



Dihlabeng Christian School Newsletter

NEW LIFE CHURCH
BIGGIN HILL



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A Farewell Message from Andy Woodage

Dear DCS Family,

It feels very strange to be writing this message to you, my last one as Principal of DCS. I have a mix of emotions, mostly sadness and gratitude with perhaps a hint of pride. After an eleven-year journey, Becky and I are moving on! In 11 years, we have seen so many amazing things; our children have grown into teenagers, our hair has become quite grey and our lives have been forever impacted.

This final year has been a whirlwind. In the last few months alone we have had a school 'inspection', an international conference, our 25th birthday celebrations, prize-giving events, a Grade 7 prom, a Christmas Extravaganza and more, on top of delivering an academic curriculum with end-of-year exams. Our birthday party was certainly the highlight, as you will see in this newsletter, and felt like a fitting pinnacle to our time here in Clarens.

DCS will always hold a dear place in my heart and I am so grateful to everyone for their generosity over the years, both in prayer and financial support. It has been an exciting adventure with God and I have cherished the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of many young people and their families. I am excited to be handing over the future of the school to a brilliant team, led by **Bohlokwa Mofokeng** and **Lizzie Mbele**, who will take the school to new heights, I'm sure.

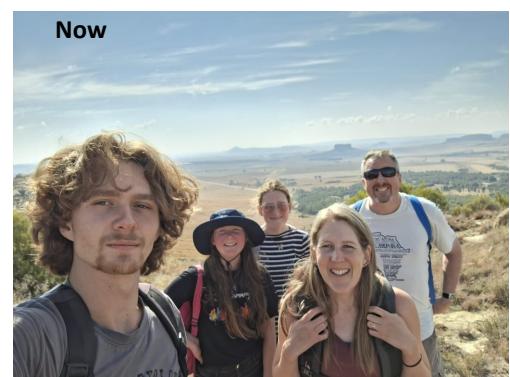
Much love to you all!

Andy



Then

On behalf of the children and staff of DCS, and on a personal level too, Alan and Carol would like to express our love and grateful thanks to Andy, Becky, Matthew, Keryn and Lucy for the dedicated service and sheer hard work they have put in to the school, church life, and the community of Clarens. Their sacrificial love shines through in all that they do, and we wish them every blessing in their future adventures.



Now

OISESA Quality Assurance Evaluation by Andy Woodage

In September this year, we completed an evaluation with the **Office of Independent Schools Evaluations Southern Africa (OISESA)**. This process is a comprehensive review of the school, involving questionnaires to all stakeholders, a self-evaluation (leading to a detailed report) and a visit from a 'mentor' who comes to verify the self-evaluation and provide an outside perspective.



This whole process was extremely positive as we had an opportunity to celebrate the things we do well and to consider ways that we can improve ourselves in the future. Our mentor, Michael Hosty, a very experienced and accomplished leader in education, brought wisdom and encouragement to us all. Best of all, our new principal has a clear direction for future improvements.

Whilst the full report is yet to be published (at time of writing), we will share one quote from Michael's report: *'Dihlabeng Christian School truly mirrors its Vision – It is a place of high-quality education, one that cultivates a united community, that is diverse and equal, and one that 'loves God, loves others and loves learning'.*

Kgodumodumo Trip

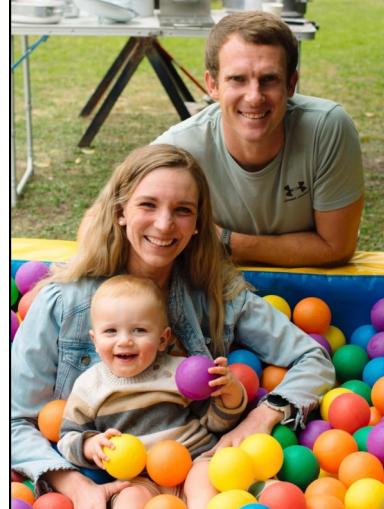
On the 29th September 2025, the Grade 2 class embarked on a journey to **Kgodumodumo**, a new museum that showcases the local historic dinosaur legacy, and tells tales about how they lived long ago. It is located in **Golden Gate National Park**, which is just outside Clarens. The museum was open and free until the end of September. The children learnt about dinosaurs that lived in the area, saw life sized models of the creatures and their skeletons, as well as a model of a nest. The children were extremely excited to go somewhere new and enjoyed both the museum and the outside play equipment.



Our School's Occupational Therapist

"My name is Anjelike Faasen, and I have had the privilege of serving Dihlabeng Christian School for the past four years, along with several other local schools in the area. The sessions focus on helping children participate confidently in the classroom by strengthening the foundational skills they need for learning. My approach to therapy is rooted in relationship, connection and play."

I believe children learn best when they feel safe, loved and engaged. So, my sessions are designed to be enjoyable, social and playful. I mostly work with small groups, which makes therapy more affordable, whilst still allowing children to benefit from collaborative, movement-rich, hands-on learning experiences. I enjoy working at DCS because of the meaningful relationships built over the years and the way in which the school community serves Christ wholeheartedly."



Anjelike and her family

Thank you to those sponsors who specifically support the Special Needs work at DCS. You help to make this therapy possible.

A Gift from the UK

In October **New Life Church**, in **Biggin Hill, UK** raised funds to help the children of DCS celebrate the school's 25th Birthday in style. They were able to send R55,000 (approx. £2,500) to the school. This enabled each class to have a large birthday cake to decorate, and then share! There were party bags full of goodies for each child, party hats, decorations, balloons and much more that helped make the day a success. There was also an amount left over which will be used next year for some kind of lasting memorial to mark this important milestone. This will be decided on by the school staff.

Thank you to all those at New Life Church who contributed; your support is so very much appreciated.



Balloons and Party Bags
Cakes and Paper Chains



DCS 25th Birthday Party !!!!



This year we were blessed to celebrate the 25th birthday of Dihlabeng Christian School. The event took place on 7th November 2025. It was hosted over 3 momentous events; one with our current learners at school, one with parents, the local community and sponsors, and the last one was a Gala Dinner for all staff, previous learners, and some of our sponsors from South Africa and around the globe.



Our first event took place during the school day and involved our current learners and staff. We started the day by writing and drawing what we love about DCS. Additionally, each class had their own cake which they decorated (thanks to donations from New Life Church in the UK). They also made party hats and decorated them. Then, the school gathered in the church hall for some fun and games, and to listen to and watch some speeches and performances from learners and staff.

Our second event took place in the early evening. Members of the community and parents were invited to the church to listen to and watch speeches and celebratory performances from the learners and staff. Everyone was given cupcakes decorated with the DCS colours of red, white and black. We then enjoyed a short dance party.



Picture right: 3 Principals, Bohlokwa Mofokeng, Andy Woodage, Margaret Grant



Our final event was a Gala Dinner held at the Clarens Golf Estate. Past learners, teachers and sponsors of the school travelled from far and wide to join our current staff in celebrating our school's birthday. Attendees shared a wonderful meal and listened to speeches celebrating all that DCS has achieved in 25 years, since Margaret Grant founded the school. Past learners also shared what the school meant to them and how their experiences at DCS have positively impacted their lives. There was plenty of time for catching up, reminiscing and celebrating.

It was a truly wonderful evening.



Ex-students left and right.

The children's writing and drawings of what they love about DCS.



A Message to All Our Child Sponsors

In preparation for the end of year Prize Giving events, and the school's birthday celebrations, each child painted their own self-portrait. These were displayed as the backdrop to each event to show how special each child is at DCS. The pictures were so delightful, we decided to send them to the children's sponsors, along with a greeting from each child.

If you would like to know more about sponsoring a child at DCS, please go to our website: www.dihlabengschool.com or email direct either the school in South Africa, or New Life Church in the UK. (See top of newsletter).



DCS Cross Country Team

The DCS Cross-Country team, featuring athletes from Grades 3 to 7, had a successful 2025 season competing across Bethlehem and the Free State. Our runners: Prince, Michael, Mpho L, Otlotleng, David, Thato, Mosa, Joseph, Sihle, Sethu, Zano, Amohelang, Xolisan and Tlotliso, trained with commitment, and represented DCS with pride. A major highlight was several athletes qualifying for the **Free State Provincial Championships**. As Coach, Teacher Mathandela said: "This team showed heart in every race. Their discipline and determination made all the difference." Well done team!

Left: Some members of our Cross Country Team who competed across several events.

Right: Teacher Yolanda Van Den Broek with the DCS Eco-Schools committee members



Eco-Schools - Yolanda Van Den Broek

This year we were presented with our **Platinum 2 Award** and have continued to work towards the next level of the Award. Each year, we work on 6 different themes including: Water, Waste, Energy, Culture and Heritage, Health and Wellbeing, and School Grounds. We then create a portfolio showing what we have done in each of these areas. Many of the activities that we do can be included. For example, the Grade 2s trip to the new Dinosaur Museum; Grade 3s trip to the Basotho Cultural Village, and our Heritage Day celebrations all count towards the theme of Culture and Heritage.

Congratulations to all staff and learners, working together.

Prize Giving and Trophy Awards - (Photo top right)

Once again, we celebrated the efforts and achievements of all the learners at our various Prize Giving events. This year the learners receiving awards were:

Modiehi Mokoena Bill Robbins Award for Progress; **Nompilo Khoza** Oliver Family Good Fellowship Award; **Mosa Mofokeng** IP Sportswoman Award; **Kabelo Mofokeng** Mount Horeb Perseverance Award; **Prince Kuria** Creativity Award, Basson Maths Award and IP Top Achiever; **Cara Roos** Afrikaans Award and Care and Kindness Award; **Thlokomelo Mosia** Performing Arts Award; **Joseph Mokoena** IP Sportsman Award; **Cornel Roos** Afrikaans Award and Woodage Family Award for Science; **Xolisan Xaba** FP Sportsperson Award; **Kara Lengoabala** FP Top Achiever Award; **Mojalefa Mokoena** Exemplary Behaviour and Principal's Award; **Reitumetse Nzimande** (not in the photo) Moshoeshoe Sesotho Award.

The Woodage family introduced a new **Science Trophy Award**, which they presented to **Cornel Roos**. (Photo bottom right)



'Thank You' to all our Sponsors and Friends

