



I would like to begin by thanking Mrs. Kenny for joining us this evening as our guest speaker. Mrs. Kenny retired earlier this year after many years of teaching at the Sacred Heart School. She is one of the many outstanding teachers that continue to help the school after retirement; she is currently our governor for safeguarding. Mrs. Kenny taught me for the last 4 years of her career and I would not only like to thank her for her contribution this evening but also for making geography one of my favourite subjects.

As head girl and a pupil at the Sacred Heart School since the age of 3, I have first-hand experience of the unique nature of this fantastic school. For me the Sacred Heart School has become like a second home. Through their Christian values of being kind, caring and giving the Sisters and staff have created a safe, caring and loving environment in which all students can and do flourish.

Despite being a small school the Sacred Heart offers its pupils the chance to be involved in many academic, sporting, artistic and musical opportunities of great variety, which would probably not be available at other schools. These activities allow each student to grow as a person and develop in independence and confidence. I feel that my personal development has benefited greatly from the opportunities that I have been given at the school. This has been highlighted recently as a result of writing my personal statement for sixth forms, in which I have been able to present a significant amount of achievements in creative and academic subjects, all of which have been made possible as a result of being part of this fantastic school.

The skilled and knowledgeable staff continuously give of their time, energy and enthusiasm to get to know each pupil individually, to understand their interests, strengths and weakness and to work with them to achieve their best potential. From a young age pupils are encouraged to perform and are given the confidence to stand up in front of audiences. I remember when I was younger I sang a solo at the Christmas Carol Concert. I remember being very nervous but through the encouragement of my teachers and the team spirit and support of my friends, I was able to perform well. Now as a year 11 pupil this positive experience together with numerous others has led to my confidence in the arts, performing and speaking, which are skills I will continue to take with me through life.

The Sacred Heart is a warm and welcoming school where everyone knows one another and where the older children take care of the younger children. This ethos of caring extends not just within the school but outside to the wider community. A most recent example of this is the holiday challenge completed during the October half term. Filling shoeboxes for the Samaritan's Purse charity was supported enthusiastically by all pupils, who crammed their shoeboxes with fun and thoughtful gifts to put a smile on the faces of children around the world living in less fortunate circumstances than ourselves.

It is with these core values that our school encourages pupils to be well prepared for the world and its challenges outside the classroom, and it is with these qualities that I believe our school will continue to thrive and succeed with the changes that lie ahead of it. I would like to wish Sister Francis, the Sisters and staff all the very best for the future, wish all of the pupils every success and say a special thank you from the heart, to everyone at the school, for giving me my own unique experience.

Samantha Brain