

Student involvement key in creating amazing play environment.

There is excitement and happy faces aplenty in Manurewa West's new playground.

Manurewa West Primary School is a vibrant South Auckland school with a goal to provide a well-balanced education for all children, where they feel happy and secure in a warm, caring environment.

In 2018, the school had undergone a major refurbishment including the construction of new buildings and extensive work to existing buildings. At that stage their current playground setup wasn't fit for purpose and with no seamless transition between the physical setup of the school and areas of play, they decided to completely redesign a new play area. The existing playground was also worn and outdated and with the school roll growing significantly in just a few years a new playground was an urgent priority.

Options for both junior and middle student play were also key so that students could age up through the play spaces and their development through play could continue.”

– Kogie Naidoo, Principal, Manurewa West Primary School.

School Principal, Kogie Naidoo began browsing through several Principal and School News Magazines and saw editorials and advertisements for several playground suppliers including Park Supplies & Playgrounds. In 2019 she attended the New Zealand Principals' Federation Conference where she visited their stand, chatted to the team and picked up some brochures.

The school had several goals for their new playground,

“Our Manurewa School students often come from overcrowded living situations that don't

have the greatest outdoor play spaces, so it was really important that we created an amazing play environment for them to enjoy whilst at school. We wanted to create something that sparked their imaginations, was super fun, helped them develop their fine motor skills and encouraged sharing.



An arial shot of the finished junior school playground.



The final design included vibrant blue and yellow Tiger Turf and custom routing on several playground structures.

Following the conference Kogie approached three different playground companies and requested preliminary physical designs and recommendations. The school's senior leadership team then reviewed the submissions and made a final decision of which company to go with. The senior leadership team really appreciated that Park Supplies & Playgrounds Playground Consultant Melissa (Mel) Cowie involved students in the whole process including doing a basic movement session with the middle school students before asking them for their ideas and wishes. The session really helped them to understand more about what play items may benefit them in their new playground. Kogie shares,

“At the end of the day, it's the children's playground and they know best what will make it fun and enjoyable for them. We were extremely impressed with how the Park Supplies & Playgrounds design team had really taken on board the children's suggestions and incorporated them in the final design and recommendations. It was an easy decision to go with Park Supplies & Playgrounds as our playground supplier.”

Ahead of the playground install, Park Supplies & Playgrounds invited the school to bring along a group of students to their Onehunga factory so they could learn about how the playground equipment is made. Of the experience Kogie says,

“The children had an absolute blast and found the factory tour interesting and informative. We really liked that Park Supplies & Playgrounds equipment

is New Zealand made as we knew the quality would be high and would be designed specifically for New Zealand conditions, it's also great to be able to support local businesses in the current economic climate too.”

The install process was very seamless, there were a few delays early on due to lockdown and then some weather events which made the groundwork and Tiger Turf installation a bit of a challenge, but the actual playground install went without a hitch. Kogie was highly complementary of the Park Supplies & Playgrounds team whilst on site,

“The team was extremely professional throughout the install; they worked in-line with all of the school health & safety protocol and also had their own very high standard of health & safety protocol as well. They fenced/cordoned off the area really well and we had no reservations about the safety of students during the install process. The team also tidied the site up immaculately afterwards and the school grounds-person was delighted. Since the install the team have also been out to check the playground to ensure all the bolts were optimally tightened and was ready for play.”



Manurewa West students visit the Park Supplies & Playgrounds factory.



Park Supplies & Playgrounds carried out a seamless installation.

Now that the playground is open the school is delighted with the outcome and the teachers relish the joy it brings to the students.

“The students absolutely love it – it’s a lot of fun, to see their excitement and happy faces while playing on it which really brings a smile to the staffs faces. Once the bell has rung, we often have to venture out and ask some of the students to come back to class as they don’t want to leave.”

On the students’ favourite part of the playground Kogie shares,

“The juniors really love the tower and the tunnel slide, they can act out many games and enjoy playing king of the castle. The Lunar Spinner is also a complete hit with all the students.

The middle students’ favourite is the Lilypad Basket Swing as you can get up to six kids on there at once.”

Overall the school had a very favourable experience with their new playground build, the one piece of advice Kogie would give other schools wanting to build a new playground is;

“Talk to the students and get them involved as much as possible, their ideas for what will make it the most fun for them. As adults we often think that we know best, and we should be the ones to make the decisions, but children provide a completely different perspective on what fun is.”

And of working with Park Supplies & Playgrounds Kogie says,

“They were awesome to work with, I felt like it was a very collaborative process. They were able to guide us to make the right choices without telling us what to do. They are also fun and outgoing people with a good sense of humour, they certainly know what fun is and that comes through in both their approach and the playground designs they produce. Their knowledge of the industry is second to none and they know their own product range inside-out, it was very easy to put trust in them.”



The finished middle school playground includes an abundance of climbing activities.



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