

URSULINE HIGH SCHOOL

**Brief Report of Visit to Ursuline High School
Tuesday 18th May 2021**

Professor Paul Miller

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Overall

During this EDI Strategy Day to Ursuline High College the College, I met and directly engaged with several members of the SLT and other senior staff within the school. I also participated in a tour of the Arts Centre. Through these several interactions, I have come away with a very good impression of Ursuline High School in terms of the overall commitment of the school to EDI, as well as the personal commitment of all those contributing on the day. The conversations were as illuminating as they were honest, proving helpful contextual insights into ongoing EDI across the school which can be described as significant.

Particular observations

The school's EDI work is guided by 18 strategic intents based around an overarching purpose of 'self and others' and 'the common good'. The strategic intentions are elaborated through a six-part Strategic Action Plan which was agreed in September 2020. The Plan is currently focused on: Student Voice, Curriculum & Assessment, Professional Development of Staff, Policies, Recruitment, Initial Teacher Training. The Plan is also influenced by the principles of the Race Equality Charter (REC) used in Higher Education, and the 'BAME Collective' – a group of current and former students who led a study of 'racism' and experience at Ursuline High which fed back through a 72 pages report in August 2020. Central to the Strategic Intents and the Action Plan are philosophical and practical notions of '**belonging**' and achieving **racial justice**.

It is clear that a lot of work has been done over the past 8 months against the Plan, and there are many things for the school to 'celebrate' and be proud of. For example:

1. Having in place a Strategic Action Plan for achieving racial justice
2. Working successfully with a range of external stakeholders to educate, develop and strengthen among governors, leaders and staff team through a range of CPD/ capacity-development options
3. Linking the actions in the Plan to committees served by governors
4. Having EDI/ anti-racism as a performance/ appraisal target for all staff
5. Having EDI/ anti-racism on meeting agendas as SLT and governors
6. The establishment and work of the 'Racial Trauma Support Group' and the 'Big Sister Minoritised Group'
7. Curriculum improvements which started before this Plan have since been intensified
8. Students reportedly being able to articulate evidence of change/ inclusivity in their experience of the curriculum
9. Blind marking and joint moderation, including with other schools to reduce the potential for 'Unconscious Bias' creeping into assessment
10. The development of systems (e.g.: 'regular' raising achievement meetings, intensified data collection, and the appointment of a dedicated data-lead, etc) which has allowed for better monitoring and more targeted intervention for some students (e.g.: Black/ Black British).
11. More targeted support for University applications, with plans in place to support students during 'Clearing'
12. Analysis of data around aspirations (where students are applying to, and which students), acceptance (which students are getting accepted into what Universities)

13. Working proactively with multiple stakeholders, including parents to support aspirations and ambitions through: guest speakers, lunch & learn sessions, career panels, student conferences
14. Reviewing student facing policies
15. Training staff to develop anti-racism content via PSHE
16. Working proactively with Education Wellbeing Practitioners to support students, but especially White students who are accessing wellbeing services disproportionately compared with other groups
17. Working with university providers to examine and disrupt a pattern of lack of ethnic diversity among trainee teachers being sent to the school
18. Working with videographers to commission videos to more reflect the school's diversity in broad terms
19. Delivering be-spoke CPD and capacity-development sessions to staff and students on 'Unconscious Bias' and 'Micro-aggression'.

Things that could be considered going forward

It is clear that a lot of work is being undertaken by the school in the area of EDI/anti-racism and this is commendable. The following suggestions may be useful in taking the work forward:

1. Establishing a clear EDI communication's plan either as part of each Work Package or as an overarching Strategy that is managed either by someone on this team (e.g.: Claudine) or the school's Business Manager
2. Developing an integrated EDI Strategy & Action Plan. It will be for the school to decide where needs greater attention (e.g.: 'race', gender, sexuality/ sexual orientation) and when (immediately & ongoing, 6-12 months, 12- 18 months, etc). An integrated action plan shows all EDI issues are being considered in a joined-up approach, providing the likelihood for greater buy-in from members of the school community
3. Consolidating and recalibrating the existing Work Packages (to, for example: (i) Curriculum, Teaching & Learning; (ii) School Climate, Culture, and Policies (iii) Community Engagement, Careers and Destinations, (iv) Talent Management & Development, and (v) Wellbeing & Emotional Wealth. This is a suggestion at this point and not a recommendation. This will also call for greater matrix working, for example Collette would work across Community Engagement & Talent Management, whereas Claudine would work across School Culture, Climate and Talent Management & Development. Julia could likely, for example, lead the School Climate, Culture and Policies strand, and Michelle could lead on Wellbeing & Emotional Wealth.
4. Streamline the numbers of external consultants involved in the work such that the 'Impact' and the 'Impact Logic' can be more easily identified and followed, respectively.

In my view, items 1-17 above represent a great achievement over the past 8 months for which the school can be proud, and through which it can demonstrate an impact against it's Strategic Action Plan agreed back in September 2020.

End.

Paul Miller

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