



# Hermannsburg Quarterly

*Thinking independently since 1856*

## From the Principal's Desk...

How big is a container ship? How deep is a mine? What does it really mean to go 'back to basics'? Have you seen Cape Town laid out before you from the top of Table Mountain? Have you seen a lion up close? Have you smelled the ocean air?

Within the four walls of a classroom we can learn a lot of facts and even many skills, all of which are important and develop our minds and our thinking skills. With modern multi-media, we can take our children to faraway places – with expert commentary and fantastic camera angles. We can peek into meerkat burrows, watch ants build nests – all things we could probably not easily experience first-hand. We can 'walk' through the pyramids and visit the Zimbabwe ruins and even 'experience' other people's lives. But can we truly feel the age

of the Parthenon? Can we sense the mystery of Stonehenge? Can we smell the musky fur of the meerkats in their burrow? We see only what the camera shows us, and hear only what the scriptwriter (with his or her bias) wants to tell us.

Education should be about more than dry facts and academic skills – education should also be about giving us a real sense of where we fit in, and, if possible, providing context and the 'bigger picture'. The only way to truly appreciate the grandeur of the Drakensberg, or gain a true respect for the breakers on our beautiful East Coast, is to be there.

It is for these reasons that field trips are so important, and why our school, like most other schools, offers different field trips through all the Grades. Some things may seem very simple, but even the challenge of creating fire from nothing but two pieces of wood and a length of string brings a special sense of

achievement once that first, hesitant flame flickers into life. When the members of your group compliment your cooking, even though you've never prepared a meal before, their validation takes on a special meaning. And trying this in a classroom is just not the same thing, and sometimes not even possible.

While some of our scholars are fortunate enough to do this in their family life, many are not so fortunate. And even if your children are among the fortunate, experiencing all this with a group of people who come from different backgrounds, have very different views and prior experiences, adds a whole new dimension – suddenly you have to be aware of what you are saying, your value judgements and your opinions. You need to learn sensitivity, and possibly also when not to take offence.

Increasingly we live in a digital world, where people don't have to deal face-to-face and we can make hurtful comments without thinking and without repercussions – or so we often think. Would we really say all the things we text to each other on Whatsapp and Facebook if the person to whom we are addressing ourselves were standing right in front of us? Experts tell us that 80% of inter-personal communication is non-verbal – tone of voice, hand gestures, 'body language' are the sub-text to any conversation that give our words context and give them added meaning.

We do ourselves and our children a disservice if we just sit back and let social media be their only interaction with other people, and video games and the History Channel be their only interaction with the physical world around them. At Hermannsburg, we strive to strike a balance between the digital world, if you like, and the physical world. We may not always get it perfectly right for everyone's taste, but we do what we can with the

### Our Mission

To provide educational excellence in a Christian context, in various languages, especially German. To ensure the holistic enrichment of each individual in order to meet the challenges of a changing world confidently.

### Our Values

The pursuit of excellence in all endeavours. The conduct of all interactions with integrity, respect, trust and compassion. The fostering of an attitude of commitment, responsibility and pride.

### DIARY

#### JUNE

16 Kindergarten Open Day

#### JULY

23 High School Parents' day  
Parents' Info Session

#### AUGUST

5 Inter-house Athletics  
24 Midlands Youth Choir  
26 Gemeinde Basar  
28 HMB Music Esiteddfod

#### SEPTEMBER

2 Umvoti Athletics  
8 Kindergarten Opa & Oma Tag  
21 School Play  
23 HMB Golf Day  
30 Potjiekos Competition

#### OCTOBER

3 German Day  
7 Family Fun Day  
13 Grade 12 Awards  
14 Matric Dance  
(by invitation only)  
29 Confirmation

#### NOVEMBER

1 Reformation celebration  
18 Kindergarten Graduation  
ABC Schützenfest  
25 Birding Big Day  
26 Church service with choirs  
30 Primary School Awards

#### DECEMBER

1 High School Awards



Mr Terry & Nature Clubbers in the Flower Patch

support of our parents.

Educating young people so that they can enter adult life with the tools they need to not only survive, but to achieve the heights we wish for them has to go beyond the classroom – and it does. Each of our scholars brings to school the attitudes, values and opinions they have learned from their parents and siblings, and find that these are sometimes at odds with what other scholars have brought to school with them. Our school has its own particular ethos, encompassing attitudes and values that may or may not be at odds with what the scholars bring with them. But this school ethos is what makes our school the special place it is – this ethos is what draws people here. Changing this ethos would change the fundamental principles on which we base our education of young people.

Some within our school family would like the school's ethos to more closely reflect their personal cultural or ideological background and traditions, but this begs the question: will this improve the school? Or will it satisfy one group at the expense of others? Will it be something better than what has attracted people to our school thus far?

Our school has a unique character, informed over many decades by German missionary heritage and more lately by our Mission and Values, which we continually strive to achieve and uphold.

If you choose to play cricket, you wear the whites, you acknowledge the crowd's accolades with a courteously raised bat, you submit to the decisions of the umpire – no matter your ethnic or cultural background. The same is true whether you choose to play hockey, rugby or soccer, or any other sport code. And the same should hold true for our school – whatever our ethnic or cultural backgrounds or beliefs, we should respect the ethos of the school, where many different cultures and ideologies are thrown into a 'melting pot'. Our school has a respected reputation, and this has been earned in part due to its ethos, the fundamental elements of which are shared by many cultures.

If we all accept and respect the school's ethos, which has led so many to successful matriculation, further study and working lives, we will continue to enjoy the benefits of attending a school that offers so much, and, dare one say it, is unbeatable value for money. Attending our school is a free choice, respecting its ethos while one is here should be a part of that choice.

## Explainers

As mentioned in the previous edition of the *Quarterly*, our school is affiliated to ISASA. One of the requirements of this affiliation is that we undergo regular whole-school inspections, conducted by IQAA.

Our first inspection started at the beginning of March, when our IQAA mentors met with nine of our teachers in Hermannsburg to conduct a workshop on the details of the process. Four teachers from the High School and four from the Primary School / Kindergarten, make up the two internal evaluation teams. One teacher is the collator and report-writer. These teams have been busy collecting information – gathering together various school documents, conducting classroom visits and evaluating the results of the online surveys conducted amongst our parents, scholars and teachers.

In addition to these two teams, a team consisting of the boarding establishment (BE) staff has been evaluating the results of the online survey dealing with the BE, and another team has been concerning itself with the results of the online survey regarding governance of the school.

Once the school's internal evaluation report is completed – various focus groups have also been looking into some of the results of the surveys – it will be submitted to the mentors, who will visit the school to conduct an on-site inspection before writing their own report – which will become the official IQAA evaluation of our school.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the online survey and allowed us the opportunity to see what our strengths and weaknesses are, so that we can work on improving our school even further.

Online Survey Statistics – Parent Response			
Section	Potential responses	Actual responses	% response
Kindergarten	42	23	54
Grades 1–3	32	11	34
Grades 4–7	32	22	69
Grades 8–12	84	49	58

## Bush Camp

While some remembered the last High School bush camp fondly, others, new to the idea, found the prospect rather daunting – especially with the more experienced telling them 'horror stories' of having to hunt for their food and sleep under the stars! Fortunately, the reality is somewhat different, with hot and cold running water, flushing toilets and tents to protect everyone from the elements – and food in plenty!

In the end, as is the case every time, the scholars were loathe to leave the tranquil surroundings even though they had to keep their tents clean, cook their own food, stoke the boilers

for hot water, clean their own dishes and participate in a variety of activities from building a raft with inflated tubes, to baking bread for everyone, to identifying birds, trees and other fauna and flora, 'bush first aid' and bushcraft. Hikes alternated with swimming in the river, and much fun was had.

For some, it was the first time they'd ever camped. For others, the first time they'd ever really looked at the stars or seen them so bright in the sky. The sights, sounds and smells ... and the ants! ... were an immersive experience that will not soon be forgotten.



The High School bush camp groups with their team flags.

## Primary School Field Trips

The Grade 7s made their first foray to Cape Town as a class, and not Mpumalanga as in previous years. They visited various places of interest, saw the sights of the Mother City and came back with new perspectives on our beautiful country.



The Grade 7s in Cape Town, enjoying the large artworks.

In the meantime, our Grade 1 to 6 scholars visited more local attractions – from uShaka Marine World to a game farm and the Bird of Prey Sanctuary, to the bottling plant at KwaSizabantu (aQuellé). Even those who had been to some of these places before, found something new that they could add to their list of experiences and learning.

A big thank you goes to all our hosts, and to the teachers who accompanied the various groups.



The Primary School at the Bird of Prey Sanctuary outside Pietermaritzburg.

## Germany Exchange Programme

Possibly the ultimate field trip of any school in South Africa is our Germany Exchange Programme (GEP). In its 13<sup>th</sup> year with HAP Grieshaber Gymnasium (as BZN Reutlingen is now known), the GEP represents a unique and unmatched opportunity to immerse oneself in another culture for a month – and to return the favour when our German guests visit South Africa. For many of our scholars, this will be the first time in a big aeroplane, the first time leaving South Africa, and the first time they will be in a country where the first language is not English.



The German parents of the 2016 GEP group raised funds to donate to our school.

Our German guests visited many different places of interest in KZN, and even joined our scholars in lessons for a couple of days. Individually, they were taken to different parts of South Africa during the Easter holiday, and experienced life in South Africa in a way that a 'normal' tourist would never be able to. Our scholars will have that same experience when they visit Germany – a truly priceless experience!

In the end, our scholars' experiences cannot be matched by any other school, and at a very reasonable cost at that.

## Schulfest 161

It may seem a little ostentatious to call it 'Schulfest 161', but the fact remains that our small school is the oldest existing in KZN and one of the oldest in our country – and it's still going,

delivering high quality education to young people.

The Friday's music recital wowed the audience and the bonfire and braai in the evening was very well supported. On the Saturday, the weather was again perfect and the company exceptional (as always); the varieties of food and refreshments suited every palate and our hockey teams played their hearts out to walk away with victories in the tournaments. The weekend experience was rounded off by a church service on the Sunday morning before we sat down to a tasty breakfast.



A huge thank you goes to all the parents, scholars, teachers, Old Scholars, and friends of our school for their help on the day, behind the scenes, in cash, in time and in kind. Herr Dr Winfried Spanaus, Subject Advisor for German in South Africa from Germany, attended Schulfest with his wife and had this to say:

“My heartfelt thanks for the pleasant days in Hermannsburg. Hermannsburg made a very good impression, as did the kind people. Hermannsburg is an outstanding place in South Africa and we must do all that we can to ensure that it remains attractive. Your Schulfest has a unique character and the concert was most impressive.” – Translated



## HMB FUN RIDE

The second fun ride for two- and four-wheeled bikes attracted riders from a wide field of experience and age, and once again proved a popular and successful event. A more technical course challenged the more experienced riders, but all who participated had fun on the trail.

Thanks go to our teachers, parents and trustees of our Board of Trustees for organising the event, and to the Kranskop Farmers' Association, Mondri and our neighbouring farmers for providing the meals and opening up their farms for the riders to traverse. Our generous sponsors are likewise due thanks for their invaluable support.



## GREYTOWN MTB CLASSIC

Our mountain-bike club was asked to organise and provide marshals and officials for the night ride section of the Greytown Mountain Bike Classic, and despite freezing, wet weather they and other scholars, parents and teachers did our school proud. They were complimented on their cheerful smiles despite the conditions, and those who competed did very well indeed, ringing up first places and top three spots.

The Sunday's day-ride saw more participating and was another successful day for our sportsmen and women.



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