

A Great Start is Everything

For children and parents, the reality of starting school for the very first time can be stressful.

Our Transition to School programme makes a real point of difference for our Preschool families - a supportive, seamless and positive process in their child's continual learning journey.

At Preschool, the children have 'a world of opportunity' to meet the goals of the New Zealand curriculum that has the vision for children to be confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners - who during their schooling years will continue to develop and affirm the Saint Kentigern Way with the values, knowledge and competencies that will enable them to live full and satisfying lives. The true sense of belonging at Saint Kentigern is embedded from the day they start Preschool as part of our 'one organisation'. The children proudly wear their Saint Kentigern uniform with pride and on visits to schools, hold their heads high as they meet the 'big children'.

The world of opportunity that Preschool provides in all areas of a child's development - aligned with the Early Childhood Curriculum Te Whariki - supports the children in their readiness for school.

Preschool offers an ever changing environment where through play, the children's days are filled with fun, enthusiasm and new experiences. Learning happens as passionate, qualified and experienced staff scaffold and plan both set and impromptu activities for children to learn and embed a varying range of new skills. Skills developed through our daily programme include correct pincer grip - learnt through our Nimble fingers programme which leads on to correct letter formation - with our Casey the Caterpillar writing programme.

From 3 years of age, children are provided with opportunities in planned and impromptu teaching and learning, with preparation for school a key focus. With phonics included in our programme, the children develop both letter sounds and the alphabet throughout their days. A print rich environment with children's individually produced work displayed, shows an appreciation and value for their creativity.

Social skills - playing with their peers co-operatively, taking turns, sharing, interacting

effectively with peers irrespective of gender, ethnicity or background are all integral skills in becoming a worthwhile citizen of our ever-changing world.

Independence and self-help skills are fostered as children take responsibility for carrying their own bag into Preschool to their lockers, looking after their own belongings, dressing after swimming lessons, feeding themselves at all mealtimes and are competent in toileting. Finishing activities, tidying up after themselves, having resilience to attempt and achieve new skills are all areas that ensure children show a sense of responsibility for their own well being and belonging.

Small and large group activities in all areas of the learning programme - art, music, science, drama, French, Te Reo, Yoga and mindfulness, gross motor, pre-numeracy and language - occur throughout every day and prepare the children for activities that school will provide.

Experiencing daily mat-times, story reading, attending school events like Chapel and Carol services, assemblies and watching productions and shows is further preparation for school. These activities ensure the children's concentration, focus and expectation for appropriate behaviour is strengthened - as well as extending and consolidating their listening skills and being able to follow instructions.

Routines are established at Preschool to meet the children's needs - they are clear and consistent to ensure that knowing the boundaries is a key area when at school.

Developmental reports, assessments and observations - clearly documented throughout our children's individual portfolios - which show their learning journey. These ensure our teachers know where each child is at in their development and where they need support or encouragement. This continues once at school as this information is shared with staff.

An important part of a child's learning journey as well as a child's attitude to learning, technical skills or abilities is gaining a sense of acceptance by their teachers and peers. Our Transition to School programme provides a seamless process as our boys and girls have fostered a positive relationship with their teacher and the students they will be in class with.

To start school as a competent enthusiastic learner sets the children from our Preschool off on a head start in their educational journey.

Fides Servanda Est

Mrs Sue Nash
Preschool Director

Christmas Television Stars!



SKY TV and the Starship Foundation approached the Preschool for our 3 and 4 year olds to feature in a television advert to support Starship Foundation in their fundraiser, selling wooden Christmas stars at New World over the festive season. There was a little trepidation from the film crew as they were not sure that children this young would be able to handle it! Little did they know just how amazing our children can be! Being followed throughout the process at SKY TV headquarters with a camera that was filming for a 'behind the scenes documentary' did not faze our little champions.

Rehearsing the lines of the script with Sue took some practising but the children were fabulous. After changing into 'TV clothes' and having their makeup and hair done, they waited in the 'green room' for their turn, able to watch their friends in the film studio on the big screen TV. The highlight was finally, all joining together in the magic red chair in front of the TV cameras and the big Christmas tree covered in Christmas stars. Sue was very proud of how amazing the children were - their behaviour, their ability to focus and concentrate and to deliver their lines articulately. What an amazing experience to help children in need.

Keeping Us Safe

A large group of our children were welcomed to Onehunga Police Station by Sergeant Dean and Constable Don along with station dog, Piper. They spent time looking through the Police Station, seeing the cells, watching themselves on camera in the interview room, and learning about Tasers, pepper spray, radios and what they are all used for.

The arrival of police dog handler, Kelvin with police dog, Fagan was exciting. As Kelvin made hand signals, Fagan sat, lay down, stood and barked. What a clever dog! Under supervision, some of the children tried to pull Fagan's favourite toy out of his mouth— a special 'toy' used as a reward when training - but he was too strong!

The learning continued when Sergeant Gavin visited the Preschool. His uniform, handcuffs, baton and radio came under special attention from the children. Outside the experience became even better with when the children had a chance to inspect the police car. Every light was flashing and the children had turns to push the buttons to make the sirens work. The Preschool mini police loved the experience!



All A-Buzz

September was Bee month in New Zealand and the Preschool was a-buzz with learning. The arrival of a beehive and 80 'leafcutter cocoons' brought much discussion to Preschool. Leaf cutter bees are non-colony, non-stinging and do not make honey; their sole use is for pollination of flowers. The bees needed 20 warm sunny days to hatch, which earlier in Term 4 was a challenge!

Our 'little gardens' have been a great source of educational learning as the children planted a bee friendly garden with a variety of flowers and specific plants that attract bees.

'Did you know? - a bees wing can move at 200 times per second and that is where the BUZZ comes from.' 'Bees can fly really fast at 25 kms an hour.' 'If we don't have honey bees in New Zealand, we won't have any vegetables to eat.' 'All worker bees are girl bees - and they do all the work to collect the pollen.'



Kids Aren't Afraid!

Whilst most adults might think twice about handling a large spider, it was all in a day's learning for our preschoolers! 'Bug man,' Brian from HANDS ON CREATURES brought all kinds of fantastic creatures to visit the Preschool. The children had plenty of opportunity to learn from Brian as they engaged with lizards, reptiles, insects, arachnids and more!

Some of the children were very brave and sat with the huntsman spider crawling on their faces or held bearded dragons and blue tongued lizards. Being able to touch and interact with the creatures up close allows the children foster their curiosity, and develop sensitive and caring natures. The experience helped our children gain new understandings and develop their working theories of the natural world.

Grandparents' Day

The Preschool was buzzing with excitement on the morning our treasured grandparents came from far and wide to spend time with us! Morning tea had been prepared and the children just couldn't wait for them to arrive! The occasion was a chance for the children to share quality time as they showed their grandparents around their place of learning.

Our visitors really enjoyed the children's performance of some of their favourite songs and watching their fitness routine.



We Love Music and Performing

Music, dance and drama are a huge part of our Preschool programme. Children gaining the confidence to perform in groups to a few friends or to an overflowing Cathedral is an integral part of preparing the children for their future.

All forms of expressive arts are regularly available. In daily fitness, children join as a group and learn how their bodies work - balance, movements left and right, concepts of forward and back, and gaining 'midline' ready for further skills.

Special occasions to perform on stage are met with great confidence. Parents are often surprised at the children's ability to learn the words of songs! Extending their memory and repertoire of songs supports listening skills and concentration, and the knowledge of sounds helps the children to read and build words as they become developmentally ready. Rhythm, timing, tune, volume and sound of tones all are learnt through regular music and drama opportunities.

Music at Preschool is used for calming children, expressing joy and excitement, engaging children and strengthening social and emotional intelligence.



Welcome Santa!

There was much excitement at Preschool in anticipation of a very special seasonal guest - Santa! Before his arrival, over 50 children performed a spectacular concert on stage at the Girls' School, in front of proud family, friends and invited guests, including Trust Board members and the Principals of the Boys' School and Girls' School.

Each child had their time to shine as they sang their little hearts out, with dance moves to match! You could not help but smile, seeing the joy on each and every one of their faces! The Preschoolers sang eleven different songs including 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' in English, Maori and French. Following on from the concert, everyone went back to the Preschool for a special party lunch.

The loud sirens of a police car saw all the children rush to the fence, squealing with delight as Santa arrived - without his sleigh - and made his way down the driveway. When Santa finally had a chance to sit, each child came forward for a photo and received a present. Before Santa left, he congratulated the children on their fantastic concert - he knew where to come because he could hear them singing so well!