



# Introducing our New Preschool Principal

We are very pleased to welcome Mrs Nikki Joyce, as the new Principal of Saint Kentigern Preschool.

Mrs Joyce has been involved in the Early Childhood Education industry since 2007, when she opened her first Early Childhood Centre, Bear Park in Herne Bay, which she owned for six years. More recently, she has owned Pikopiko Learning in Whitford. Mrs Joyce said, 'My aim at Pikopiko Learning was 'Children and Adults inspired by Kindness and Learning', so we always have the values of Kindness and Respect at the core of everything we do, similar to Saint Kentigern's core values.'



A highly motivated leader with robust independent views, Mrs Joyce values the importance of professional development for her staff, helping them to achieve their goals in life. She has inspired staff to go on to lecture at international conferences, gain permanent positions as lecturers at training institutes and own their own centres. She says, 'My strength is in strategic planning and the 'big picture planning' of centres, alongside the day to day operation. My first centre involved a new build, as well as converting an older building for use.'

'My last centre required a major turn-around when I first took it over, due to Ministry of Education requirements. I upgraded not only the physical centre, but also the teaching philosophy and management systems, for it to become a successful and viable centre of learning, earning a positive ERO review.'

Alongside owning and managing her centres, Mrs Joyce has taken great interest in educational research and has attended many ECE conferences,

including attending conferences twice in Reggio Emilia, Italy, home to the Reggio Emilia inspired philosophy for Early Childhood, centred on the principles of respect, responsibility and community through exploration, discovery and play. In 2018, she travelled to Finland to learn more about their preschools and how their population consistently sits near the top of not only PISA scores, but also happiness and wellbeing scores.

Mrs Joyce joins Saint Kentigern as planning gets underway for a new, purpose-built Preschool on the Shore Road campus. She says, 'Joining Saint Kentigern at the start of a new building programme offers such amazing opportunities, especially having input to ensure that that the new Preschool is designed in such a way that it provides inspiration, guidance and challenge for children for generations to come.'

Mrs Joyce has been very involved in both the Boys' School and the College for a number of years. Both her sons started their schooling at the Boys' School, with Campbell now in Year 11 at the College and older brother, Hayden appointed as this year's Deputy Head Boy in his final year. She said, 'Ever since my boys first started, I have loved everything that Saint Kentigern stands for.' She was actively involved in the Boys' School Parents and Friends, is currently the secretary of the College Rowing Club Committee and was part of the Sports Review panel at the College last year.

In a professional capacity, she has visited Saint Kentigern Preschool a number of times over the years. She said, 'I enjoyed sharing ideas and am looking forward to the challenge of building on the excellence that is already on show every day. I am honoured and excited to have been given the opportunity to lead Saint Kentigern Preschool and to ensure that the values, which are such an integral part of our community, are nurtured in the youngest members of our organisation. I look forward to inspiring everyone involved at the Preschool to realise their vision as world leaders in education, ensuring that both the children and our collaborative teaching team continue to grow throughout their time there.'

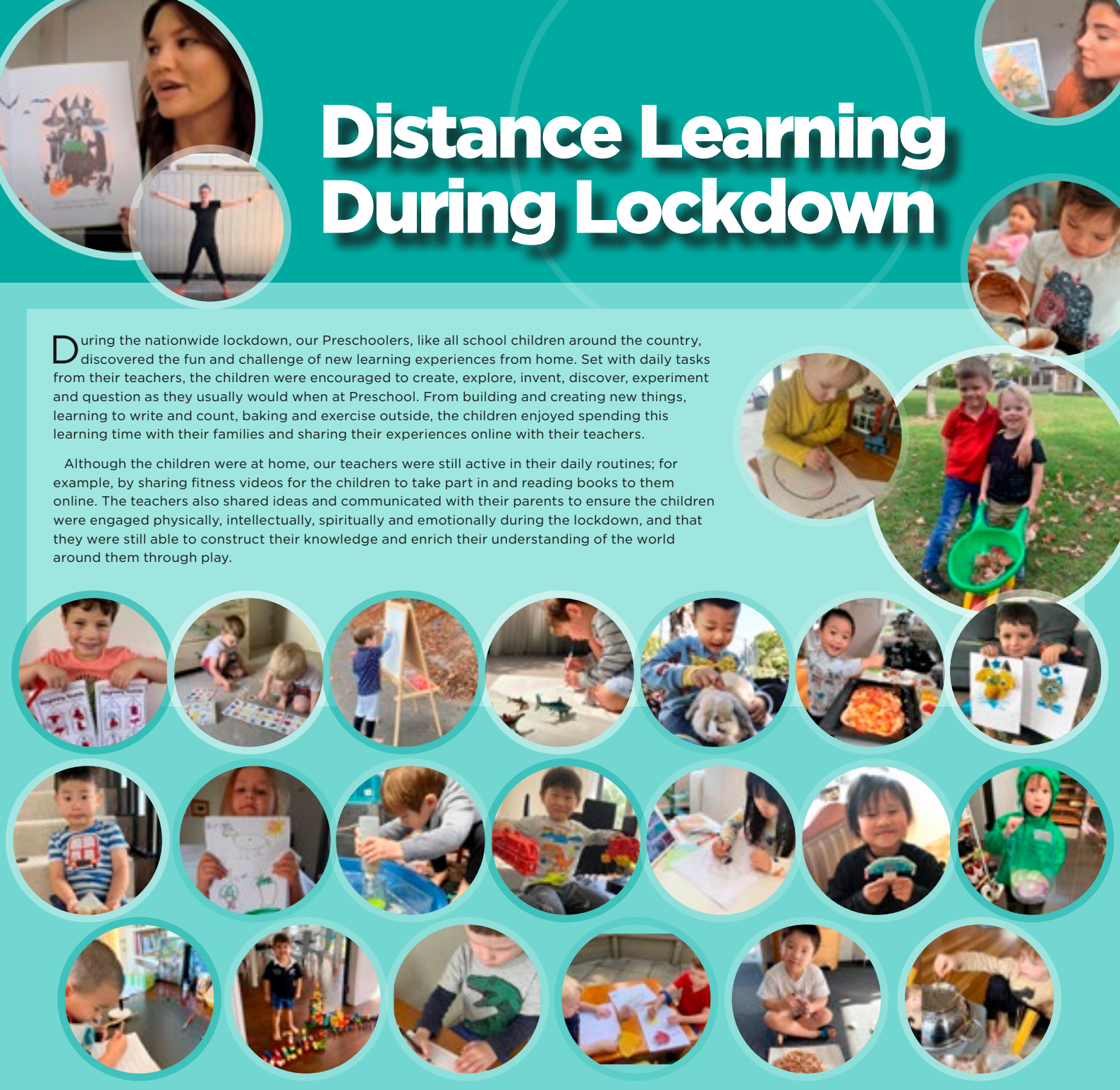
The Trust Board is confident that Mrs Joyce will provide robust and effective leadership for the Preschool as it continues to build on the strong foundations and achievements of the last nine years since it first opened. We welcomed Mrs Joyce early in Term 2, keen to give our youngest Saint Kentigern students their best start in life.



# Distance Learning During Lockdown

During the nationwide lockdown, our Preschoolers, like all school children around the country, discovered the fun and challenge of new learning experiences from home. Set with daily tasks from their teachers, the children were encouraged to create, explore, invent, discover, experiment and question as they usually would when at Preschool. From building and creating new things, learning to write and count, baking and exercise outside, the children enjoyed spending this learning time with their families and sharing their experiences online with their teachers.

Although the children were at home, our teachers were still active in their daily routines; for example, by sharing fitness videos for the children to take part in and reading books to them online. The teachers also shared ideas and communicated with their parents to ensure the children were engaged physically, intellectually, spiritually and emotionally during the lockdown, and that they were still able to construct their knowledge and enrich their understanding of the world around them through play.



## Farewell Sue

After nine years of dedicated service to Saint Kentigern Preschool, Sue Nash resigned earlier in the year from the role of Preschool Director. During her tenure, Sue saw countless young boys and girls successfully transition through their preschool years, well-prepared to start school.

With a new Preschool planned on our Shore Road campus, as part of the relocation and consolidation of our Remuera campuses. Sue decided that it was the right time for someone else to step into the role of leading and managing this next exciting phase for the Preschool, allowing her time to focus on her own business interests.

Sue has been the Director of the Preschool since its establishment and has been instrumental in its success. We thank her for all of her hard work, passion and commitment during her tenure and wish her well in her future endeavours.





# Building Homes and Habitats

As early childhood educators, we are constantly observing the children as they play, explore and interact with resources and materials to discover any common interests that they might share. Constructing and creating houses and enclosures became a strong thread of learning that bound the children together. To respond to this, we decided to delve into homes and habitats.

Using a variety of art mediums, children were given opportunities to think about not just their own houses, but the unique habitats different animals live in. The children amazed us with their existing knowledge and we were impressed by their dedication to their creations. The attention to detail, along with the sense of pride they took in their own work was truly inspiring.

For our passionate builders, this centre of interest gave them free licence to construct homes and enclosures of all shapes and sizes. These opportunities allow for children to express their individuality and expertise, especially when it came to spatial concepts such as balance, stability, symmetry and geometry. These moments of play reminded us of children's competencies for building on their own knowledge in cooperation with others.



# Discovering Bugs and Insects

Bugs and insects are an area of interest that will always captivate young children. Their curiosity towards these living creatures motivates them to share their existing knowledge as well as being open to new facts and information. During Term 1, the preschoolers made the most of every opportunity to extend their learning, whether that was through art activities, books or playful discussions amongst themselves and the teachers.

Some of the children took it upon themselves to 'seek out' bugs and insects in our outdoor space - we had a few children who took on this role of responsibility with great enthusiasm! We were reminded about children's abilities to notice the tiniest insect or bugs hiding on plants or in the bark. When exciting discoveries were made, these were then shared with the rest of the group.

This centre of interest transcended into children's family homes. We were inundated with cicadas, stick insects, spiders, praying mantises and even the odd cockroach. These treasures were celebrated by one and all at mat times. These opportunities allow for the children to make meaningful contributions to the learning of the larger group, as well as gaining a deeper appreciation for the living world themselves.



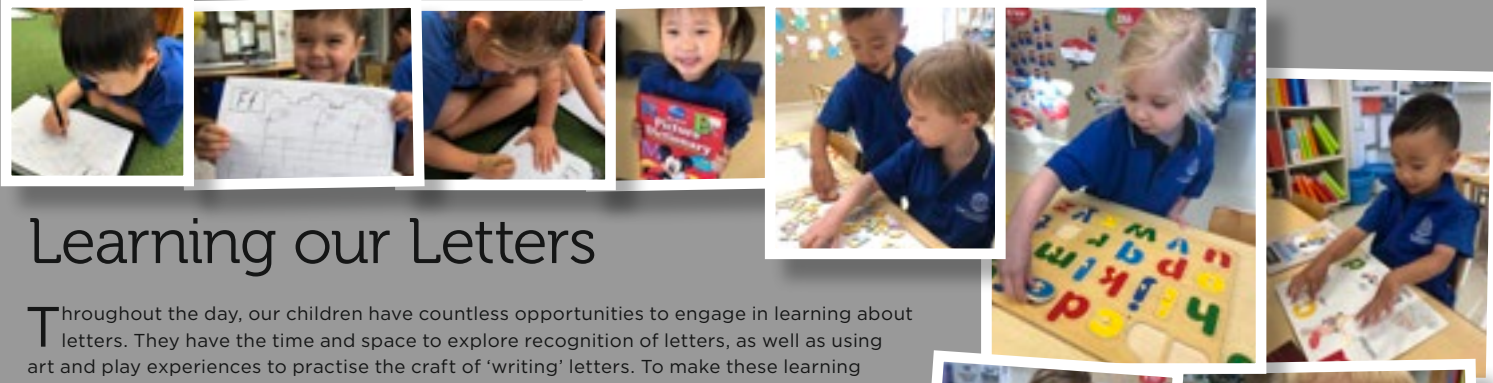
# Young Gardeners

The children's keen interest in gardening has been enhanced by the opportunities and materials that nurture a love for the natural world. Tending to our plants and growing their own flowers, herbs, fruit and vegetables in the Preschool garden, the children have learnt new skills, and expanded their knowledge and respect for nature. From observing how sun and water affects the growth of plants, to gaining an understanding of the important role insects play in the garden, there was much to learn!

Exploring our garden and planting new seeds was a wonderful way for the preschoolers to utilise their senses and cultivate a sense of enjoyment of the natural world, expanding their knowledge and understandings of how we can help a garden to flourish and grow. They learnt how to care for our plants and in turn our environment, as well as a growing sense of responsibility as they water and tended to the plants. They discovered ways to grow food as they watched their plants grow!







## Learning our Letters

Throughout the day, our children have countless opportunities to engage in learning about letters. They have the time and space to explore recognition of letters, as well as using art and play experiences to practise the craft of 'writing' letters. To make these learning contexts meaningful, we often start with their own names, as children place enormous value on their names, as they foster their sense of identity. The Preschool teachers recognise that young children learn through hands-on and interactive activities, encouraging them to think about the shapes of individual letters and how to re-create these interpretations using a variety of art media and other materials.

Learning about letters sits within a wider scope of oral, written and visual literacies. This requires our teachers to skilfully invite the children to also think of letter sounds, as well as to foster a love of literacy through reading and listening to stories. Early childhood is a time for children to develop a love for, and enjoyment, in using their developing language and literacy skills to become confident and expressive communicators.



## Endless Opportunities through Outdoor Play

At Preschool, the outdoor area is a learning environment full of potential and possibility. Each day this space is enriched with resources and intentionally planned experiences for the children to engage in. Popular areas of play include obstacle courses, monkey bars, bike riding and the sandpit but to name a few.

Through their playful interactions, the children are learning to assess risk and challenges under safe supervision. The children take opportunities to guide their skill acquisition when navigating obstacle courses and the monkey bars. These experiences foster gross motor strength and confidence, along with the capability to balance, negotiate height and to explore positional concepts such as 'over' and 'under.' When using the bikes, children are embracing the opportunity to explore speed and momentum as well as coordinating a wide variety of physical skills alongside their friends.

Our sandpit is a highly popular curriculum area that invites children to use their imaginations and enjoy shared interests with their friends. Holding tea parties, baking and cooking, making sandcastles, and creating landscapes for the animals are frequently observed by teachers. This highlights the value we place in trusting children to initiate their own rich, dramatic play experiences.



## The Positives of Water Play

With the splendidly hot summer weather, water play has been a daily requisite within the Preschool programme. This has presented opportunities for the children to engage with water in different ways, along with being a means to cool down and enjoy its calming effect. Water holds great fascination for young children. It invites interaction with the senses and can hold their concentration and focus for extended periods of time.

Our water play experiences are enriched by a variety of resources and materials to support the children's innate desire to learn through play. The addition of items such as jugs, scoops, funnels and water wheels become the catalyst for early science and mathematics learning. Children can explore their developing understandings about the natural world with the addition of sea creatures and other animals as provocations to generate dramatic play in small groups. Water play also lends itself to encouraging the children to take a collective responsibility for looking after our resources; bathing the 'babies' is always well received. This careful provision of materials allows for children to learn about themselves and to develop working theories about their social, physical and material worlds.

