

A Taste of Scotland

All our schools, including the Preschool, can trace their history back to Scotland and so each year our Preschool boys attend Celtic Day at the Boys' School while our girls join in with the Flora MacDonald Day celebrations at the Girls' School. Whilst the sound of the Pipes and Drums can be a bit intimidating at first, the preschoolers soon rose to the occasion marching proudly dressed in tartan!

Our Preschool girls were so proud to be marching in the Flora MacDonald day parade at the Girls' School. They donned tartan sashes and marched behind the Pipe and Drums, before going into the hall for the official ceremony. The girls listened to the choir sing and watched the orchestra play which included Principal, Ms Juliet Small on her violin. Ms Small retold the story of Flora MacDonald and Rev Hardie recited a Scottish blessing.

Year 11 College student, Fayth Doherty played with the Pipe and Drums during the parade. While Fayth was a Girls' School student, she completed her Service at the Preschool, helping in the mornings and afternoons. The Preschool girls were proud to have their photo taken with her. What a fabulous morning!

The Preschool boys headed to the Boys' School early to join Celtic Day. After watching the Kapa Haka group perform, the Pipe Band led the marching parade, with the preschoolers following behind waving to all the visitors as they made their way around the field before heading into the Sports Centre. The boys sat beautifully during the formalities, listening to all the speeches, singing Scottish songs and watching the Head Boy, George Beca recite the 'Ode to the Haggis.' Some of the boys were very brave and ate some haggis, some happy to ask for more - whilst others much preferred the shortbread!



Natural Encounters

In a world increasingly dominated by technology, with fewer children truly experiencing the opportunity to play freely outdoors, it is fantastic to give our preschoolers a taste of freedom! This was a day to take a picnic lunch and head across the road to Wairua Reserve for an adventure!

The wide expanse of grass provided excitement to run freely, whilst the investigation of bugs in a tree hole and a dead bird nestled in leaves were fascinating for our youngsters. But the real excitement was the big tree for climbing that provided an amazing opportunity for many of the children to move outside their comfort zone.

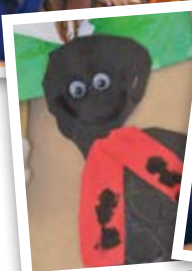
Climbing trees fosters a range of different skills including creative thinking, balance, problem solving, spatial awareness, natural exploration, tactile experiences, coordination, strength and above all else enjoyment, fun and freedom!



Young Entomologists!

After discovering many insects in tree stumps and under leaves during their visit to Wairua Reserve, our Preschoolers became fascinated with hunting for bugs. Each day we had a menagerie of insects brought into Preschool by children for our show and tell - praying mantises, cockroaches, spiders, snails, wetas, centipedes and more. Our staff were stoic!

Our 'Nature' area became full of all things living and crawling, both alive in our bug catchers, along with our children's amazing art displays on the wall. The preschoolers loved going on hunts around the playground to find different insects to bring back to our 'Bug Hotel.' They were never scared to hold them or look closely with the microscopes. What great entomologists!



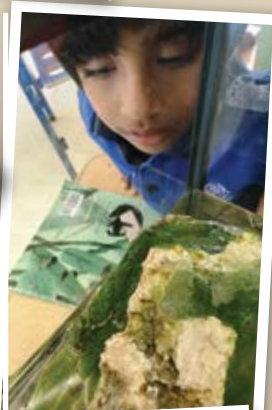
Tadpoles to Frogs

The arrival of tadpoles saw the children absolutely enthralled in the process of metamorphosis.

Each day they checked with excited anticipation, waiting for the legs to grow as they gradually turned from tadpoles into frogs.

Within two weeks, the Preschool had ten gorgeous tree frogs - all with different shades of green and varying patterns on their skin. The children caught live flies at home and brought them in for the frogs to eat, watching with great fascination as the frogs jumped to catch them on their sticky tongues. Preschool became a sea of green with artwork of frogs in all shapes and sizes covering the walls and paint covering the children's faces!

As with all new encounters, the possibilities for conversation and discussions opened wide with new words, language and songs introduced, furthering the children's opportunities to learn.



Buttercup the Bunny

A very special part of our Preschool programme is to expose the children to a range of animals so that they may gain an understanding about, and have a hand in, their care. For short periods of time, the Preschool has been home to turtles, frogs, birds, fish, piglets, lambs, chickens, ducklings, eels and more!

Term 1 saw the arrival of a baby lop-eared rabbit, bringing a very tactile learning experience. Buttercup the bunny is very tame, cuddly and loved by all our preschoolers. The children bring in vegetables as a daily treat to hand feed her, discovering that her favourite choice of green leaves are herbs, including parsley, basil and mint!

She is quite a pampered bunny; she loves to go for walks on her lead with the children and with the arrival of the colder weather, she has been seen to sport her very own cable knit, pale pink jumper!



Cheep Cheep, Quack Quack!

Following on from the arrival of Buttercup the bunny, the children returned to Preschool after the Easter break to find four-day old chicks and ducklings, sourced from a farmer at the Farmworld Royal Easter Show. Their arrival brought sheer joy and excitement! A heated lamp was setup in their new home to keep them warm along with straw, sawdust, water and food. These young animals changed almost daily so it was another great hands-on experience for our children watching them grow, while they took part in their care and feeding. Seeing the ducklings take their first swim was very special!



Bus, sand, play, boat

With the topic of the moment, transport, the preschoolers set off on an adventure to Devonport, catching buses down to Kohimarama, along the waterfront, into the city and over the Harbour Bridge to Devonport Beach, all the while keeping watch for as many different kinds of transport they could spot from bicycles to ocean liners!

After a stop for morning tea, the children set off to explore the beach front. The tide had just begun to go out, exposing plenty of shells and seaweed for the preschoolers to discover as they fossicked in the sand. Together they constructed sandcastles and enjoyed the chance to paddle in the shallow water. There was also plenty of fun to be had in playground on the swings, seesaws and slides.

To complete their round trip, the youngsters boarded a Fuller's Ferry for a ride across the harbour back to Auckland City, before getting back on the buses to Preschool.



Nimble Fingers

Our manipulative programme, 'Nimble Fingers' is well embedded throughout our day, keeping young hands active to develop their fine motor skills.

Before children can begin to successfully form shapes and letters they must have developmentally achieved a correct and automatic pincer grip, and control of a pencil.

By providing the children with activities such as padlocks and keys,

pegs, threading beads and connector sticks, it helps to develop a pincer grip, crossing the midline and finger control. To be able to master this skill, children need and be exposed to opportunities for practice. Practising their pincer grip with a pencil, while following patterns and zig zag lines, helps with the smooth flow onto shapes. Once our children have achieved this, they move onto our Casey the Caterpillar writing programme.



Learning to Write

Casey the Caterpillar writing programme is a developmental, pre-literacy curriculum that ensures children learn how to correctly hold a pencil, enabling them to form all the shapes needed to write the letters of the alphabet. The children learn 15 different shapes which they can visualise through illustrations and practice. When the shapes have been mastered, they are put together to correctly form all the letters of the alphabet, followed by numbers.

All children have the opportunity to be involved in the programme at their own level, moving through shapes and onto letters at their own pace. Both the Boys' and Girls' Schools also use this programme in their Junior classes – which helps our children with a seamless transition to school.

We Love to Move!

Providing regular fitness classes is one way we can help our preschoolers to look after their health, encouraging a healthy attitude to personal wellbeing from a young age. As well as the fun of joining in exercise, the classes have many other benefits - helping to develop co-ordination, agility and balance, midline skills, as well as fostering happy, social and healthy children!

The programme also gives different children the opportunity to be 'fitness leaders,' providing a sense of responsibility that in turn develops self-confidence and an appreciation of ways they can contribute to the group.

