



## FROM THE JUNIOR SCHOOL HEAD'S DESK

Last week, the girls in the Junior School attended two wonderfully thought-provoking assemblies with Di Gordon and Lauren Howden on reading and book banning respectively.

Referring to a book by local author Boitumelo Mothupi, and illustrated by Subi Bosa, Mrs Gordon and the girls in the Junior Primary considered the value of reading, and the indispensable role it plays in our being able to ask - and answer - far-reaching questions.

In *The Girl with 21 Questions*, main character, Mathelane, refuses to take anything at face value, prodding, provoking and exasperating everyone around her into thinking about why there are spots on the moon and why we have shadows (a favourite question among the Little Saints children at the moment), as well as more philosophical questions, like, "Do we have to love people who do bad things?" "Mathelane" the book tells us, "was also not scared of asking difficult questions. When her neighbour, Mama Lerato, came home from work, Mathelane would ask: 'Why does Zaza always have to sweep the yard and wash the dishes but Tshepo does nothing?'" This last "difficult" question sparked animated debate among the girls - several of them tried, unsuccessfully, to justify the gendered division of labour to their peers and teachers!

While the Junior Primary girls were being inspired by the story of an incorrigibly curious girl who brought her community together

through the power of reading, the Senior Primary girls were being challenged by the topic of book banning, its historical presence in public institutions throughout the world, and its recent manifestation in schools and libraries across the United States.

Mrs Howden presented the girls with a list of books with a common past: all of them had been banned, some several times, somewhere in the world: *The Book Thief*, *Harry Potter*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Lorax*, *His Dark Materials*, *The Hunger Games*, *The Giver* (a book the Grade 7s will read this year), *Where the Wild Things are*, *James and the Giant Peach* and *Alice in Wonderland*.

The justifications given for the bannings - that the books are dangerous, unsuitable, suggestive, crude, negative, offensive - tremble with moral outrage, or what American author Judy Blume calls "fear disguised as moral outrage." As Mrs Howden explained to the girls, quoting Blume, "censorship grows out of fear, and because fear is contagious, some parents are easily swayed. They want to believe that if their children don't read about it, their children won't know about it. And if they don't know about it, it won't happen."

Using the example of the picture book *And Tango Makes Three*, based on the true story of two male penguins in New York's Central Park Zoo who formed a partnership and raised an egg together, Mrs Howden spoke about the impulse to ban books that present diverse

experiences to children. Books that tell other stories, ask Mathelane’s “difficult questions,” and show us how to imagine ourselves and our world differently free us to think for ourselves. And what kind of government, school or parent wouldn’t want us to do that?

“Any good novel,” Timothy Snyder reminds us “enlivens our ability to think about ambiguous situations and judge the intention of others.” (Incidentally, a graphic edition of his indispensable *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* has just been published by Penguin with huge appeal for teenage readers.)

Further, as writer and cultural critic Olivia Laing is at pains to point out: “Empathy is not something that happens to us when we read Dickens. It’s work. What art does is provide material with which to think: new registers, new spaces. After that, friend, it’s up to you.”

We have the material, and these are our children: it’s up to us.

SARAH WARNER  
JUNIOR SCHOOL HEADMISTRESS

## FROM THE CHAPLAIN

### Signs of God’s presence

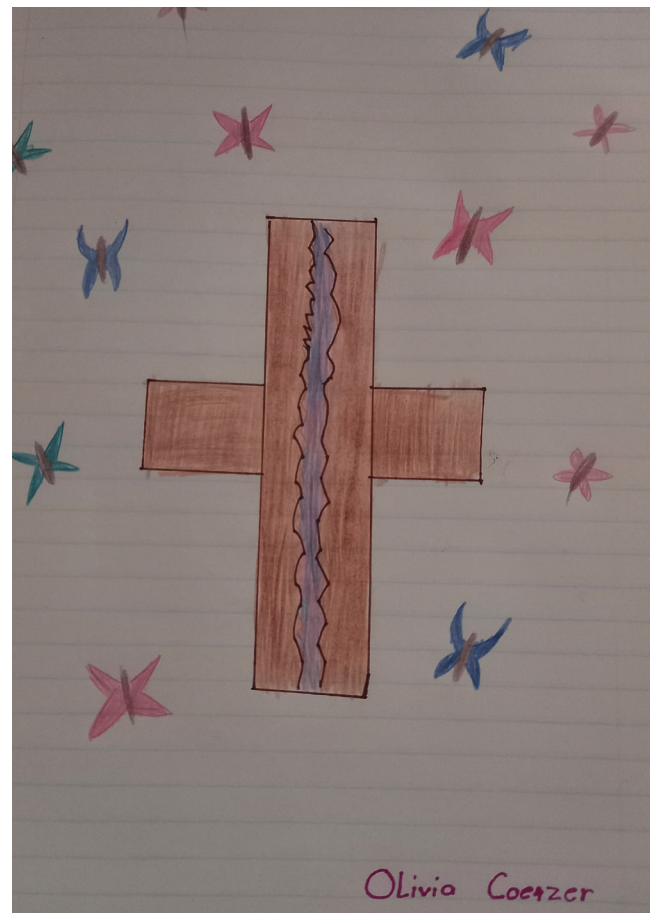
One of the recurring themes in the planning of chapel services and Divinity classes has been the signs and symbols on our campus that signify God’s presence in our school. In our Divinity classes, it is lovely to see how the girls interpret and understand these signs and symbols of God’s presence. The Grade 5s recently had to draw pictures of what Divinity means for them. One of the images that stood out for me was of a wooden cross splitting in two with butterflies coming out of it. It was easy for me as a priest to associate the idea with something related to the creation and to connect it to St Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals and ecology. As explained by the Grade 5 pupil, the image speaks of new life. This explanation reminded me of one of the collects for Easter week, which reads as follows:

Lord Jesus Christ  
you transformed the tomb of death  
into the womb of new life:  
make us joyful witnesses  
of this good news  
that all creation may be redeemed,  
restored and reconciled;  
for you live and reign  
in the unity of the Blessed Trinity,  
one God, in glory everlasting. Amen

The exercise with the Grade 5s is a reminder that, while the girls may not have the formal theological language to describe God, in their own way, they know God, and they know about God.

All of us can learn from the girls about how to approach God with a renewed sense of curiosity.

REVD RAKGADI KHOBO  
CHAPLAIN





# LITTLE SAINTS NEWS

Following on from our investigations into how light casts shadows, the Grade 00 pupils displayed a keen interest in objects that are see-through. This encouraged us to launch a study of objects with transparent properties. After studying transparent, translucent and opaque objects on our light table, the class went on a discovery walk to the Senior School. The children noticed a variety of transparent structures on the school campus. They were fascinated by the colours in a lily mosaic that they could see through the clear water in a fountain, the clarity and transparency in a bird bath, the beautifully dressed mannequins that they saw through the glass in the upper level of The Edge, the opaque glass in the bathroom windows, and the large opaque glass panes that form part of the corridor flooring in The Edge.

In their Art lesson the children studied the wings of a dragonfly and noticed the transparency and intricate patterns. Using black sharpies the children drew the wings of the dragonfly. Their attention to detail and careful observations enabled them to draw the patterns beautifully. The tadpoles in the Atelier are provoking curiosity and conversation as the children are fascinated by the little creatures that they see darting around in water they have described as “a little bit transparent.” The children have loved exploring the paint provocation on the light table in the Atelier. It has provided a sensory platform for them to deepen their understanding of transparency.

THE GRADE 00 TEACHERS

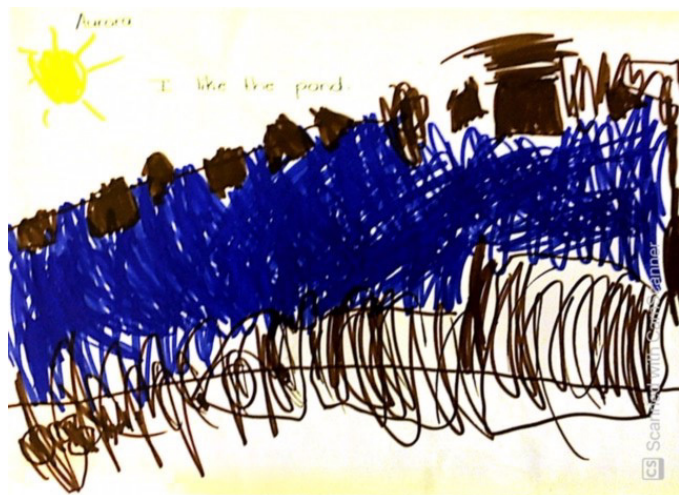




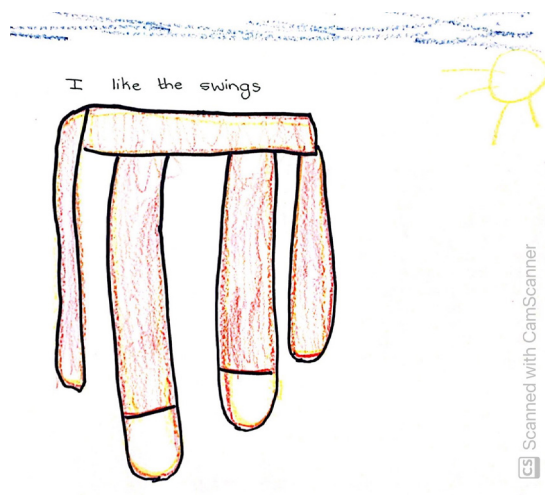
# GRADE 0 NEWS

The Grade 0s have settled well into the routine of school life, exploring their surroundings and learning through play. We asked the girls to draw what they love about school.

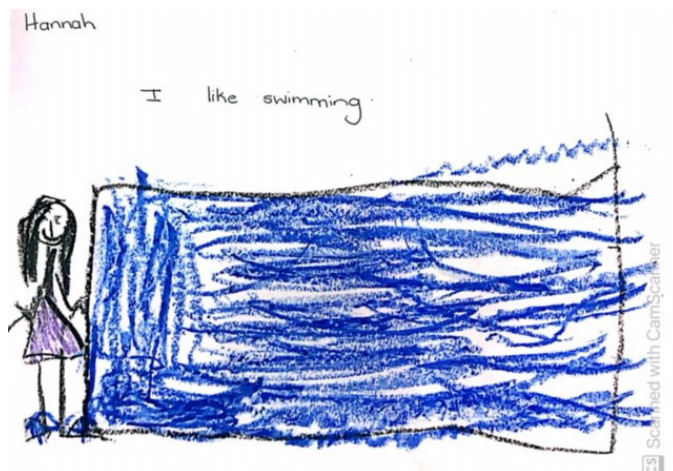
## THE GRADE 0 TEACHERS



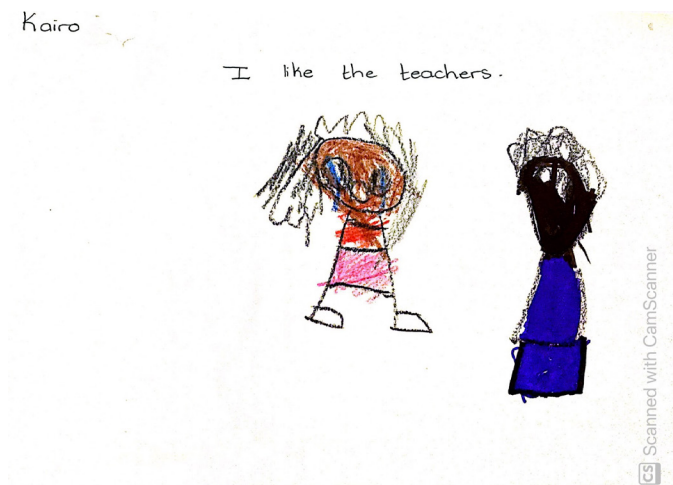
Aurora Barker



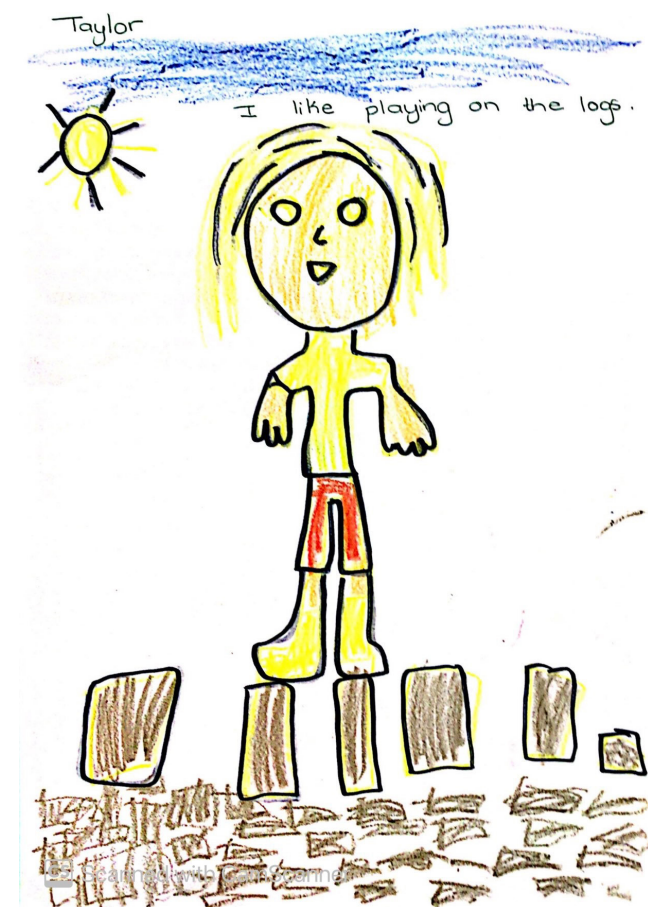
Ava Nana



Hannah Purser



Kairo Madlala



Taylor Frodsham



# GRADE 2 AND GRADE 3 NEWS

## Monday enrichment classes

The Grade 2s and 3s got together to fine tune their fine motor skills. They made watermelon corner book marks, using various paper folding techniques with a creative spin for the books they will be reading. They also practised their fine motor skills by warming up with various finger exercises to strengthen the small muscles which control the hand, fingers, and thumb. As their main activity, the girls cut paper into four small squares, folded and glued the paper, and added a creative stem and leaves to complete their flower craft.

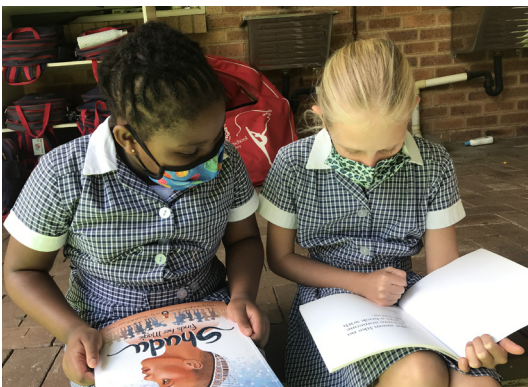
THE GRADE 2 AND 3 TEACHERS



# GRADE 3 NEWS

The Grade 3s celebrated World Read Aloud Day on 2 February. They each bought a favourite book to read to their friend.

THE GRADE 3 TEACHERS



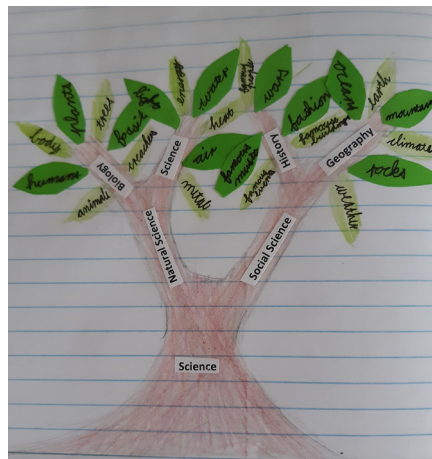
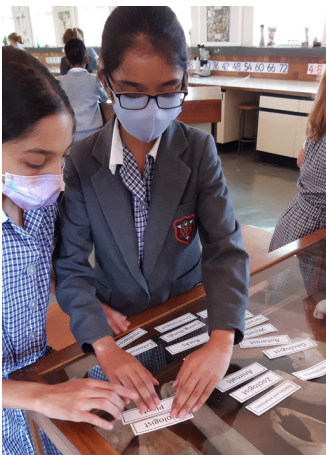


# GRADE 4 NEWS

The Grade 4s enjoyed their first experience of the science lab and the subject of Natural Science. They enjoyed an overview of the many scientific disciplines and the names of scientists within these fields. The language origin of scientific studies and the root words ‘ology’ and ‘ologist’ were an interesting diversion. There are budding zoologists, marine biologists, herpetologists and even a dragonologist in the grade! The curious, answer-seeking, question-

asking, persevering and eager-to-share characteristics of scientists were highlighted. The next step is to focus on a few famous woman scientists with tasks to introduce techniques used to identify important facts.

**ANGIE JENNETT**  
SENIOR PRIMARY TEACHER



# GRADE 4 IT NEWS

The Grade 4s built mazes out of Lego and mapped out specific directions that their Bee-bot had to follow as it moved through their maze.

**NADINE WHEELER**  
IT TEACHER





## GRADE 5 NEWS

Following on from the classification module of Grade 4, the Grade 5s began to investigate the characteristics of the five divisions of the plant kingdom. Algae, the ancestors of land plants, were the first focus. The girls used the dissecting microscopes to view the simple body structure (lacking differentiation of roots, stems and leaves) of a filamentous green algae found in a suburban pond. The importance of this primitive group to our planet was an eye-opener, as we tend to be less aware of this group of plants. The approximately 30 000 species produce around 50% of the planet’s oxygen and form the energy base for the food webs of aquatic ecosystems.

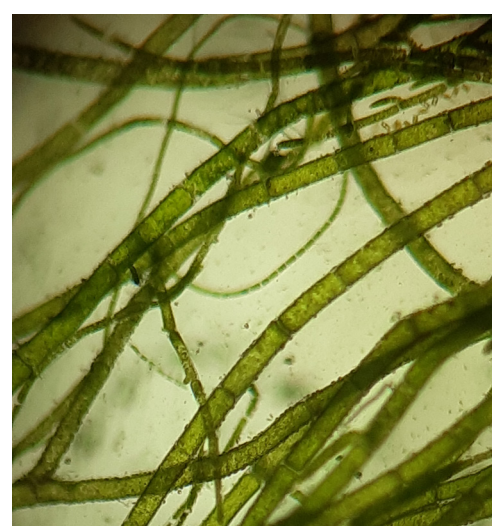
**ANGIE JENNETT**  
SENIOR PRIMARY TEACHER



Practical research



Recording detailed observations



Filamentous algae magnification 30X

## EDTECH NEWS

### Launch of PurpleZA, a professional development platform

Using PurpleZA’s professional development platform, our teachers are empowered to effectively incorporate technology into teaching and learning while implementing progressive pedagogies, including inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, and design thinking. This self-paced teacher training programme allows teachers to create their own learning path, earning microcredentials and awards along the way. In addition to having access to a variety of excellent teaching resources, our teachers are also able to connect with other PurpleZA schools in South Africa, share ideas and resources, and help each other.

The PurpleZA launch took place on Thursday 27 January. We participated in a murder mystery contest asking, “Who killed teacher Joy?” and solved puzzles as we became acquainted with the platform. PurpleZA’s aim is to inspire and motivate teachers and to elicit the JOY of learning in both students and teachers. We cannot wait to see how it challenges our teachers to achieve greatness!

**MARIETTE ADAM**  
EDTECH LEADER



## MUSIC NEWS

Last week, the Senior Primary choir enjoyed its first camp in two years. The girls were very excited to spend time with friends singing together. We began on Friday afternoon and the girls sang their hearts out while thunder and lightning rumbled outside. On Saturday, we had fun learning *Lean on Me*. Mrs Mehlomakhulu, who conducts the Senior School traditional choir, taught the girls a medley of two songs: *Skirileke*, a traditional children's game song meaning "Suddenly something happened in the game," and *Kya tsamaya* meaning, "the car is moving fast." The girls thoroughly enjoyed learning the medley. We sang and played games and the girls enjoyed building towers using dry pasta and jelly tots. Our first performance of the year will be Singing Sistas in March. We are very excited!

Please note; owing to the adjusted Covid-19 regulations, Junior Primary parents should fetch their daughters from The Edge after individual music lessons.

GEORGE POTGIETER  
HOD: JUNIOR SCHOOL MUSIC



## TENNIS

The A team lost 32-34 to Brescia's A team in their first match of the season. Our B team beat Brescia's B team 47-15. St Mary's C team lost to St Katharine's A team 17-30 while St Mary's D team beat St Katharine's B team 26-18. It is wonderful to see all our players out there competing again. Well done to all the girls!

KAREN CORBETT  
ASSISTANT TENNIS COACH



## St Mary's rowing club golf day

Please contact Ronelle Price-Hughes on [rpricehughes@gmail.com](mailto:rpricehughes@gmail.com) for any queries or sponsorship offers



Please click here to book.  
We look forward to seeing you there!



St Mary's School  
Waverley  
Founded 1888



## NOTICES

### MUSE MORNING - TUESDAY 22 FEBRUARY

Date: Tuesday 22 February

Time: 07h30 to 08h30

Venue: Senior Primary hall

Speaker: Andy Cohen (see biography below)

Topic: "A parent can't always act like a grown-up, here's why..."

Booking is essential as space is limited. Quicket booking:

<https://www.quicket.co.za/events/164978-muse-morning/>

Andy Cohen is a psychoanalyst-in-training and TEDx speaker with a background in art and counselling. She is deeply passionate about creativity and self-repair and works therapeutically with a wide range of groups and individuals in private practice. Andy holds the position of editor-elect on the executive committee for IPSO, the International Psychoanalytical Studies Organisation. She also writes for a range of parenting hubs like Jozi Kids, with a strong focus on "psychoanalytic ideas made simple" in order to empower families to live fuller, more integrated lives.



### ED-ADMIN PARENTAL PORTAL

St Mary's uses a school management information system called Ed-Admin to distribute termly school reports and to provide parents with an opportunity to inspect and amend personal information recorded in our database.

Below, please find details as to how to access this Ed-Admin St Mary's portal:

- You will require a Parent ID whenever signing into the parent portal. If you are unsure of your Parent ID, please email [portal@stmary.co.za](mailto:portal@stmary.co.za) with both your and your daughter's names and surnames for assistance.
- To access the St Mary's portal, please click on the link below or visit the school website on [www.stmarysschool.co.za](http://www.stmarysschool.co.za) and click on the portal login on the top right of the page. <https://stmarysw.ed-space.net/pparentportal.cfm>
- Enter in your Parent ID and choose forgot password. Please ensure that you enter the email address that St Mary's has on record and enter in the CAPTCHA code.
- You will then receive an email. Once received, click on the link in order to set up your password. Choose a secure password; you will then receive another email to confirm your password has been changed. You can now proceed to log into the portal.

If you experience problems logging into the secure portal, please contact [portal@stmary.co.za](mailto:portal@stmary.co.za).