



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



THEMBELIHLE SCHOOL



MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRLADY

2021 began with Thembelihle School having established COVID-19 protocols in place along with a good strategy for teaching and learning. The start of the academic school year was however delayed due a new variant of the virus and lack of access to vaccines. Added to challenges of the pandemic, violent and crippling civil unrest devastated our town during the month of July leaving the Province of KwaZulu-Natal facing enormous food insecurity issues. Despite these challenges we remained resolute in finding creative solutions to ensure the uninterrupted education of the 395 children enrolled at our School.

With innovation, the implementation of our STEAM based approach to teaching and learning, a lot of courage and firm determination, very limited classroom time was lost; this in stark contrast to the plight of other children from similar socio-economic backgrounds who were only able to attend school for half the year. We embrace, and are extremely heartened, by our 97% attendance rate with all children able to attend school for the entire academic day seeing us completing the full academic curriculum as we would do in any "normal" year. We are appreciative that every child was able to attend school in person every day as we remain steadfast in our mission of caring for each child; mind, body and spirit. With children not isolated at home, we could actively reduce levels of mental distress, decrease exposure to abuse and violence, provide nutritious meals daily and fill inquiring minds with knowledge and skills.

Foundational education is far more than simply achieving academically, but encompasses moulding a child to have the strength of character to flourish in any high school and tertiary institution. Our culture, based on a Methodist ethos, has stood all our children in good stead with our alumni excelling in all walks of life. We were thrilled with the successes of our grade 7 class along with our past pupils who completed high school. We are excited about for the future of those currently studying at University and the entrepreneurs who are already valued members of our community.

As we collectively live through extraordinary times requiring high levels of resilience, the Thembelihle "family" remains inspired by the words of our now deceased, but always beloved, Archbishop Desmond Tutu; "Discovering more joy does not save us from the inevitability of hardship and heartbreak. In fact, we may cry more easily, but we will laugh more easily too. Perhaps we are just more alive. Yet as we discover more joy, we can face suffering in a way that ennobles rather than embitters. We have hardship without becoming hard. We have heartbreaks without being broken."

Dr Carolyn Hancock

OUR MISSION

Thembelihle School aims **“To be a Beacon of Hope in the Pursuit of Excellence”**.

It provides a quality education to under-resourced communities in the Howick area.

What we do:

- Provide a holistic and multicultural education rooted in Christian values for children of all backgrounds.
- Ensure a safe environment to learn and grow academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.
- Equip learners for life through an education that fosters innovation and excellence.
- Partner with families in caring for the needs of the whole child beyond the classroom.

Working as a community, we will give each child the necessary tools to take their next steps and achieve success in every phase of their lives.

OUR VALUES

Integrity

Partnership

Justice

Discipline

Diversity

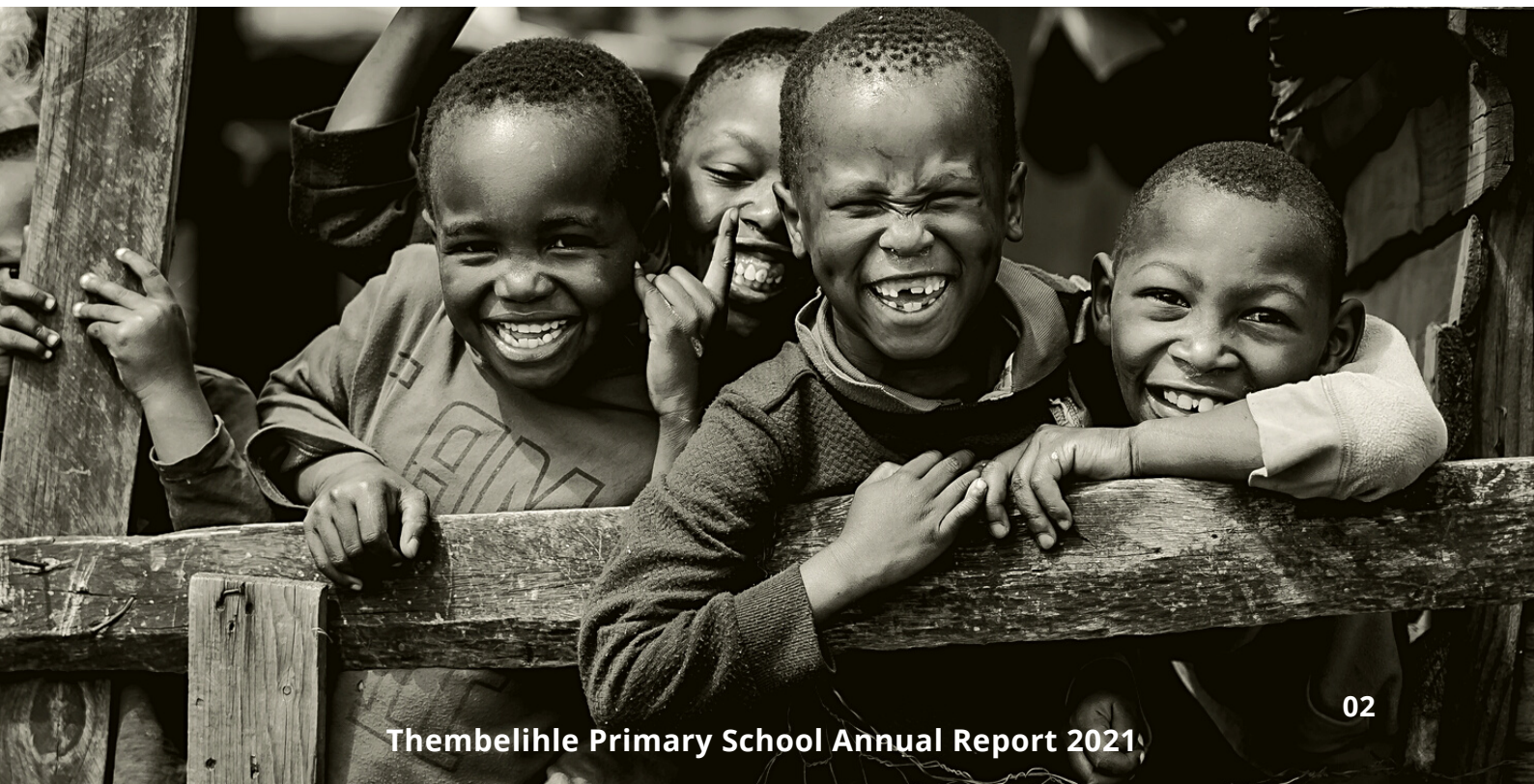
Excellence

Respect

Growth

Courage

Impact





77%

Face food
insecurity

62%

Live in women or
child-headed
households with
little to no
income

30%

Households have
NO books

82%

of our children
could not afford
our school fees

OUR CHILDREN

Our children come from poverty stricken, poorly resourced communities surrounding Howick, in the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa.

- Those living in these communities are largely unemployed
- Many of our children are victims of circumstances due to HIV/AIDS and are therefore orphans or members of child headed households, or live with their caregivers, grandparents or relatives, often surviving on minimal state pensions
- In some cases they are immigrants, which means there is no state support
- Living conditions are very harsh and many of our children come from homes with no running water, electricity or sewage systems

395 children were enrolled in 2021, of which **(82%) were sponsored**, with their school fees paid either locally or internationally.

OUR HISTORY



1993

A Church Hall

The pre-primary school was started in the Howick Methodist Church Hall, with 18 children from desperately poor families.

2005

The Old Parsonage

The Howick Methodist Church offered the Old Parsonage to the school and the pre-primary school moved into its own building.



2008

International Partnership

Brentwood United Methodist Church (USA) provided funding for 90 Main Street to expand into a primary school.



2010

Primary School Beginnings

The school decided to accept 120 desperately needy primary school children from Merit Christian School. Three additional classrooms were built to accommodate these children.



2011

Start grade 1 to grade 4

The primary school opens with classes from grade 1 to grade 4.



2012

Media Centre

The school built a new classroom and a library/ media centre, and renovated the Old Parsonage. Grade 5 began.



2014

A full primary school

The primary school has a grade 6 by 2014, and grade 7 by 2015.

The amazing transformation of Thembelihle School was all funded without debt through generous donations from South Africa and USA.

2017 - 2019

School expansion

Expansions to the school began in 2017 and were complete in 2019. There are now two classrooms per grade and facilities to complement our STEAM curriculum.



EDUCATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND LOCAL CIVIL UNREST

Thembelihle School was a place of hope in times of a global pandemic and the local civil unrest, in June. 2021 saw our School playing a pivotal role in providing uninterrupted education to all our children whilst their families lives were often disrupted and challenging.

Thembelihle School had an attendance average of **97%** throughout the academic year, with 395 children being able to receive quality education in a safe, faith-based environment. Whilst COVID protocols were challenging, they were strictly adhered to with the return to school of all our children on a daily basis, and risk-adjustment strategies put in place. In contrast, during the same time period most children from similar socio-economic backgrounds lost 54% of their learning time due to enforced rotational attendance and sporadic school closures. Throughout South Africa an estimated half a million children simply dropped out of school altogether. At Thembelihle School not one child has dropped out of school due to either the pandemic or civil unrest. .

School attendance is critically important as learners isolated in their homes become mentally distressed, are exposed to increased levels of violence and abuse, miss meals provided only at school and show reduced development of social and academic skills. To counteract these potential negative effects on child health, safety and development, Thembelihle School collaborated with the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2021 to conduct holistic assessments of our children and provide guidance to those who were experiencing either emotional or learning challenges. Additionally, our partner organisation, Angel's Care Centre, supported our learners and their families with counselling, food parcels and essential items such as cotton face masks.

The stark reality is that our children have been safer at school than in their tumultuous communities and home environments. Our educators and support staff have put aside their own personal anxieties and found the faith and courage to "show up no matter what" for our children and their families.

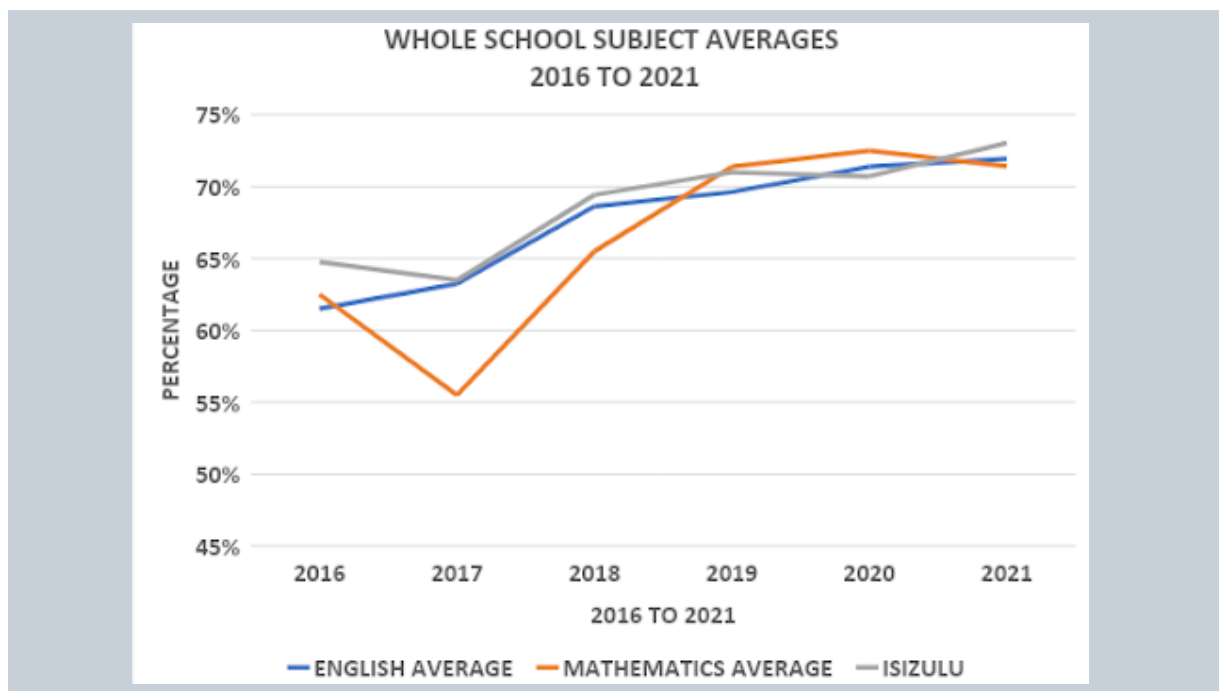


2021: EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

The civil unrest and looting mid-year did not deter Thembelihle School from resuming teaching and providing holistic care as soon as was made possible through the unswerving commitment and dedication from leadership in terms of our school governing body and core staff members. The tireless commitment from all our stakeholders allowed our children to thrive and not only survive in an extremely unstable environment. Despite the magnitude of the impact of the looting and pandemic on our children's already untenable home environments, the commitment shown by our children and their families to return to a sense of normality and receive a holistic education remained undeterred; testimony to Thembelihle School remaining a beacon of hope for the community.

Expansion projects completed throughout 2019-2020, provided the School with much needed facilities such as a world-class kitchen, which in 2021 enabled the provision of daily hot meals to every child. Learning cannot happen successfully when children are hungry, and often the hot meal provided by the school has been the only meal of the day received by our children.

While in 2021 many schools in South Africa were unable to produce progress reports for their children due to the disruptions of the pandemic and unrest, Thembelihle School succeeded. A termly honour roll was introduced, encouraging our children to celebrate their successes in times of uncertainty. When COVID restrictions eased, the School engaged with parents and guardians who were invited to partner with the School and their children in collectively setting academic goals to be achieved for the latter part of the year. In the midst of all the challenges, Thembelihle School's commitment to achieving excellence in education remained steadfast, with our children having the opportunity to complete the unabridged academic curriculum.



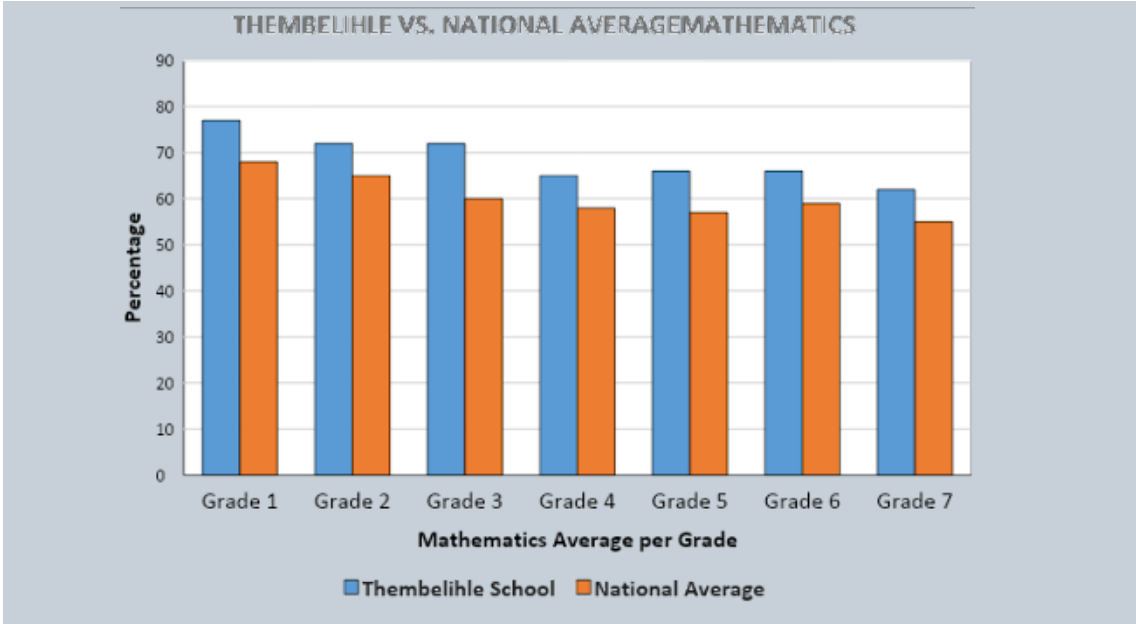
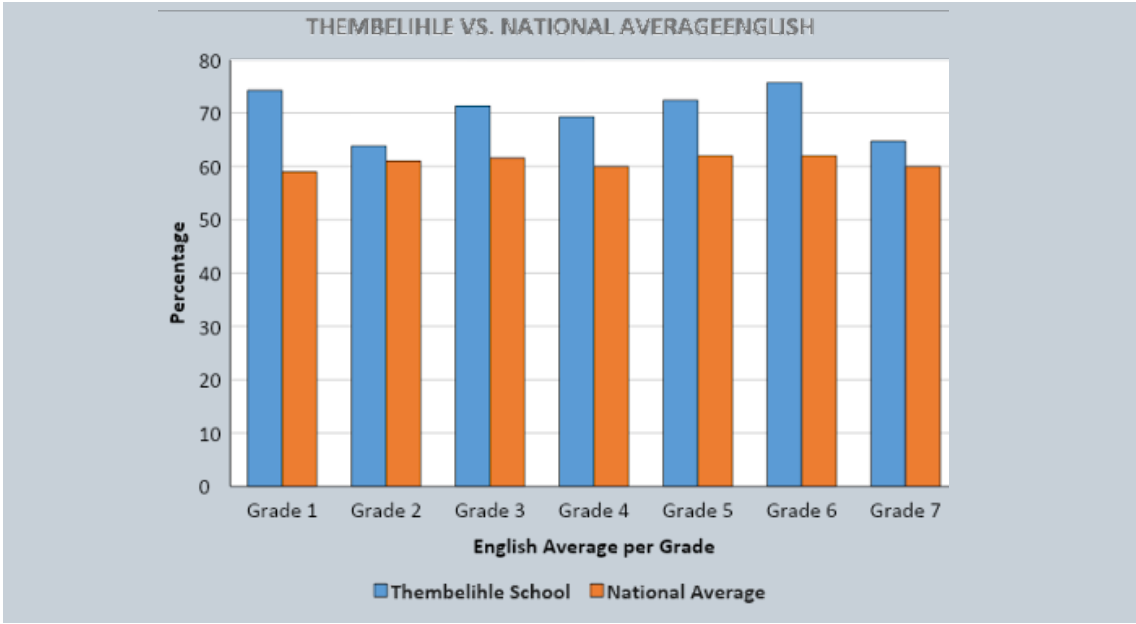
The grade averages remained steady throughout 2021 and in line with pre-pandemic accomplishments.

In stark contrast to most State schools, the full academic curriculum was covered at Thembelihle School.



OUR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Comparisons with government schools (grade R - grade 7) shows we are exceeding their performance in core focus areas such as English, Mathematics and Technology.



STEAM APPROACH TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

What is STEAM and how are we applying it at Thembelihle?

Our STEAM Curriculum is based upon the concept of Skills-Based and Project-Based Learning (PBL) approaches to specific themes or concepts, where the students are empowered to think both critically and creatively about the curriculum, its content and how it can be related to everyday life. By approaching the curriculum from a 'design-thinking' and ideation point of view, the students are able to link all problems and solutions to Science, Technology, English, Arts and Mathematics through an integrated approach across all subjects. This stimulates both lateral thinking and logical thinking, and allows children the opportunity to think "outside the box" when they are challenged with a question or a problem.

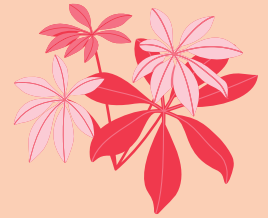
Our STEAM Programme is growing from strength to strength as the teachers and students become more confident in applying the methodologies and curriculum philosophies to everyday school subjects.

In 2021, we were fortunate to partner with an expert consultant who conducted both Teacher professional development sessions, and a series of STEAM workshops for Grades 4 to 7. This then allowed the class and STEAM teachers to integrate these workshops into the rest of the school programme throughout the year.





LIFE & LIVING RESPONSIBLY



The main theme for term 1 was Life and Living. This theme incorporates a variety of topics, ranging from how to identify living things from nonliving things to developmental stages of growth in different living organisms. This theme allowed a number of interesting integrations of STEAM throughout the intermediate and senior phase. Learners took this theme to explore the world in which they live in and the myriad of living things that surround them.

For example, during this time, learners grew their own seeds – following the life cycle of a plant. Through this, learners were able to see the importance of things growing/moving in a chronological order – which made understanding topics in Mathematics that much easier. Concepts such as whole numbers – how to read and write big whole numbers as well as the values of whole numbers.

Learners also got to explore different living organisms that live in a nearby river and determined what important factors are needed for them to survive. Becoming more aware of their environment and the importance of taking care of our natural environment and the organisms that live in these ecosystems. They also collected dead organic animals and put them under a microscope in order to see their physical characteristics and how these characteristics help them survive in their environment. Throughout this term, learners were able to make an important distinction between their life and growth processes as well as the many living and nonliving organisms that inhabit our planet with us. This created a lot of awareness for the importance of sustaining a healthy environment.





POWER & ENERGY



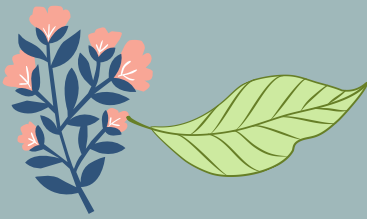
Term 2 - Power and Energy

Our learners had a remarkable opportunity to perform with the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra. Miss Dlamini who heads the Arts department, had taught in detail, the "families" that form an orchestra. This tied in excellently with a topic within Natural Science and Technology, where learners had to learn about different types of instruments, their origins and how they are played. Moreover, singing along with the orchestra involved singing techniques, harmonising, knowing the correct timing and key signatures. This made the experience more enriching for the learners, as they had prior knowledge on most of the instruments that they saw played by the orchestra.

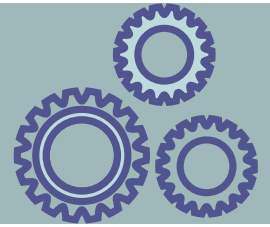
Learners also had the opportunity to explore the properties of different materials through making water cycle diagrams, in which they identified all the different states in which water can exist e.g. gas, liquid and solid ice.

Additionally, the learners explored the durability, heat conductivity and electrical conductivity of different materials. This promoted critical thinking within the learners, as they had to decipher which materials work best for different needs. For example, if they had to build a house, they had to consider all the properties of the materials so that they could choose the most adequate and competent materials.





SUSTAINABILITY & CREATIVE SOLUTIONS



Term 3 - Sustainability and Creative Solutions

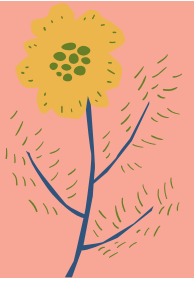
Our learners used recycled materials to employ their design skills during the third academic quarter of 2021 by creating musical instruments, wall and bottle decorations. These projects reinforced our encouragement of our learners to have environmental sustainability uppermost in their minds. Needless to say, they were able to turn recyclable materials into something beautiful, which was a positive learning experience for all.

Thembelihle learners were honored to be invited to visit Ardmore Ceramics Pottery Studio where they had to mold ceramic clay into beautiful objects which were fired in a kiln before being painted. This tied in well with the content taught within the Natural Science and Technology curriculum, where learners explored how energy is created as well as transferred, sometimes changing an object entirely. The learners were able to experience firsthand how the energy (heat) from the kiln was able to change clay, which is soft and moldable, into a hard clay pot. We are grateful that Ardmore Community Trust will in future be partnering with us on an ongoing basis allowing the children to become more creative and continue exploring practical learning experiences!





EARTH & BEYOND



Term 4 - Earth and Beyond

The last term of the year ended on a high note with each of our intermediate and senior phase classes developing "STEAM explorer spaces" in their own classrooms. These creative spaces provided learners a hands-on experience as they created models to demonstrate how different processes and phenomena occur in our natural environment. Topics including the first moon visit, the formation of sedimentary rocks and fossils, what makes our solar system interesting, and the historical development of astronomy were all practically demonstrated to enhance learning.

The pictures below show how different grades demonstrated their understanding of the science behind planet Earth and beyond into the universe.

In addition to the creation of models, learners utilized the STEAM lab to develop their knowledge of basic Information Technology (IT) skills. The use of tablets for learning was both engaging and exciting as for the very first time in their lives, some of the learners got to appreciate how to conduct research via the Internet, create personal emails, and study using digital platforms.





SPOTLIGHT ON THE ARTS

Due to COVID-19 protocols Schools could not conduct any extra murals after school. In order to ensure Thembelihle nonetheless included the Arts in our timetable during school hours, the creative arts were well aligned with the STEAM projects undertaken. Highlighted below are additional programs included during the year:

Performing Arts

- Recorder ensemble
- Marimba band
- African music and dance
- Music fundamentals and music tech
- Choir

Our learners had a remarkable opportunity to perform with the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra. We had taught in detail the families that form an orchestra. This tied in excellently with a topic within Natural Science and Technology, where learners had to learn about different types of instruments, their origins and how they are played. Moreover, singing along with the orchestra involved singing techniques, harmonising, knowing the correct timing and key signatures. This made this experience more enriching for the learners, as they had prior knowledge on most of the instruments which they saw displayed by the orchestra. With the food parcels and the feeding scheme amongst other things that the school provides for our learners we chose a song "What a wonderful world" to show appreciation to our sponsors.

Visual Art

- With all the Covid-19 protocols, our learners used recycling material to explore their design skills. We focused on musical instruments, wall and bottle decorations. We have been encouraging environmental awareness and urging our learners to take care of their surroundings. Being able to turn recyclable materials into something beautiful was a positive experience for our learners.
- Our school had an opportunity to visit Ardmore ceramic pottery and make some beautiful clay sculptures.

CULTURE OF HOLISTIC CARE

At Thembelihle we have always focused on providing for all our children's needs; body, mind and spirit. During times of crisis this becomes increasingly crucial and we are thankful and proud that not only were we able to ensure the academic progress of all our learners, but also that their health and access to nutrition were not compromised. The provision of spiritual support and guidance was key to ensuring all children were emotionally able to cope with issues such as grief, isolation from their friends and many other difficulties.

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT

Thembelihle children begin their daily routines with prayer. Additionally, all our lessons incorporate discussions on, and adherence to, our Christian values. Our teachers ensure a positive approach to discipline which relates well to our Thembelihle School values. Spiritual enrichment literature centered on bible stories that impart values and ethics are shared with the children to bridge cultural divides and embrace holistic skills such as prayer and forgiveness. A team of volunteers from the Methodist Church spend time weekly with each class to facilitate the School's spiritual enrichment program and reinforce our faith-based values system.

The Foundation Phase spends an hour daily on spiritual development, where each child takes part in a diverse lesson which is focused on our Methodist faith and ethos. The spiritual enrichment activities prepare our Foundation Phase children by providing them with the necessary resilience to be able to cope with adverse circumstances.

The Intermediate and Senior phase children begin their day with a reading from the Bible, with additional support being received from Reverend Lombard from the Howick Methodist Church, who spends time with the Grade 6 and 7 classes.

The high attendance rate and dedication of our staff and children to academic and spiritual growth in 2021 speaks to the values-based culture of our School.



NUTRITIONAL PROGRAMME

Thembelihle has always had a nutritional programme that ensured that all children that needed food were given a meal at school. However in 2021 Howick had to survive through civil unrest as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, our little town was looted, burned and destroyed to the point of no recognition. Our safety and those of our staff and children completely overwhelmed us as we had to close both Thembelihle and Angels Care Centre (the first time Angels Care has been closed) for a week to survive and fight for the very little that was left. We lived through a time that will become a part of our country's history and a time that will alter the future of our nation. We cried with our beloved country, our friends, family, staff and community that lost so much, but most importantly we UNITED to rebuild. We continued to create a space that gave these children HOPE, a quality education and support through these devastating times.

The Civil Unrest sparked us into action as we realized that the families of the children that attend Thembelihle would be in an even worse financial situation than before. We thus immediately started feeding all the children a hot nutritional meal daily. This was only made an instant reality, due to the completed expansion project, we had a fully equipped kitchen and the most amazing cooks! The children were also offered additional porridge to take home, this was thanks to the DO MORE FOUNDATION, who provided our children with porridge to last 6 months. Corporate and individual donors additionally assisted with the necessary emergency relief funds necessary to get the nutritional programme up and running immediately following the unrest when food insecurity was at its worst .

We focused on ensuring that the children were thriving and not just surviving. These children are the future of our country and the first to feel the devastation of increased hunger and poverty. Without our sponsorship and nutrition programmes we could not be there for these precious children. It however has led to increased budget strains as we have had to provide the children with a more holistic meal to ensure they are well fed and healthy. We hope to expand the nutritional programme in 2022, as we know our children cannot learn to the full potential without a full stomach. We also just love seeing the smiles and pure joy when they receive a bowl of delicious food.



EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, LIFE SKILLS AND SOCIAL AWARENESS

While the celebration of special days may have been limited in their scope, our children's holistic development was nevertheless a firm priority, in alignment with our goals of exposing our children to as many different platforms in life as possible. The Thembelihle team have collaborated to find ways in which best to engage our children in the face of adversity, we have staff who are completely committed and don't rule out traversing beyond what is expected of them.

Sporting activities were curbed for extended periods throughout 2021, however the lessening of restrictions in regulations allowed Thembelihle to host an internal cricket T20 competition between grades. The positive upliftment in the demeanour of our children was palpable.

Unique opportunities involved aspects of the Arts. Highlights of 2021 included a collaboration with Ardmore Ceramics, and the performance of the KZNPO (KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra) at Thembelihle School.

The holistic care of our children has shown to be as paramount as achieving excellence in academics. The Angel Paws dog therapy team began engaging with our foundational classes in the fourth quarter, guided reading for comprehension is done together with the dog and child.

The Grade Rs were able to enjoy a career day outside in the sun, with firefighters, policemen and nurses sharing their experiences and engaging the children in question and answer sessions. We were grateful to have had the opportunity for a year-end concert and graduation for our Grade R children. Additionally a formal prize giving was held for each grade with a final ceremony for our Grade 7 school leavers.



OUR AMAZING ALUMNI

Our 2021 Dux Lwandisa Mkize blew us all away with her incredible results, character and determination. Not only was she the most successful scholar at Thembelihle, she has also awarded a 100% sponsorship to St Anne's Diocesan College, one of the most prestigious private girls high schools in South Africa. Lwandisa was at Thembelihle School for 10 years, where she was sponsored throughout. A quote from Lwandisa, "I am a responsible, hardworking and diligent girl. I believe in myself that I hold the key to my own success. Going to St Annes is a life changing opportunity whereby I can have the opportunity to showcase what I am capable of, in a much more privileged school. I come from a very humble background and this opportunity is not only life changing for me but also for my mom who has raised me on her own in an area that is very hard to live in. Thank you to Thembelihle School, where I have been for 10 years, and all those that made this possible."

Our incredible runner up Nolwazi Xaba, was also offered a 100% sponsorship to St Anne's' Diocesan College. Nolwazi says, " I am a dedicated, hardworking, humble and respectful young girl. I believe St Annes is going to open many doors in my life. St Annes is a beautiful independent girls school that provides quality education and many sports activities. When I get there I want to make sure I work hard, strive for the best and surround myself with people who will support me through this journey. I also believe it is a chance to prove that no matter what background you come from you can still make it in life, especially if you are true to yourself. Thank you to Thembelihle School and all those who made this possible".

We cannot wait to watch these girls turn into young woman of great character, making their dreams come true.



OUR PAST PUPILS EXCEL AGAINST ALL ODDS

We are so proud to report on the following past pupils, who have been accepted into top high schools in South Africa.

- **Sisande** who is attending Durban Girls College is described as a quiet but self-assured young lady who has transitioned to high school extremely well. Sisanda has been promoted to Grade 10.
- **Alwande** is relishing in being at Treverton College where she is already much loved by all in her boarding house. She has excelled academically and is known for her enthusiastic participation in all sporting and extracurricular activities. She has been promoted to Grade 10 and received a glowing review by all her teachers for her big heart and exceptional work ethic.
- **Thulasande** is enjoying his time at Grace College. He has been promoted to Grade 10 and continues to work hard and make the most of the opportunities given to him.
- **Jojo** has been promoted to Grade 11 at Maritzburg Boys College. He is still a sporting star and continues to break the school records in multiple running distances. He also loves soccer and works extremely hard to attain the results for which he strives.
- **Noxy** who is attending Durban Girls College, has been promoted to Grade 11. She is also known for her big heart and determination to do the best she can. She always has a smile on her face and ensures she makes the most of all the opportunities given to her.
- **Khanya** has been promoted to Grade 9 at St Anne's Diocesan College. She loves everything about the school and all her teachers have been blown away by her. She only started halfway through the Grade 8 year and managed to catch up academically as well as making lots of new friends.

In 2022, we have 8 of our past pupils in phenomenal schools in KZN. They continue to make us proud and are proof that no matter what high school our children are accepted to, they are not only coping but thriving. Our academic excellence and values at Thembelihle create a foundation where these children can honestly change the face of poverty in their lives and hopefully community.

Examples of outstanding matric results achieved by our 2021 matriculants:

Tawananyasha Hwata

This young man not only received amazing marks, he also won the prize for character (he obtained an A for every division).

His final matric results were as follows:

- English (home language): 74%
- Engineering Graphics and Design: 71%
- Life Science: 81%
- Physical Science: 64%
- Mathematics: 64%
- Life Orientation: 75%

He is currently at the Durban University of Technology studying Urban Planning.

Andiswa Mguni

Andiswa completed her matric at the prestigious Howick High School where she was awarded a merit certificate and bilingualism trophy for isiZulu and English. Some of her outstanding matric results include:

- English (home language): 75%
- IsiZulu (first additional language): 91%
- Mathematics: 61%
- Accounting: 79%
- Life Orientation: 74%

She is currently enrolled at the University of Witwatersrand studying a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting).

HOW TO HELP

- Sponsor a child's education **R6850**
- Sponsor a teacher **R156 000**
- Sponsor a support staff member **R65 000**
- Sponsor a specialist STEAM program **R350 000**
- Sponsor a child's meals for a year **R3 000**
- Sponsor a class their meals for a year **R90 000**
- Sponsor a computer station **R12 500**
- Sponsor a computer lab **R3500 00**

Together we can rebuild our community and make a South Africa we are all proud of, and create a bright future for all our students.





CONTACT US:

Audited financial statements available on request.

We are a non profit, public benefit organisation

- Public Benefit Organisation - 930042047
- Non Profit Organisation NPO - 064-090

BANK DETAILS:

Thembelihle School
First National Bank: Business Cheque
Howick Branch: 220725
Account: 6201 447 4225
Swift code : FIRNZAJJ



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