



Artist's impression of the new Preschool

## Celebrations

After a wonderful holiday break our children and staff have leapt back into Preschool life, and whilst enduring two more brief lockdowns during Term 1, we are excited to have so much to celebrate already this year.

**C**elebrating the past, the present and the future already, with a ten-year anniversary, an ERO review and the designing of our new Preschool on Shore Road, has made for an exciting start to the year. But alongside this, remembering and understanding who we are as Saint Kentigern children and staff, and what we hold dear as our values, is a part of our curriculum to be celebrated.

### 10 Year Anniversary

On the 7th February 2011, the Saint Kentigern Preschool opened with 17 children attending on their first day, so in February this year, the Saint Kentigern Preschool was officially 10 years old. Unfortunately, due to Covid 19 lockdowns, we were unable to celebrate this, but we have instead delayed the acknowledgement of this occasion until Term 4. We look forward to being able to officially recognise this big milestone.

Over the 10 years, 469 children have been enrolled at the Preschool, starting their journey through the Saint Kentigern organisation, learning skills to ensure they are well prepared for their lives ahead.

The oldest of these children are now continuing their education in Year 10 at Saint Kentigern College, having enjoyed 'a world of opportunity' along the way.

### Education Review Office

We were pleased to host the Education Review Office at the Preschool at the end of February this year. The reviewers were with us for three days, looking at all facets of the Preschool, from the curriculum we provide, the ongoing professional learning our teachers undertake, how we evaluate our own performance (our focus of Ongoing Quality Improvement) and the governance of our organisation.

The reviewers made observations during their time with us, such as: *"collaborative children with strong friendships, respecting people and environment, inquisitive and show perseverance whilst demonstrating high levels of critical thinking, articulate and strength in maths, literacy and science."*

I would like to thank the teaching team at the Preschool and acknowledge the preparation and planning they put into providing such an educationally rich programme, preparing children not only for school but for life as well.

### New Preschool

Designs for the new Preschool on the Shore Rd campus are almost complete, and we were excited in March to receive news that our Resource Consent has been approved. Building is expected to begin in October of this year with a planned opening of early 2023.

Designing and building a brand new Preschool for the Saint Kentigern families is an exciting project to be part of, we have been able to ensure that we will be offering the children a world class facility.

### The Saint Kentigern Way

This year has seen a focus on ensuring that our children develop an understanding of the Saint Kentigern Values and how they can live these at their age.

Our Saint Kentigern Values of Respect, Integrity, Service, Excellence and Love are well understood by students at all of our schools and are well known as The Saint Kentigern Way. Breaking these down to be understood by three and four year olds is an important part of our programme, ensuring by the time they start Primary School they have a deep appreciation of what it means to be a Saint Kentigern Boy or Girl.

So what do the Saint Kentigern Values look like to our Preschool children?

- Respect** - listening, discussing others' ideas, caring for environment
- Integrity** - honesty, empathy, manners
- Service** - helping friends, tidying up, supporting the Food Bank, donating pyjamas
- Excellence** - Perseverance, risk taking, resilience, collaboration
- Love** - friendship, caring for others, looking out for new children

Values are absorbed by children as much as they are taught—which further emphasises the fact that both parents and teachers have a role to play in modelling positive behaviours and expectations. Through practising and talking about our values, the children gain a good foundation of a good moral character, as well as guiding their sense of right and wrong.

I know that you will continue to support the children as they grow in their understanding of our values, remembering that children are always watching and listening to what we say and do. Continue to relish the moments and celebrate the gains your children make along their journey.

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Nikki Joyce  
Preschool Principal

## Celebrating Family Connections

With thanks to Emily Baker

**A**t Saint Kentigern Preschool, our children share many interests with us, but one of the most common and favourite among the children is pretend play. The children love role modelling real life experiences and making sense of what they have seen by playing in the family corner and the sandpit area, using various resources, such as dinosaurs, dolls and cooking equipment to explore their working theories further.

In the Kowhai group, we have been exploring this interest with much enthusiasm and passion. In our hui and investigation times, we have had many conversations around our families - the number of family members, what they like to do with their families and who is in their family. We have also used a range of mediums to express these ideas, from pencils to vivid, water colour and paint. Provocations have been centred around this interest, allowing children the opportunity to make their homes out of blocks, preparing meals, looking at their photos and drawing unique interpretations of their families.

These experiences have helped us as teachers learn more about who our children are, through the lens of their family dynamics. The children are sharing heartfelt stories of the love they feel towards treasured extended family members both here in New Zealand and overseas. What a timely reminder of the importance of maintaining these precious connections in a world that has been up-ended by global events.



## The Language of Tactility

With thanks to Devon Rand

Recently we have been working alongside small groups of children as they learn how to use paint as a tool for creative communication and self-expression through sensory play. We were curious to find out why the children chose to explore the paint in this way. Consequently, we have been fascinated to observe how the children chose to engage with this tactile experience, given the children had to use the table as the 'canvas' instead of paper.

As the children engaged with the properties of the paint, they became more aware of the way it felt and looked on their skin. The children were using their curiosity to explore the paint through sight and touch to learn more about tactility as an expressive language. These kinds of playful tactile experiences present opportunities for children to continue to build on their fine motor strength and dexterity. Seeing the joy and wonder on the children's faces affirmed the authenticity of this learning experience. More importantly, the children are forming meaningful connections with one another during these experiences that are becoming catalysts for friendship that the children are then building on in other areas of their play. This experience is offering these younger children the time and space to move from parallel play to interactive play as well as improving their confidence to further develop their verbal language.

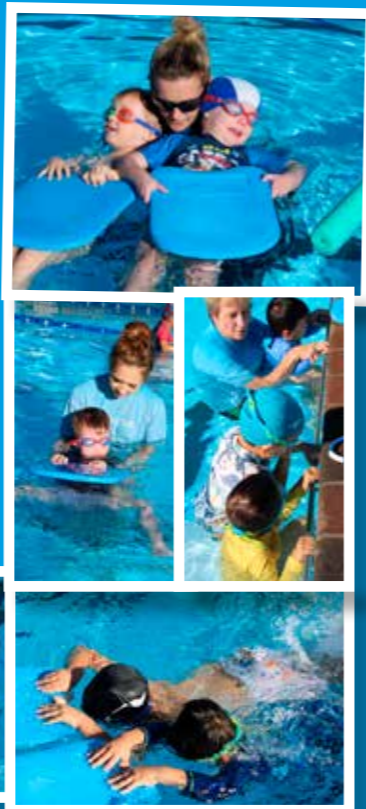


# Developing Confidence in the Water

With thanks to Lauren Smith

Having the togs, towels, goggles and swim caps at the ready, the children are confident and excited to hop into the pool to either just have a splash around or get their swimming technique going. Kicking, blowing bubbles and floating are just some of the principles that the instructors are focusing on, as these will further help them both in the lessons to come and when they go to school. It provides the children a further addition to the specialist teacher programme and also encourages them to empower their friends who are a little bit nervous to swim. There is a tangible sense of collective joy for some and shared bravery for others. Swimming provides challenges and rewards, which helps the children become self-confident and motivated swimmers, where they gain belief in their motor abilities.

The children are moving confidently and challenging themselves physically by using different muscles to learn how to move their bodies in different ways. Swimming is enabling the children to become more self-aware, whilst learning to keep themselves safe, including floating which involves all the muscles in their body as a fundamental swimming skill. They are staying physically active and are being encouraged to keep themselves safe from harm by also becoming knowledgeable about water safety.



# Chinese New Year Celebrations

With thanks to Durga Toolap

The Chinese New Year, which is celebrated in many parts of New Zealand, usually falls somewhere between 21st January and 20th February each year. In 2021, Chinese New Year fell on 12th of February. This is the Year of the Ox. Here at the Preschool, the children and families celebrated this special occasion with traditional decorations, food, costumes, Chinese character writings, lion dancing, and various other experiences, offering children the opportunity to be part of the lunar festival. The preschoolers prepared delicious dumplings as part of the celebration and enjoyed creating and giving 'Hong Bao' - red envelopes filled with hand-made gifts to each other. Usually, these red envelopes are given as tokens of good wishes during the new year. Through the reciprocal process of giving and receiving the envelopes, the children experience aroha and love with each other and their families. The significance of this festival was discussed and shared further with the children through storybooks and dramatic play. Children came dressed in Chinese costumes, adorned grandly in red and gold. These colours signify good luck, happiness and lucky charms. The children enjoyed immersing themselves in this cultural celebration that has meaning for many of our Preschool families.



# Sons and Daughters of Saint Kentigern

With thanks to Eileen Coghlan

At the end of Term 1, our boys and girls were invited to attend Celtic Day and Flora Macdonald Day respectively. These annual events are much anticipated on both the Boys' and Girls' School calendars. Donning tartan sashes, our children had the opportunity to play a part in the ceremonial proceedings that included marching in the parades led by the Pipes and Drums, along with sitting quietly to take part in aspects of our Scottish heritage, superbly led by the older boys and girls.

These experiences offered our Preschool children opportunities to build a sense of belonging within our wider community. Wherever possible, we always will try to honour family affiliations with the school Houses, ensuring that sashes worn match accordingly. The children loved being part of these events; the pomp and ceremony offers moments for the children to appreciate the significance of being a valued member of the Saint Kentigern family. Heart-warming scenes, where siblings can seek each other out for a quick hug or friendly smile, make these times even more special and poignant. Attending events like this also add an extra layer to our transition experiences for our children as they give them a taster of what is to come as they prepare for school.



# Wildflower Investigation

With thanks to Mona Kaur, Kirsty Fisher, Colleen Donoghue and Eileen Coghlan

Recently some of the children took an interest into wildflowers and as a teaching team, we wanted to respond to this by offering the children opportunities to extend their knowledge about flowers using their senses. After much closer inspection of these small wonders of the natural world, the children were encouraged to share their observations at mat times. Through intentionally slowing down the children's engagement with the flowers, they were able to digest their unique discoveries and began to represent these through increasingly detailed observational drawings.

To challenge the children further we offered images of different kinds of wildflowers to foster their abilities to draw what they could see. These were then used as provocation within their clay work.

We have also ventured out into the Girls' School for short walks to see if we could search out a further range of flowers. With each encounter, the children paid closer attention to the world around them and even began to name different flowers correctly. What a great opportunity to share knowledge with one another, a reminder that children are fountains of knowledge when given the opportunities to express themselves through a variety of learning experiences.

