



3 February 2025

Te Kākano (Years 1-3) Newsletter – Term 1, 2025

Kia ora whānau

Welcome to Te Parito Kōwhai Russley School. We hope that you were able to relax over the break and enjoy some downtime with your loved ones. We are excited for another busy year in 2025 and looking forward to getting started.

Meet Te Kākano

Te Kākano has 7 classrooms to start the year. We have some new teachers joining the team this year.

Annette Ward (New Entrants, TR1)

My introduction to Russley School started when my oldest child was five-and-a-half. He was the first of my four boys to be Russley kids. When my youngest child was about to start school, I was offered a part-time job, which I accepted, and I am still here!

As you can imagine, Russley is very special to me, and I treasure being a part of the school community. It is so rewarding to see our youngest students' independence and joy of learning develop. And learning isn't just for the children, education never stands still and there are always exciting new ideas for me to bring to the classroom.

Out of school, I spend much of my time with Simon, my husband, and my family. All our sons live in Christchurch, so we have everyone together for all those important family celebrations. I go to a dance exercise class twice a week which I love. I enjoy most craft, always having a project or two on the go. I am really looking forward to working with my new class, and their whānau, and getting started on the adventures ahead for Room 19, 2025.

Kathryn Clare (Year 1/2, TR3)

I am looking forward to teaching in our new collaborative space this year. I am from Canada but have now been living overseas for 16 years and in NZ since 2015. My husband and I have two sons who are both at Russley School. Basti is in Year 3 and Max is in Year 1. We are an active family who love to travel, spend time outdoors and play all kinds of sports. We are all football players so can often be found at the park with a ball. I am excited for a fun year ahead and can't wait to hear about all your summer adventures.

Derryn McFetridge (Year 1/2, TR4)

I am looking forward to getting back to school in 2025 for an exciting year in our new space. It is going to be a real adventure. My husband and I live on a 10-acre property which keeps us busy. We have two cats, Slinky and Watson, who just love climbing trees, hills and catching rabbits, sometimes bringing them inside during the night! We also have 7 hens, who like to lay their eggs anywhere but the hen house and 8 cattle. We have two grown-up children - Christine and her husband Mike who live in Melbourne, and Matthew and his wife Cushla who live here in Christchurch. Our first grandchild, Bennett, is just delightful and is now 17 months old. We have even had Bennett for 2 sleepovers during the holidays. I am really looking forward to working with you all and getting our learning and routines underway.

Ashley Nuttall (Year 2/3, TR5) - I'm excited to be joining Team Te Kākano this year. After teaching in the senior team last year, I'm looking forward to working with younger students in a Year 2/3 class. Before becoming a classroom teacher, I taught swimming lessons at Christchurch City Council pools which was an incredibly rewarding experience. During this time, I discovered my passion for teaching kids. In my spare time, I spend weekends near Oamaru where my sister lives. It is always great to see my family down south and spend time with my younger nephew. I also love to travel and explore new places, often squeezing in as much as I can during the school holidays. I am looking forward to getting into the new year of teaching and learning all about the students.

Tim Beckingham – Team Leader (Year 2/3, TR6) - I am excited to be teaching Year 2/3 in a new space this year. I like to keep a positive classroom where students can feel comfortable and confident in their learning. I am passionate about sports and enjoy playing football and the odd round of golf in my spare time. My wife and I have two children. Our daughter Harper is ten and our son Kieran, is seven. They both enjoy being part of Russley School. We have an old labrador who travelled with us from our time in South Korea, and a curious cat called Clyde. I am very much looking forward to a fun-filled year in the brand-new environment.

Vicki Smith (Year 2/3, TR7)

I am delighted to be working with Team 2/3 this year! I'm looking forward to collaborating, learning, and growing together as we create an engaging and supportive environment for everyone. It's going to be an amazing year, and I'm excited to be part of such a fantastic team!

I'm married and a proud parent to three daughters who keep life exciting and are full of energy. Our family also includes two dogs and two cats, so there's never a dull moment at home! In my free time, I enjoy bike riding and spending quality time with my family.

I am ready to discover new ideas and achieve amazing things and work together to make this year full of growth, discovery, and fun. I value building strong and positive relationships with parents and caregivers. I believe having open communication and mutual respect creates a supportive environment and allows children to thrive both academically and personally. I am passionate about ensuring every student feels supported, understood, and empowered to reach their full potential. Here's to a fantastic year ahead.

Andrea Robertson (Year 2/3, TR8) - I have been a junior teacher at Russley School since 2013 and am very excited to be working in the new building this year, in a collaborative environment. I enjoy teaching early literacy skills and love seeing the progress made in reading and writing in this age group. My husband and I have an aged yet energetic border collie and two daughters. Evie is in Year 4 and Isla is in Year 1 so you will often see them in my classroom before or after school. We live at Waimairi Beach and spend our spare time popping over the sand dunes for a swim or body-board or adventuring around Bottle Lake. We also spend a lot of time at our bach in Hanmer, or playing taxi to the girls who are both heavily involved in gymnastics.

Learning Programme

Our beginning inquiry concept is **Who we are, Migration and Voyaging?** We will be exploring and thinking about ourselves, our homes, our school, and a deeper look and understanding as to how this all came about.

Structured Literacy

Te Kākano students will spend the first two hours of the day engaged in literacy. We follow a 'Structured Literacy' approach to teaching reading and writing. This approach explicitly teaches systematic word identification and decoding strategies. Students will learn to read and write by following a specific scope and sequence of letter sounds, digraphs and spelling patterns. In the early stages, students will only complete writing tasks involving these same sounds so that they become automatic and fluent, often in the form of dictated sentences or words. Students who have completed the structured literacy texts will have enough knowledge to complete larger pieces of writing with more creative license.

Home Learning - Reading

Children are encouraged to take home books from the school library or their book box to read for enjoyment and to share their learning with you. The books may not be levelled or at their instructional level

from school but a book that they can enjoy and experience success in. Sometimes they may choose a book that they need support with or may be long. With these books, we encourage you to talk about the pictures, read it to them or take turns to ensure reading time is successful and stress-free.

Some students may also bring home instructional reading books. Please ensure that these are returned daily so that they can be reread at school the following day or used with other students.

We also have a free online reading resource *Sunshine Reading Online* that your child can access. *Sunshine Reading* has books that are levelled to the NZ curriculum with activities to help with understanding the text. The link can also be found on our blog and accessed with **Username:** russleyschool **Password:** school3496. There are also instructions on the *Sunshine Online* website about downloading the app.



Epic! is an amazing digital library that gives kids unlimited access to over 25,000 books, audio- books, and learning videos. It's personalised for your child and their interests, from animals and comics to DIY, science, and so much more. *Epic!* is easy to access anytime, anywhere - on your smartphone, iPad or computer.

Library Days

Please encourage your child to keep their library books in a library bag and bring it to school on their class's library day (to be confirmed once school starts back).

Sharing Our Learning

Russley School will continue to use EDUCA to report and share student learning. This portal is also used for messaging so please check for updates. Learners' EDUCA profiles will continue over from last year and new profiles will be created for students new to the school. If you are experiencing problems with this, please contact your classroom teacher.

Fitness

In Te Kākano, we have daily fitness, and it is helpful if learners wear appropriate footwear, the kind that they can take off and put on by themselves.



Te Kākano Events

Listed here are some of the events Te Kākano has on this term:

- Meet-the-teacher interviews - Thursday 30th and Friday 31st January
- Waitangi Day - Thursday 6th February (classes return Friday 7th February)
- School photos - Friday 14th February
- Te Kākano Fun Day - Monday 17th February
- Mihi whakatau - Tuesday 18th February
- **Teacher-only Day - 24th February**
- Year 1-4 Swimming Sports - Monday 10th March
- Flips and Tumbles - Weeks 9 and 10
- Last day of Term 1 - Friday 11th April



Hats, Drink Bottle and Uniform

Please ensure your child brings a wide-brimmed navy-blue sunhat to school every day, and that it is named. Hats are compulsory this term. If students do not have a hat, they are restricted to playing under the sunshade at morning tea and lunch. ***Please encourage your child to bring to class, daily, a named drink bottle containing only water.***

Headphones

In Te Kākano we use iPads for learning, so all students require their own headphones (named). Retailers such as The Warehouse have economical options. It is important these are clearly named. *Please note; New Entrants do not need headphones for school.

School Photos

Class and individual photos will be taken on Friday 14 February. Please ensure your child is dressed in regulation uniform on this day and arrives at school on time.

Fees and Payments

Please note that the Russley office is cashless and requires payments e.g. stationery, second-hand uniform, and extracurricular activities such as camp to be made by eftpos or online transfer. Team Te Kākano parents can expect very few charges this year, as Ministry of Education funding covers most activities including swimming lessons.



Keeping in Touch

Don't hesitate to ask if you require information or have anything important you would like us to know to support your child and their learning. You can contact your classroom teacher by email.

Ngā mihi nui

Te Kākano Teaching Team

Annette Ward, Room TR1

Kathryn Clare, Room TR3

Derryn McFetridge, Room TR4

Ashley Nuttall, Room TR5

Tim Beckingham (Team Leader) Room TR6

Vicki Smith, Room TR7

Andrea Robertson, Room TR8

annette.ward@russley.school.nz

kathryn.clare@russley.school.nz

derryn.mcfetridge@russley.school.nz

ashley.nuttall@russley.school.nz

tim.beckingham@russley.school.nz

vicki.smith@russley.school.nz

andrea.robertson@russley.school.nz