

Celebrating Women Leaders at Cranbrook



CRANBROOK
SCHOOL



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Housemaster
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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?

After 17 years of teaching and leading the girls' sports programme at a small independent co-educational school, I decided to leave my comfort zone and challenge myself professionally. This led me to join Cranbrook in July 2022. During this time, I have taught PDHPE Years 7-12, mentored students in Davidson House and managed the Rugby First and Seconds XV and Open Basketball teams. Most recently, this year I was promoted to Housemaster of Thomas House.

What do you love about your job and the School?

Despite the challenges the role of a teacher provides, each day I walk onto the Cranbrook campus with a sense of gratitude. The most rewarding elements are the daily interactions with the students. The thought of teaching at an all-boys school was quite intimidating; however, the rapport I was able to develop with the students was instant. The students here

possess an immense level of respect and humility, making daily interactions pleasant.

Witnessing the students' growth is undoubtedly the most rewarding component of my job. PE can be a daunting experience for many students. Therefore, my role is crucial in providing an inclusive and positive experience for all students, despite their strengths and abilities. Watching students achieve success, however small, is truly a rewarding experience.

Cranbrook provides the students with a breadth of co-curricular opportunities. I am in awe of the diverse range of talents that the students here possess. Cranbrook students are so balanced, where the 1st XV Rugby players are running from training straight to their Drama or Music performances. Being involved in a school where I can support the students beyond the classroom has contributed to my love for the job and helped me to appreciate the diversity of all students.

Having taught for almost 20 years, I would not have thought it was possible

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to experience the professional growth that I have here at Cranbrook. I feel privileged to be surrounded by such educated and inspiring colleagues. Their knowledge, guidance, and support not only for the students, but for me personally have undeniably contributed to my professional growth.

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

Having assumed roles in my teaching career that have been predominantly male-dominated, I have witnessed a culture shift. Most PE positions were assumed by males, particularly in boys' schools. Women are now being considered for leadership positions that were traditionally assigned to males, especially in the sport leadership context. I remember my first ISA Head of Sport meeting where I was one of three women representing my school around a table of 20 males. During my time in this position, I witnessed the representation of women increase as school leaders increasingly acknowledged their value. The growth of women's sports has been the catalyst for providing more opportunities for women to lead in this space and can only continue to improve. Cranbrook has been quite progressive in this respect, with many female staff members assuming roles in the PDHPE team, sports coaching, and even Rugby. I have been fortunate to be employed at schools that negate this gender bias and select the most suitable and valuable candidate.

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

I am looking forward to being a part of our transition into coeducation. I think this is an important step in allowing our students to experience an education that is reflective of the real world. Rather than my hopes for change, I hope that the strong sense of community and supportive peer culture here at Cranbrook continues with the inclusion of girls. Continuing to prioritise an inclusive

environment where we celebrate all individuals, despite their gender differences will be crucial in strengthening the existing strong culture. Looking forward three years, it would be amazing to have the same supportive crowd at the Netball games that currently exist at the boys' fixtures!

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

As a passionate sportswoman, I have been fortunate to manage Cranbrook Rugby First XV. Sport provides lessons to all involved, one being, that the measure of success is not in the result itself. My most memorable moment at Cranbrook was the fixture against Waverley. Firstly, the sheer number of students in attendance to watch and support was an eye-opening experience and represented the strong sense of community that exists here at Cranbrook. Despite leading the whole match, they were defeated by 2 points in the last minute. The devastating emotion that followed was so heart-felt and demonstrated the immense level of pride that the students have for their school. At this moment, I could not have been prouder to be a part of the Cranbrook community.

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

Be involved in all aspects of school life. There is no better recipe than getting to know your students and developing a rapport with them. When you support, encourage, and celebrate their achievements beyond the classroom, this will result in a stronger and more positive classroom environment.