

Early Childhood Centre of Excellence Award.

Makhanda is blessed with a large number of effective high-quality ECD Centers. Three of the most outstanding of these were shortlisted for this award.

Our three shortlisted centres are:

- The Little Red Dragon Pre-School
- Siyazama Pre-school
- Rhodes Pre-school and Day Care Centre

As this is a centre award and not an individual one, the centre receives a cash prize of R50 000.

This year's award goes to, The Little Red Dragon Pre-School

The Little Red Dragon Pre-school was established in 2005 and serves mainly the communities of Ghost town, Hoggenoeg, Vergenoeg, Sun City and Scott's farm.

The pre-school has gold level registration with the Department of Education. The strength of the pre-school lies in the practitioners and parents' involvement.

The two multilingual practitioners offer classes in English-Afrikaans and English-IsiXhosa and are both BEd students at Rhodes University. The pre-school has a strong focus on learning through play which is supported by an excellent outdoor play area.

There is regular communication and between the school and the parents through meetings, events, and interventions such as the Mikhulu book sharing.

Close collaborations with various stakeholders enhance the holistic early learning programme offered by the pre-school. For example, the pre-school is part of the Rhodes University Vice Chancellor's ECD Centre of Excellence Initiative and supports learner's health and wellbeing through participating in campaigns hosted by the Department of Health, local audiologists, dentists, and optometrists.

Excellence in Foundation Phase Teaching.

The three shortlisted teachers in this category are:

Grade 1 teacher at Fikizolo Primary, Zoleka Kepe

Grade 3 teacher at Tanti Lower Primary, Mandisa Peter

And Grade 2 teacher at Holy Cross Primary School, Zingiswa Mdingi

The winner of the award for Excellence in Foundation Phase teaching 2024 is Ms Mandisa Peter, please join us on the stage.

Ms. Peter has been an exemplary teacher in Makhanda for over 25 years, demonstrating a deep commitment to her vocation. Her dedication extends beyond the classroom; she

actively participates in community engagements, holiday schools, and directs children's ministries at her church.

Her classroom is a vibrant, inclusive space where care and compassion are palpable. Ms. Peter designs her lessons to connect with her learners' lived experiences and adapts to their needs to ensure meaningful learning. Her commitment to her learners' well-being is reflected in the supportive systems she creates and the extra efforts she makes.

Ms. Tabisa Booï, a panel member, noted, "Ms. Peter's dedication, resourcefulness, and positive learning environment were evident throughout my visit."

Additionally, Ms. Peter's pursuit of professional growth is impressive, with multiple qualifications from Rhodes University following her initial diploma from the Cape College of Education. She also excels as a mentor for pre-service teachers, demonstrating her dedication to advancing the profession.

Excellence in Intermediate Phase Teaching

This category is a little bit different. Two excellent candidates were impossible to choose between and so in this category we have two winners who will share the award.

The award for Excellence in Intermediate Phase teaching 2024 goes to, Grade 4 teacher at The Good Shepherd Primary School, Jade Botha and, Grade 4 teacher at Victoria Girls Primary School, Kerry-Lee Knott-Craig.

Jade Botha Citation

Ms Botha plays a leading role at Good Shepherd Primary as member of the school management team, phase head of English, and as coordinator of the school nutrition programme. Her colleagues speak highly of her commitment to the school.

Ms Botha's lessons are creative and stimulating and show a strong commitment to inclusivity and love of learning. She develops her own materials and makes good use of technology in sharing lesson development with learners.

She shows excellent attention to detail in her own lesson planning and demonstrates very careful reflection on learners' progress as well as how she can adapt to improve lessons in the future.

Her classroom environment is bright and cheerful and she encourages feedback from learners with a 'mailbox' in which they can anonymously share concerns.

Her excellent classroom control is kind and firm and the well-managed active learning, with flexibility for different needs, keeps her class captivated.

After school hours, she runs a remedial reading club called the Gogo-Gang which was established to give learners the opportunity to spend time with a supportive adult outside of the classroom and home environment.

Kerry-Lee Knott-Craig

Ms Knott-Craig is a well-respected member of the Victoria Primary staff, as is evident from supportive letters from her peers and the principal.

Her bright and busy classroom walls indicate deep and engaging learning and are also used to encourage a caring and participatory environment. Ms Knott-Craig produces careful and detailed lesson plans and it is encouraging to see how she integrates the National Arts Festival into her learners' activities and does creative integrated practical work such as making crumpets in class.

She is clearly loved by the learners who show trust in their engagement with her. She is known in her school to informally spend time with girls talking and helping them work through social challenges.

After hours, she runs a reading club for those in need and provides intervention sessions for those needing homework help or who are struggling academically. She is a reflective teacher with a keen interest in integrating her assessment practices and research.

Excellence in Leadership: Primary School.

We have three exemplary leaders shortlisted in this category this year. The shortlisted candidates in this category are:

- Ms Nicola Hayes, from Holy Cross Primary School
- Mr Thulani Wana, from the Good Shepherd Primary School
- Ms Pricilla Glover, from Tanti Lower Primary School

The 2024 award for Excellence in Leadership Primary Education goes to Mr Tulani Wana.

Thulani Wana Citation

Mr Wana is a stand-out principal who is professional to the core. He regards South Africa's children as our most important national asset, and thus prioritises offering them a safe, healthy and stimulating environment at Good Shepherd Primary School.

His understanding of an excellent school is all-encompassing: it should ensure effective academics and holistic child development, encourage full stakeholder participation, prioritise compliance with all legal and ethical frameworks, and enable ongoing professional development.

In all these respects, Mr Wana leads by example: he teaches Life Orientation and Economic and Management Sciences; he is personally involved in extra-mural offerings; he communicates confidently and respectfully with all stakeholders and is furthering his own studies through the University of Johannesburg.

He has a good all-round skill set (including curriculum and financial skills) that he brings to bear on school management, to good effect.

Finally, his character strengths (respectfulness, inclusivity, thoroughness, consistency) have enabled him to connect with the Makhanda community, to the advantage of his school.

Unsurprisingly therefore, there is abundant evidence that his leadership is producing fantastic outcomes; for example, Good Shepherd has performed very well in the city-wide Grade 4 Comprehension study.

Shortlisted SP teaching award candidates:

Siyanda Patience Tyobashe at Khutliso Daniels Secondary School
Zuzeka Zisentle Ndumiso at Andrew Moyake School of Excellence

SP Teacher Award Winner:

Zuzeka Zisentle Ndumiso

Awardee Citation:

Ms Zuzeka Ndumiso is a highly-engaged Makhandla citizen and passionate teacher who strives to provide high-quality Mathematics education. Her continuous professional development endeavours include pursuing an MBA which has contributed to multidisciplinary featuring in her teaching strategies. This helps her learners see the connectedness between different subjects. Furthermore, Zuzeka's creative multi-sensory teaching approach draws on the love that her learners have for performance Arts. This is evident in her classroom practice incorporating fun learning activities such as role-playing, singing, and rapping, which foster a productive disposition towards Mathematics. Zuzeka's lessons reveal coherent progression that contributes to making Mathematics knowledge accessible, and real-life examples allowing for relevant practical application. The result is that her learners not only enjoy their Mathematics lessons but are also empowered for lifelong learning. Zuzeka's excellence in teaching is praised not only by her colleagues and school leadership, but also by her school learners and Rhodes University student-teachers.

EXCELLENCE IN FET PHASE

Ms Deliwe: Life Sciences Teacher at Khutliso Daniels Secondary School

Ms Deliwe demonstrates outstanding passion and dedication in her teaching, her enthusiasm shines through in every lesson. Her presence in the classroom is both commanding and inspiring, fostering an atmosphere of respect and focus that enhances learning. Through her strong classroom management, she cultivates a well-ordered environment where learners can thrive. Ms Deliwe has demonstrated meticulous organisational skills and a commitment to adapting subject material to meet the diverse learning styles of her learners. Her ability to present content in engaging and practical ways, particularly through hands-on Life Sciences demonstrations truly brings the subject to life for her learners. Colleagues and novice teachers commend her for her exceptional organisational skills and empathy, noting how she prioritises understanding and connecting with each learner. The positive feedback from her peers highlights the significant impact she has made, not only as an educator but also as a mentor and role model within the teaching community. Over the past two years, Ms Deliwe has achieved 94% and 96% pass rate in Grade 12 Life Sciences. In the recent June exams, her Life Sciences Grade 12 results were the second highest average, following IsiXhosa Home Language.

High School Leadership

Radio Mcuba Citation

The broad challenge that Mr Mcuba took on was to transform Khutliso Daniels from an under-performing school into a school of excellence. To rise to this challenge, he embraced a transformative leadership approach, in terms of which he sought to influence everyone in the school community... teachers, parents and learners. Key aspects of his hands-on approach have been: leading by example, delegation and teamwork, promoting a strong work ethic, developing trust and support, and showing courage. His approach has been impactful: the learners' conduct is exemplary; the teachers are united and willing to go the extra mile; and the parents are completely on board. He has created a culture of ubuntu, respect and accountability at the school.

The outcomes that he has achieved are sensational. In 2017, the Matric cohort size was 32; there was a 25% pass rate and 0 Bachelors. Six years later, in 2023, the cohort size had more than tripled, to 84; there was a 96% pass rate and 46 Bachelors. 96% is the highest ever-ever matric pass rate achieved in a fee-exempt school in Makhanda.