

Celebrating Women Leaders at Cranbrook



CRANBROOK SCHOOL

International Women's Day



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In celebration of International Women's Day 2024 on Friday 8 March, we are proudly profiling our female leaders at Cranbrook as part of our commitment to championing diversity and fostering inclusion in education. This year's theme, 'Count Her In: Invest in women. Accelerate progress', underscores the importance of celebrating the invaluable contributions of women in the teaching profession. By spotlighting female educators, we are sharing their inspiring stories, and showcasing the diverse perspectives they bring to the classroom, whilst instilling a sense of belonging and empowerment for us all.

How long have you worked at Cranbrook and in what role/s?

I arrived through the gates of Cranbrook School 27 years ago appointed as the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator for the Junior School.

It was a great honour to initiate many new opportunities for students that I helped identify as high potential. In this role, I established enrichment and extension learning, such as Philosophy, Future Problem Solving, and RoboCup Junior Australia. I was quite impressed with students' confidence to communicate and engage with immense joy in challenging, creative and complex problem-solving experiences. Later, I transitioned to the role of Curriculum and PYP Co-ordinator, which involved the implementation of the PYP IB Programme in the Junior School. In the last ten years I moved into the role of the Assessment and Data Coordinator which is a part-time role. I am grateful that the School facilitated the continuation of my senior leadership contribution in a different way. One of the many responsibilities I hold is to oversee the assessment used

within the teaching and learning cycle, supporting staff in the development of differentiated assessments, coordinating external assessments and managing the Da Vinci Decathlon competition. As an extension and with support from Michele Marquet, I successfully introduced the Da Vinci Ascham and Cranbrook Day for Year 5 and 6, a day that embraces and celebrates the genuine collaboration of our students in a stimulating academic and socially enriching environment.

What do you love about your job and the School?

I love the diverse and multilayered aspects of my role. Working collaboratively with teaching and specialist staff in small groups and in one-on-one sessions to support them in planning, designing and evaluating assessments is humbling. The collaborative nature has strengthened teams to create rich and relevant opportunities to support students to improve their learning, and this for me is the heart of why I love my work at Cranbrook.

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Cranbrook, for me, is a school that genuinely cares and strives to support their students and staff. The commitment to providing excellent academic rigour motivates me to be part of this dynamic process. Continually reviewing how we enact our vision and mission excites me, fostering a pursuit of excellence. Over the years, I have been humbled by the generosity that our school as a community has shown to others.

How has the education sector changed for women in your time in teaching?

With over 30 years in education, I've observed significant changes for women. Personally, being given a senior leadership role was an expression of an acknowledgement of the women being valued at Cranbrook School, even in a part-time position. Across our school community, we have witnessed an increasing number of women in leadership roles, once typically filled by men in a boys' school.

Globally, efforts to improve access to high level education for women has reduced gender disparities in enrolment, particularly in developing countries. This enhanced access has empowered women to pursue diverse careers, notably in fields traditionally dominated by men, such as Mathematics, Engineering, Technology, and Science. As a result, we see that women excel in these areas, highlighting their abilities, strengths and confidence.

The rise of women in leadership positions within educational institutions has resulted in a more inclusive decision-making process. This shift has broadened the range of perspectives considered, providing a more accurate representation of society.

What changes do you hope to see continue to happen in the future?

I look forward to the day when the collaborative enjoyment of learning, as seen in our Da Vinci Day between Cranbrook and Ascham, becomes a daily occurrence. Creating stimulating and engaging learning experiences that allow boys and girls to work side by side can empower all students to respect and value each other's strengths.

What's your funniest/most memorable moment of teaching at Cranbrook?

One of the many memorable moments includes witnessing students genuinely revel in the rich tapestry of what Cranbrook offers. The strong desire and daily commitment displayed by students to excel as Cranbrookians, dedicated learners, and supportive friends are consistently evident, whether on sports fields, at swimming carnivals, or in their learning environments. These moments have presented a lasting gift, encapsulating the true spirit of the Cranbrook community.

What advice do you have for anyone starting their career in teaching?

My advice to anyone starting their careers would actually be the same for experienced teachers and that is to recognise setbacks are a natural part of the learning process. Embracing setbacks as opportunities to learn, adapt and improve their teaching can become an empowering learning experience. These setbacks build resilience in a demanding profession and cultivate humility. Teachers do not have all the answers but when we ask the questions, and invite dialogue with others, we are on our way to a mindset for continuous growth to increasingly understand our impact on student learning.

