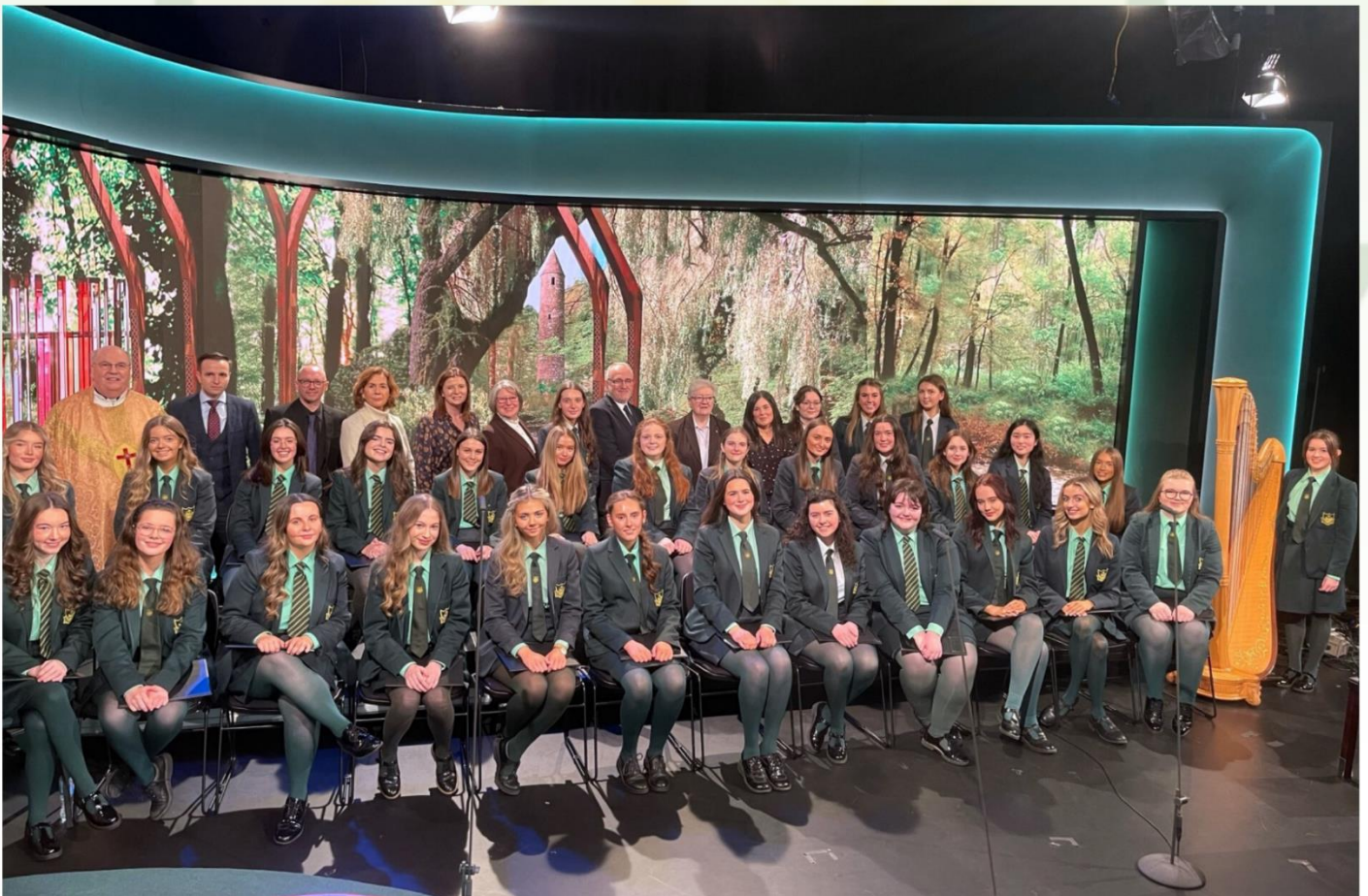
The Mary Bell Reading Room has been recently refurbished to provide a quiet space for all pupils to borrow or read the range of fiction and non-fiction books available here. The encouragement of good reading habits and reading for leisure is still very much an aspect of our student development programme. Throughout the year various activities are held to promote literacy including a Book Fair, National Poetry Day celebrations, The Irish News Literacy Project, World Book Day celebrations, READON, invitations extended to guest authors and National Storytelling Week celebrations. All students are invited to participate in these events.



Music

Sacred Heart Grammar School has a strong tradition of extra-curricular musical activities. In addition to the Junior and Senior Orchestras, there are woodwind, string and brass ensembles, a jazz band and Irish traditional group, providing opportunities for students of all levels to perform music. Both orchestras and ensembles regularly perform at a wide range of events, including Open Night, Prizegiving, Concerts, and at the local Feis.

The Junior and Senior Choirs compete in local festivals and perform on many occasions throughout the year. The Senior Choir also participates in Ulster Youth Choir workshops.



Sacred Heart Senior Choir and Students leading the RTE Broadcast Mass, March 2024.

Drama



The school has a thriving Drama Department and students of all ages have the opportunity to perform in a variety of plays and compete in a range of festivals. Years 8 – 10 have timetabled Drama class each week, while GCSE Drama and A Level Drama & Theatre Studies are popular choices for senior students. In addition to the practical work for examinations in Drama, students have the opportunity to take part in practical drama workshops led by visiting theatre companies and to participate in theatre visits and compete in drama festivals.

The School Musical

Our recent school musical, 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat', marked a highly successful return to what is an important cultural event in the school. Taking place in the Autumn term, this inter-departmental project involves Music, Drama, Art, and Technology.

Some of the other productions staged by the school in recent years are:

- Oliver
- The King and I
- The Mikado
- Anything Goes
- Oklahoma!
- My Fair Lady
- The Boy Friend
- Crazy For You
- Cats
- Guys & Dolls
- The Pirates of Penzance



Facilities

Situated on a beautifully landscaped 20-acre site, the school contains a Main Building, a purpose-built Design & Technology/Science Block, an Arts & Social Sciences Block and a Dining Area.

The facilities within the main building include an attractive Reception Area, Assembly Hall, Sports Hall and Fitness Suite, Counselling/Interview Rooms, Careers Suite, Oratory, Home Economics Rooms, Mary Bell Reading Room, The Assisi Room, Humanities Rooms, ICT network rooms, Science Labs, Reprographics and Staff Resource Areas.

The Arts & Social Sciences Block boasts a Drama Studio, Art and Music Rooms, several Music and Drama practice rooms as well as Social Sciences classrooms. The Design and Technology/Science Block offers superbly equipped ICT, Science and Technology facilities. Adjacent to this building is the Year 14 Centre. The spacious grounds contain grass and all-weather pitches, athletics facilities, tennis courts and netball courts. St Clare's Garden, opened in 2005 to mark the school's 75th Anniversary, is a tranquil and beautiful place within the school grounds where students can walk or sit during break and lunch time. It has recently been re-landscaped as part of the 90th celebrations.





Blessing of St Clare

*May the Lord show His mercy upon you,
May the light of His presence be your guide
May He guard you and uphold you
May His Spirit be ever at your side*

*When you sleep may His angels watch over you
When you wake may He fill you with His grace
May you love Him and serve Him all of your days
And in heaven may you see His face*

