

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 started in 2005, so this is my 20th year at Cranbrook. Over that time, I taught as a classroom teacher and coordinator in both Year 1 and 2 for the first 16 years. I then made the big move (across the internal driveway) up to Year 4 where I have been teaching (and continuing my role as coordinator) ever since.

What do you love about your job and the School?

There are so many elements of my role that I enjoy. As a Year 4 teacher and coordinator, I have the chance to witness and contribute to the growth and development of young students. I see firsthand how they progress academically, socially, and emotionally over the course of the year. I also enjoy the leadership responsibilities, such as guiding and supporting fellow teachers. Mentoring and helping my colleagues develop their teaching skills can be incredibly rewarding. Actively participating in shaping and enhancing the curriculum for Year 4 students is also an interesting element of my role.

This might involve introducing new teaching methods, incorporating interactive activities, and finding creative ways to make learning engaging. I also enjoy the opportunities to create memorable experiences, such as an immersive experience we trialed this year called 'Terra Fabula' which was a collaboration with Brett Rolfe in the Senior School. I feel very fortunate to also contribute to school-wide initiatives, policies, and discussions that help to shape the educational environment for all students. Perhaps the most rewarding element is the moments I get to celebrate achievements, with the students. Witnessing the "aha" moments when a student grasps a challenging concept or achieves a personal milestone can be incredibly fulfilling.

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

As an educator at Cranbrook, I have witnessed transformation in the educational landscape for women in teaching, and it's truly a story of progress and empowerment. The paradigm shift towards inclusivity and gender equality is palpable, with female

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educators now assuming leadership positions and breaking through historical barriers. Having Michele Marquet as the Head of K-2, and then the Junior School for most of my tenure at Cranbrook has been particularly inspirational, exemplifying the positive impact of gender diversity in educational leadership. It's heartening to see our institution embrace this positive trajectory towards a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape.

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

Looking ahead to the future at our school, the prospect of welcoming girls in 2026 brings with it a multitude of exciting opportunities for positive change. Embracing gender inclusivity is not just about breaking down barriers but also about fostering a richer, more diverse learning environment. I envision tailored programmes and initiatives that cater to the unique needs and strengths of both genders, promoting collaboration and understanding. It's an exciting chance to cultivate an atmosphere where every student, regardless of gender, feels empowered to excel academically and contribute meaningfully to the school community. Beyond academics, the inclusion of girls offers a chance to expand extracurricular activities, ensuring a well-rounded educational experience for all. By championing a culture of equality and respect, we pave the way for a school where every student can thrive.

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

As I've been here for 20 years, there are so many. I feel very privileged to work at Cranbrook and to have seen the transformation of the Junior School over my time. When I began at Dickins House, it was just students from K-2. There were only six classes (two for each year level) which made it a small, special place to work. As we have developed it has been wonderful to be part of the transformation of the campus to K-6. Another favourite moment is the annual Year 12 Assembly, where students who were in

the Junior School return for a celebration of their years at the Junior School. It is so wonderful to see these students after so many years. I can still see their little faces, but now in these grown-up bodies! Being part of a family's journey through Cranbrook is an honour and I feel very fortunate.

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

To those embarking on their teaching journey, try to be as organised as possible, as the days are often filled with change, so the more prepared you are the better! Also, remember that maintaining a healthy work-life balance is crucial for long-term success and well-being. Be kind to yourself, understanding that self-compassion is key in a profession demanding both dedication and resilience. An organised and calm teacher translates to an organised and calm classroom! And always try to see the fun in each day. It makes all the challenging parts so much easier to face.

