

Preschool Pre-Literacy

The absolute highlight and sense of achievement for a child in pre-literacy is the day they learn to write their name!

The importance of Preschool preparing children for school and giving children the best possible educational start, means our emergent programme has a positive balance between a structured and unstructured programme and play, to encapsulate children's developmental levels for learning. 'Age and stage' are imperative in children being ready to learn – meaning the **children's readiness for pre-literacy is a major part of our teaching and programme.**

A collaboration of staff and child-focused approach to learning is used at Preschool – where staff support children's oral skills through listening, extending and playing with vocabulary, ordering and expressing ideas, thinking skills, letter and sound recognition, story-telling and celebrating who the children are and capturing their learning experiences. Literacy is embedded in our programme, achieved in many forms at Preschool in an inclusive, supportive, fun and comprehensive way with a strong oral foundation and role-modelled behaviour from qualified and experienced staff.

Daily access to writing materials. Children throughout the day move between activities of their choice inside and outside with a full range of quality pencils, pens, clipboards, letter charts, computer work, letter and alphabet charts, magnetic and white boards, chalk and chalk boards and language games. Photos and names all consolidate the importance of pre-literacy in the programme.

Our '**Nimble Fingers Programme**' helps all children gain a pincer grip ready for pre-writing. It includes using padlocks and keys, pegs and clips, threading of beads and straws – this is done daily with small groups of children and staff, so progress can be monitored. Once the children have gained a pincer grip to correctly hold a pencil, they naturally progress to our writing programme.

The '**Casey Caterpillar Writing Programme**,' is the next stage, which also continues in the Boys' School and Girls' School Junior classes. This programme follows shapes that begin to form letters: an

open mouth (c) and a tall stick (l) form a (d). When the children can form each shape correctly, without being reminded, they continue to alphabet letters. This process ensures both differentiated learning for the children and the ability to move at their individual developmental level. We start with the letters in each child's name, as they gain a sense of belonging and achievement once they achieve this.

A focus on children gaining a 'mid-line' to help with writing and fine motor skills is essential before children can gain the skill of writing. This is supported with strong links to our fitness, music and drama programme.

Our **environment is print-rich** and literacy/words are displayed throughout Preschool. English, French and Te Reo form the basis of the three languages used at Preschool – verbal and written words throughout the programme. Each week new words, sounds and expressive language are learnt in French and Te Reo, as well as regular fun-filled mat times where children listen to and act out stories, listen to books, learn songs, use puppets and poems, while learning the importance of print and pre-literacy learnings.

Daily signing in by the children reinforces this process. Information packs of the Casey writing programme are given to parents, so they too can be involved in the connection between Preschool and home by helping the children with correct letter formations.

Phonics are learnt throughout our programme in a fun, inclusive way, where children are exposed to developmental alphabet letters, phonic sounds and the Casey writing programme.

iPad, laptops and IT on our interactive touchscreen TV all have programmes built in that children (with staff scaffolding) can use to research, develop and learn, with print and alphabet apps to extend





their pre-literacy knowledge and 'techno-literacy'. The iPads are used solely for educational purposes and with staff, and are limited occasions due to the amount of screen time our children get outside of Preschool.

Books play an integral part throughout all areas of our programme, both inside and outside, for pleasure, research, specific focus on our projects and visits to both school and the Remuera library. All this ensures that the love of literacy learning is achieved.

The importance the Trust Board places on maintaining our high staff ratio is integral to ensure children have quality time with staff allowing **children to be regularly observed** individually from the day they start. This ensures staff are aware of each child's developmental level, their skill areas and where they need support and encouragement. **Evaluative reporting** for each child is documented showing **evidence in the children's portfolio** of their progress in all areas as well as pre-literacy development. This is supported through observation with Learning Stories, Magic Moments and photographic and written evidence. **Goals each term** are reflected on by staff from these observations and feedback to decide on what areas children need support with, and to ensure that all areas of development are covered. All children gain pride and achievement when they can write their own name, with each child having their photo and name accessible on wall displays, lockers, artwork, as well as a specific goal of 'writing their own name,' to see the progress of the children during their time with us.

Expectations about teaching practice in pre-literacy are covered in staff meetings, through regular Professional Development and staff upskilling, both through professional readings and practical seminars and workshops.

ERO stated, '*children are focused, highly engaged and positive in their learning - the learning environment challenges and extends children - there is an appreciation of literacy with the children and staff which is well supported - the environment celebrates children's work and their contributions to the learning programme.*'

At our Preschool, we are proud of the educational programme that has developed and continue to ensure we foster an expectation for the children to achieve their best. Through continual encouragement, support and learning through actions, we believe they are given the best possible start for their educational journey through Saint Kentigern.

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Mrs Sue Nash
Preschool Director



Happy Snow Day!

It was a magical morning as tonnes of 'snow' were dropped outside for Snow Day, transforming the sandpit into a winter wonderland. The annual event is now very much part of the Preschool's 'Seasons' unit which looks at the topics of winter and snow - a very new concept for some of our children!

From snowballs to snow angels and snowmen, wrapped in their winter woollies and gumboots, the children thoroughly enjoyed the experience, throwing 'snow' and sharing many laughs with their teachers and friends. What a great morning!





An Entertaining Show

Cheers could be heard from afar as the preschoolers enjoyed a performance from our Senior College Drama students. Based on the children's book, 'One More Sheep', the performance took the preschoolers on wild journey. From sleepy farmer Sam and his five sheep, to a lone wolf, the play fired up their imaginations and gave the children endless opportunities to get involved, be curious, empathise with the characters and sing, dance and howl along to some of their favourite songs. The oldest Saint Kentigern students put on a well-polished, energetic show that was full of fun - and kept our youngest Saint Kentigern students well entertained!



Emerging Engineers!

Can they build it? Yes they can!

After discovering the world of architecture and learning about different buildings around the world, the preschoolers put their hard hats on and dug in to uncover the work of construction engineers!

The Preschool is full of resources for the children to explore, whether it's outside in the sandpit, bark or gravel pit, or making use of wooden blocks, Lego, Mobilo and connecting magnetic blocks indoors. With the limitless imagination of children, conversation started to flow, theories were tested and the children proudly watched as their ideas came to life. Whether it was constructing a building, a farm or a zoo, or finding the best way to build a road or a water course, they worked together in groups, sharing ideas and creating solutions.

As well as researching how things are built, a group were also supervised on a visit to a demolition site to watch a house on Ranui Road be demolished - the young visiting crew had a great time dressing up in their hi-vis and safety hats!



A Visit from the Police!

Real life experiences and learning about the world we live in is crucial for young minds—and learning about the Police has been right at the top of the list for our preschoolers recently! The children spent time discussing the New Zealand Police to learn about the role they play in society, how they are trained and what they wear.

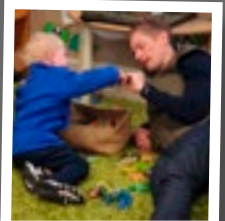
To help the students with their learning, Old Collegian, Constable Cooper Rand visited the students to talk to them about his role as a new Police Officer at Otahuhu Police Station. Questions were flying and the children were keen to test out his handcuffs, dress up in uniform and show Cooper their Police artwork – including a life size portrait of Cooper himself!



Happy Fathers' Day

The Preschool was abuzz at the Fathers' Day morning tea as, to add to the excitement, special guests, New Zealand Police Sergeant Steve Pike and Senior Constable Chris Harris brought their three Police dogs, Floyd, Primo and Luca along to Preschool.

As part of the Preschool's focus on Police, this was a great opportunity for the students and fathers to learn something new together and watch the police dogs in action. Steve and Chris spoke to the children about the work of the Police and the dogs showed off some of their search skills.



Jammies for June

Our annual Pyjama Day - 'Jammies for June' was particularly special this year! Not only did the Preschool collectively donate 150 pairs of pyjamas to go to Starship Children's Hospital, they joined the Rawhiti Retirement Village residents for a Pyjama Party Disco!

The students walked down the hill dressed in their pyjamas to Rawhiti and discovered the Village was beautifully set up with balloons, gold and silver confetti and streamers. On arrival, everyone called out, 'Play the music Mr Music Man!' and from there, conga lines were formed, and the dance was on! The students had fun making new friends and dancing with the residents – some were remarkably sprightly for their age!

There was much tooting and waving on the way back to Preschool, as it's not every day you see 50 children and 15 adults dressed in their pyjamas walking the streets of Remuera!

