

Celebrating Women Leaders at Cranbrook



CRANBROOK
SCHOOL



Michele Marquet

Head of Junior School

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?

This is my 27th year at Cranbrook – although it certainly does not feel that long! Initially, I came to Cranbrook as a Year 6 Classroom Teacher – in fact, I was the first female Junior School Classroom Teacher who taught a higher year level than Year 3 within the Junior School. I absolutely loved being a Classroom Teacher at Cranbrook – the students were positive, keen and so much fun to teach. I had many years working closely with high potential students who embraced opportunities to learn with gusto, and it was an honour to be part of their learning journey here. During my 7 years while teaching Year 6, I was appointed Senior Teacher and then I became the Curriculum Coordinator, holding that position while still teaching a class. An exciting part of that role for me was to conduct the process that led to the Junior School adopting the IB's PYP programme. It has been wonderful to see the Senior School take on the MYP and DP in the last few years too. In 2005, I was fortunate to be selected to be Cranbrook's Director

of Early Learning at what was then called Dickins House. This role involved being responsible for both our Pre-schools as well as being Head of Campus at Dangar when only Kindergarten - Year 2 were located there. It was a great joy and privilege to look after the education of our youngest Cranbrookians and work alongside some of the very best teachers I have ever come across in what is now a long teaching career. One of the exciting opportunities that role provided was to be closely involved in the development of the plans for a combined Kindergarten - Year 6 campus at Dangar, which I was fortunate to be able to see come into fruition. Once the Junior School was combined on one campus, I became the Director of Schools, Pre-School - Year 6 and then the Head of Junior School in 2017.

What do you love about your job and the School?

Educating children is an amazing gift: fascinating, complex and enormously rewarding. I feel very honoured to lead a truly extraordinary staff as Head of Junior School and our fantastic Pre-School - Year

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6 students bring me joy every single day. Cranbrook has a unique approach that marries knowledge of the individual with preparation of our students for being a fully engaged part of our wider society as they grow and develop. It does this through a liberal education model that emphasises breadth and depth of learning, something I believe in strongly. It is a school that does not want to sit still, but has a healthy desire to change and improve for the benefit of our students. For me, the philosophy of the school sits so comfortably with my own beliefs about education. I feel very fortunate to work here.

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

Get to know your students well and love them. Share your passion for learning with your students – your excitement engages them. Watch other teachers – particularly the ones you admire - and learn from them everything you can. Ask questions! Put you hand up and do things, get involved in the school you are part of. Strive to be the very best teacher you can be – that is the only goal you need. And in your first year of teaching; remember you need to sleep, exercise and eat well!

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

Over my teaching career, the number of women in teaching has grown exponentially and I have seen many more opportunities for leadership open up for talented, capable women. This has been an exciting period to have been involved in education. I have benefited from this shift and Cranbrook has allowed me to take on many different challenges in the various roles I have been given and I feel exceptionally blessed. I have also watched with pride amazing female colleagues who having benefited from teaching at this extraordinary school, then go on to other schools in leadership capacities. The experience of working here has set them up well for the challenges that their new roles have brought them.

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

Cranbrook's move to coeducation is an exciting development and I look forward with eager anticipation to 2026 and our first female cohorts entering the Senior School. I also hope that broad opportunities for talented women continue to flourish in the education sector, allowing them to contribute substantially to what I believe is one of the most important things any human can be involved in: the shaping and opening up of young minds who are the future of our world.

