

Special Educational Needs at Dihlabeng Christian School

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Dihlabeng Christian School

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We are pleased to be able to bring you an update from Yolanda Van den Broek, our designated co-ordinator, on our Special Needs work at DCS . This newsletter is sent to all sponsors who specifically support the Special Needs work, it is also available on our website:

www.dihlabengschool.com

Since the official end of the pandemic restrictions in school earlier this year, we have been able to open up activities more fully to allow the children to get the most from the interventions and facilities we have been able to offer through your generous support.

Thank you for your generosity. Here is Yolanda's report.

My aim as the Special Needs' coordinator is to try and make sure that children receive the most appropriate support to meet their particular needs, either providing support myself or organizing them to receive support from other people.

Each year I do a basic eye test with the Grade 1 children and on the basis of that, either myself or the parents will take them to 'Specsavers' to have their eyes checked professionally. This year, two of the Grade 1s were found to need glasses.

One of the Grade 1s, Rorisang, is considered legally blind so I have also been involved in seeking advice about the best way forward for her. I have taken her and her mum to see a special school where the advice was that she should learn braille. I have also been experimenting with the dictate function to get her to retell stories that she's been learning in class or from her reading books.

Rorisang has also enjoyed going for horse therapy.



Rorisang from Grade 1 working with Chamonix Boland, using exercises to strengthen core, improve balance and develop confidence



In total, 10 children from the Foundation Phase have been able to go to Horse Therapy this year. This is with Rophé Ministeries, working with Chamonix Boland at her stables on Sunnyside Farm, just outside Clarens.

Left -Mvele from Grade 3 has been helping Chamonix to break in a young colt.

Right - Ntombi who has sight difficulties and problems with coordination



This can help with physical needs e.g. to build core muscle strength and balance. It can also help children who have problems with their behaviour or those who lack confidence.

I try to start working with children who are behind with their phonics in Grade 1, in the hope that with extra input at that stage, they can catch up with the other children. This has been very successful with some children, but with others it is clear that they need continued support as they go up into Grade 2. Also, there are children who join us at a later stage who haven't got the same foundations as the children who have been with us since Reception. Again, some of these are able to catch up, while others continue to need support.

If possible, I like to work with groups of children but sometimes I feel that their difficulties are such that they need 1:1 time with me. I currently work with 12 children in 1:1 sessions and about 30 in small groups. I also run two reading discussion groups with the Grade 6 class and a Reading Club, which takes place before school, where older children listen to younger children read.

Occupational Therapy - This year, 20 children have had group sessions with our current Occupational Therapist, Anjelië Faarsen. These sessions are particularly beneficial if they have perceptual problems that may be hindering progress.



Children working with the Occupational Therapist using activities to develop spatial awareness, fine motor skills, such as hand-eye coordination and at the same time, improving social skills. They also participate in physical exercises and games using larger equipment.

Counselling - Over the course of the year, 12 children have had time with a trained counsellor from Dihlabeng church. They have all enjoyed these sessions and found them helpful. Teachers can refer children if they become aware of a child who seems to need emotional support.

Our Feeding Scheme - Whilst the Feeding Scheme does not come directly under Special Needs and is funded separately, it is there to help the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Often the two groups overlap, many of our children with special needs are also on the Feeding Scheme register.



We currently feed about 30 children through the Feeding Scheme.

26 children receive a snack at break time and 33 receive a more substantial meal at lunchtime.