



Special Character

What Is a Church School?

“In a Church school, the offer of a Christian understanding of the world and the place of humanity in it will be reflected in worship. In particular, it will be reflected in the everyday life of the school, quietly respectful of the beliefs of others and of other faiths, but confident in its own faith. Church schools will not actively seek to convert children from the faith of their parents, but pupils will experience what it is to live in a community that celebrates the Christian faith; to work within a framework of discipline and yet to be confident of forgiveness; to begin to share the Christian's hope and the Christian experience that the greatest power in life and beyond it, is selfless love.”

C. of E. Schools Review, UK.

“What does it mean for a school to be Christian? It means that students see faith being lived in all sorts of implicit ways, through the values which infuse the curriculum and the school's style of administration, and through the models provided by the best of their teachers. They learn about the faith explicitly in Religious Education and some other subjects. And they are encouraged to investigate further in voluntary religious activities the claims the Faith makes on their lives. At the end of it all, we trust that they have been put in the best possible position to make an informed choice as to whether they will make a faith commitment or not. There our direct responsibility ends.”

Brian Hill, Murdoch University, Australia.



Special Character

Fourth Schedule

Historical Resume of The Development of Special Character of St Hilda's Collegiate School

The special character of the school has evolved from its history and its present close association with the Anglican Diocese of Dunedin.

In 1870, a Church of England Order for women named the Community of the Sisters of the Church was formed by the Foundress, Mother Emily, who believed she was called "to start a new community devoted to the service of God and the spread of his Church, especially by the teaching and training of children in England and throughout the British Dominions". Early in 1894 at the urgent invitation of the Bishop of Dunedin, Bishop Nevill, one of the Sisters visited Dunedin for the purpose of investigating the opening of a school for girls. As a result, Sisters Geraldine and Etheleen were sent from England and opened St. Hilda's School in 1896.

The purpose and character of the school was succinctly stated in the original prospectus:

"The Sisters have taken the residence hitherto known as the Grange which in future will be called St. Hilda's Collegiate School. The House is conveniently situated, is bright, airy, and commodious, and easily accessible by rail or tram."

"The aim is to provide a sound education suitable for the daughters of gentlemen, and at the same time to establish a thoroughly happy home, where every effort will be made not only to cultivate the minds of their pupils, but also to train and develop their whole character. The Sisters have had wide experience in Educational work, and hitherto their efforts both in England the Colonies have been acknowledged as highly successful."

"The whole School is under the immediate supervision of the Sisters, who frequently give instruction to the various classes, and so are brought into direct contact with every child under their charge. The health and comfort of resident pupils is made an especial care."

"Religious instruction is given daily by one of the clergy or a Sister."

In 1931, the Kilburn Sisters were ordered by their Mother House in England to withdraw from the School and return to Britain. The reason was the falling off of vocations to the Order and the need to consolidate educational work nearer home. Since the Diocese of Dunedin was unable to undertake financial responsibility for the school an independent Board was set up, though the relationship with the Diocese continued to be close and the tradition of religious instruction and worship according to rites and teachings of the Anglican Church was maintained. In 1958, the Synod of the Diocese passed a Statute creating St. Hilda's Collegiate School a Diocesan School. The Bishop was chairman of the Board and held responsibility for religious teaching in the school.

St. Hilda's has been well served by many dedicated people, and throughout its history has been generously supported by the country districts of Otago and Southland. Country Board members, who have frequently travelled very long distances to attend meetings, have played an important role in developing the character of St. Hilda's.