

Herschel Transformation Report 2017

Introduction

In October 2014 Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, as our guest speaker at the annual Prize Giving, challenged us to be a more inclusive school community that will play an active role in transforming the futures of young South African women. “Herschel, you are a first-class, Christian, value-based school of excellence,” Archbishop Thabo stated. “I appeal to you to extend the fine work you already do so that it reaches even further into our communities, giving the opportunities we enjoy to even more students, whether from privileged backgrounds or not. Join our Church and our Anglican Board of Education in addressing South Africa's educational challenges. Join us in repudiating cynicism, fear and the feeling of being overwhelmed by our country's problems, and help us in our determination to bring about change.”

The Herschel Diversity and Transformation Committee

At the start of 2015, the Herschel Diversity and Transformation Committee was established under the chairmanship of Council member Logan Govender. The Committee is: Logan Govender (Chair), Stuart Harrison (Council), Aaron Ndhluni (Council), Tebogo Skwambane (OH and Council), Dr Jaques de Wet (Parent/UCT Academic), Nandipha Calana (Student Rep), Andrew Scott (HR), Belinda Heidmann (Preparatory Head) and Stuart West (Head).

In August 2015, members of the Committee attended an Independent Schools’ Association of South Africa (ISASA) Workshop which took us through the comprehensive Transformation and Diversity Toolkit that had been developed by ISASA to guide member schools in a strategic, systemic and educational manner towards increased diversity, social justice and democratic values within their school community.

The Transformational Imperative

In seeking to define the transformation imperatives for Herschel Girls School, we have been guided by both the Constitution of South Africa and our cherished Anglican heritage.

The Constitution places four obligations on us which must inform our school community. We are required to

- 1) heal the divisions of the past,
- 2) lay the foundations for a democratic and open society,
- 3) improve the quality of life for all citizens, and
- 4) build a united and democratic South Africa.



Our deep Anglican heritage teaches us that all people are created in the “image of God” (Gen 1:26) and to denigrate a person’s dignity denigrates the God behind that image. We are further commanded by scripture to “love one another” (John 13:34) as God has loved us. Based on the Constitution and the conviction of our faith, we must ensure that all those who choose to attend Herschel feel welcome, appreciated and valued for who they are and that the school acts intentionally and deliberately to redress discriminatory practices, strengthen diversity and build an inclusive culture at all levels.

Nene Molefi, renowned speaker, author and adviser on organisational diversity and inclusivity, shares a helpful three-pronged approach that is needed by all institutions undergoing transformative journeys – the Head, Heart and Hands approach.

- The **Head** (*knowing*) is the starting point as it creates a shared foundation and framework of vocabulary and reasons on which to build the case and purpose of transformation, the power and richness of inclusivity and the diagnosis of organisational issues that need addressing through strategic goals. This is what the Herschel Diversity and Transformation Policy addresses.
- The **Heart** (*being*) is the creation of an organisational culture where people feel that they belong, are accepted and valued and can perform at their maximum potential. This ‘heart-work’ is crucial amongst all stakeholders of Herschel and will need the creating of safe and sacred places for stories to be shared, assumptions checked and culture of seeking to listen and understand.
- The **Hands** (*doing*) is taking all the feedback from the Head and Heart approaches and translating them into a series of tangible action plans that drive systemic and attitudinal changes within the organisation. This is the Diversity and Transformation Plan that must be clarified and driven by Management.

For the past 18 months, the Committee has met termly to discuss and formulate the new Diversity and Transformation Policy, which was approved by Council and launched to parents and staff in August this year. Following this launch, we are thrilled that many parents have expressed their support for the policy and volunteered their expertise and time to contribute to this important journey. This policy framework has set the foundation on which a series of plans and interventions will be devised and implemented by Management during 2018. This important next step is already underway and the Committee and Management have begun the first draft of the Transformation Plan for 2018.

That said, Herschel has made important strides in many Diversity and Transformation areas this year and this report is to record and communicate some of these important, small steps.

Transformation Report for 2017

Goal 1: To address all forms of marginalisation, prejudice and racism that may exist at Herschel and cause Black girls, teachers or parents to feel excluded.

It is incredibly important that the environment at Herschel is a safe place where girls, teachers and parents feel comfortable to highlight instances of marginalisation, prejudice and racism. We need a policy framework that enables this, supported by behavioural awareness and training, particularly in areas like unconscious bias and understanding each other better.



Policy Framework

The Herschel Code of Conduct for both pupils and staff has been revised to specifically include under the alleged misconduct section that the “verbal or insulting abuse of others, using hate speech, displays of racial prejudice and racism” is unacceptable and will be investigated and dealt with in terms of strict provisions of that Code of Conduct.

Furthermore, a new Anti-Discrimination Policy is being prepared to explicitly prohibit, prevent and eliminate any conduct of unfair discrimination by any member of the School community against another based on, but not limited to, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, conscience and beliefs, which may undermine her or his human dignity.

Behavioural Awareness and Training

A number of staff development sessions this year have included diversity training. At the start of the first term all Preparatory, Senior and Administration staff attended a one-day workshop on *Inclusivity, Bias and Transformation*. The workshop focussed on an awareness of unconscious bias and inclusivity skills, and staff were encouraged to reflect deeply to contemplate ways in which they can use their personal awareness to change behaviours and create safe, inclusive, emotionally and culturally literate environments at Herschel. A number of staff attended a follow up workshop hosted at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre where transformation experiences of both staff and students from a number of schools, including Herschel, were shared and discussed.

In the second term Rev. Alan Storey facilitated a three-day Diversity Engagement workshop for a pilot Herschel group that comprised of 2 members of Council, 7 senior staff and 5 senior school pupil leaders. The facilitated sessions led participants through a very personal and communal encounter with a variety of issues such as power dynamics, types of oppression and intolerance, bias, prejudice and discrimination and the vital aspects of personal and organisational transformation and reconstruction. This immersive three-day workshop experience will be facilitated for a further four staff groups in 2018.

In the senior school, the Social Justice Society and the Forum have led discussions and debates amongst the pupil body on many vital aspects of diversity. Over twenty members of this Society combined their skills to draft a Memorandum for the Transformation of Herschel which gives a profound, comprehensive and challenging pupil perspective on the areas of diversity in school life that require attention and engagement by school management. These include staff, curriculum, religious, outreach, sexuality and mental health issues. We celebrate that Herschel produces girls with the courage, confidence, leadership and power to engage, constructively, respectfully and maturely with critical, sensitive and deeply complex issues. The Memorandum has been discussed at the Forum, Diversity and Transformation Committee, Council, staff meetings and the new leaders camp.

The school tries to bring speakers that will challenge and enlighten our girls on issues of democracy and diversity. Justice Albie Sachs gave a powerful talk to a packed Theatre on the enshrinement of women's rights in the constitution and the need for confidence in South Africa's entrenched constitutional democracy. In the preparatory school the Grade Six pupils attend an annual Diversity and Differences workshop which has been devised to look specifically at recognising and celebrating differences and diversity.



Goal 2: To actively transform the pupil population to better represent the demographic diversity of South Africa, especially in relation to race.

Both the Preparatory and Senior Schools currently have a black pupil average of over 30% in most grades and the percentage of intake for the 2018 enrolments has exceeded 30%. We acknowledge that further improvement is still needed in this area.

To transform the pupil population requires an Admissions Policy that facilitates this; the creation of an organisational culture where people feel that they belong, are accepted and valued and the communication of this to fee paying black parents to make Herschel their school of choice, and lastly creating sustainable funding mechanisms to offer disadvantaged black girls the opportunity to study at Herschel.

Admissions Policy

The Herschel Admissions Policy records that Herschel is committed to having a complement of pupils which is racially and culturally diverse. The Admissions Policy also reflects that Council has determined that, among the various admissions criteria, the promotion of diversity should carry additional weight to advance transformation at the school and to eliminate the disadvantages of the past. The Herschel Application Form has been reviewed this year and a new section added which specifically requests applicants to provide appropriate demographical information to facilitate additional weight being given to diversity applicants.

As families provide notice to Herschel, the waiting lists and diversity ratio for that grade are reviewed. Wherever appropriate, diversity candidates are given preference in the offering of places.

Organisational culture of inclusivity

This remains a work in progress and the current transformation initiatives detailed in this document have contributed significantly to the creation of this organisational culture. Furthermore, both the Preparatory and Senior schools have been intentional in ensuring that black families feel welcome and valued at our Open and Information Days.

Sustainable funding mechanisms for disadvantaged black students

The Senior School has a well-established scholarship and bursary programme and funding that intentionally draws highly talented black pupils to Herschel. Our valued partnerships with Brendalyn Stempel and Students for a Better Future provide a nurturing and highly supportive structure which allows scholarship students to thrive and excel. Each year the Parents' Bursary Dinner-Dance, held the night after the Matric Dance, raises considerable funds to grow the Herschel Bursary Fund. This year the amount raised was over **R650 000**.



This year a group of Preparatory School parents have joined forces to launch a Preparatory School Bursary Fund. A separate Prep Bursary Trust is being registered and first funds committed. The Preparatory parent trustees will market and grow that fund in 2018.

Goal 3: To actively transform the profile of the Herschel teachers at all occupational levels to better represent the demographic diversity of South Africa, especially in relation to race.

The current percentage of black academic staff across the school is 21.6%. We consider this to be far too low. We are pleased to record that eight black teacher appointments have been made since 2016; two teachers starting at the Preparatory School and a teacher, school counsellor and teacher learnership in the Senior School in 2018.

To improve the current profile we need to be deliberate in our recruitment strategies and grow staff from within. To attract quality black teachers we need to reflect the changing organisational culture to offer them a sense that they will belong, be accepted and valued.

Recruitment strategies

Herschel has fully committed to fulfilling the defined goals as stated in our most recent five-year Employment Equity Plan which runs over the period 2017 to 2021. The school has been deliberate in making the appointment of black teachers a priority. All advertisements for teacher vacancies at Herschel now state that we welcome staff and pupils from diverse backgrounds. The selection process for new appointments ensures that black candidates are included in each round of the shortlisting and interview process, including the final round.

Critically, Herschel is committed to *“Grow our own Timber”* by identifying and recruiting, prospective black teachers and assistant teachers who have the potential to develop at Herschel through our internships, learnerships and student-teacher placement programmes. These programmes are partly funded from the MySchool Card contributions by parents and friends of Herschel and from a percentage of funds raised at the annual Prep Carnival.

The Workplace Skills Development Programme in the Preparatory has been exceptionally successful over the past ten years. It has ensured that Assistant Teachers are provided with the opportunity to upskill themselves. The School pays for their studies through UNISA to enable staff to move from an ECD Certificate to a B.Ed. Degree, or from a Matric qualification to NQF Level 6 ECD Diploma. In the long term this allows for Herschel to ensure that they have experienced staff who can apply for teaching positions that become available at Herschel. If no post is available at Herschel, these staff can apply to teaching posts in the community. We have had six Teacher Assistants qualifying as teachers over the last five years. We have recently employed two in teaching positions at Herschel and three have been appointed at other schools. Next year, two more excellent graduating teachers-assistants have been earmarked for teaching positions at the Preparatory School.

The Learnership programme at Herschel has been developed to assist previously disadvantaged pupils leaving school to study to become teachers. The Preparatory school currently has four Learnerships studying towards a B.Ed Degree. The programme covers the Learnership candidate's fees, textbooks and stationery, as well as a small monthly stipend. Once the Learnership candidate is qualified, they can apply to a Herschel position if one is available, or a position within the wider community. The Senior School will launch its first full teacher learnership in 2018. This programme has ensured that we have teachers of colour that confidently thrive in an independent school environment.

Goal 4: To ensure that all academic staff are committed to the delivery of a formal and informal curriculum that is of a high standard. The curriculum content, concepts and resources utilised and selected for all pupils from Pre-Nursery to Grade 12, must be relevant, meaningful and appropriate within the context of South Africa and Africa; must address the inequalities of society and marginalisation, as well as the legacy of Apartheid, in an explicit manner, at every opportunity, and in all subjects and teaching.

All subjects and phases have been encouraged to use their expertise and independence to innovate an age-appropriate curriculum that is South African, relevant and addresses contextual South African issues. Both Preparatory and Senior School staff have begun to look critically at all materials, texts and resources utilised for teaching and learning to ensure that they are relevant, meaningful and appropriate within the context of South Africa and Africa. All reading material, suggested reading lists and texts have been carefully selected to ensure that they are from varied and diverse sources.

For example, two Grade 8 novels this year are *Coconut* by Kopano Matlwa, which deals with a black girl grappling with her identity in school a setting similar to that of Herschel, and *The Other Side of Truth* by Beverley Naidoo, which is story of Nigerian children refugees trying to forge a new life in London. These novels have led to intense discussions on race, identity and acceptance and the part they play in girls' lives and within communities.

During Life Orientation lessons in the Intermediate Phase at the Preparatory School, the concepts of prejudice, bias and racism have been taught and discussed. The sessions included the sharing of life stories, texts and scenarios which were discussed in groups with teacher-lead feedback and clarity being provided. The Grade 7s had an LO session led by a lawyer to understand the key aspects of the SA Constitution.

In the Senior School the Life Orientation syllabus has been completely revised to include modules on Current Events, Democracy, Rights and Responsibilities, Citizenship, Unconscious Bias and Identity, Social Media, Media Literacy and Reading Skills.

The whole focus of Enrichment Week in the Senior School is to raise awareness and get the pupils engaged with issues of sustainability, identity, citizenship and social responsibility. For example, the Grade 10s participated in a remarkable, interactive Diversity Workshop together with Grade 10 pupils from Claremont High School and Thandokulu High.

The legacy of Apartheid is taught explicitly in Grades 5, 6 and 7 in Social Sciences and in Grades 9, 11 and 12 in History. Through South African history and historic totalitarian case studies the girls examine issues of cultural segregation, racial profiling, stereotyping, prejudice, propaganda, religious intolerance, gender inequality, forms of resistance, use and abuse of power and the legacy of racism.

There has been a drive for a much more inclusive approach to African languages. The Preparatory School uses home language Xhosa speaking teachers to teach isiXhosa at all levels. The Senior School has traditionally offered isiXhosa at a second additional language level from Grade 8 to 12. As of 2018, the Grade 8s will be the first grade to be offered isiXhosa at a first additional language in place of Afrikaans. This will raise the dignity and status of isiXhosa at Herschel.



Goal 5: To ensure that Herschel learners and teachers are committed to meaningful Social Responsibility Programmes that promote partnerships with other school communities and engage with our broader community in the Western Cape.

In the Senior School, community service thrives every week, with hundreds of our girls involved in a myriad of community service programmes. Many girls weekly tutor partner school senior pupils in Mathematics, Science and English skills and host History support classes to support their preparation for the Matric examinations.



Others weekly mentor Preparatory partner school children in a variety of academic, cultural and fun activities, bring joy and smiles to those in neighbourhood hospitals as Care Clowns and Big Sisters, host Reach for a Dream events for deserving young girls, organise and host

Christmas parties for hundreds of children at Victoria Hospital and the Archbishop's home, and visit children's homes and crèches. During Enrichment this year our Grade 9 girls helped to establish a beautiful, resourced library for our fellow Anglican school, St Michael's Primary School in Khayelitsha. Most importantly, community service programmes in the Senior School provide a vital opportunity for our girls to learn the skills, confidence and social competence to "make a difference" while they develop an increased sense of social responsibility, a common humanity and a more realistic view of their Cape Town and South African society.

Goal 6: To actively transform the Herschel Council to better represent the demographic diversity of South Africa, especially in relation to race.

This year the Herschel Council has had fourteen members which includes four black members: Vice-chair Logan Govender (parent), Dr Aaron Ndhluni (parent), Rev. Keith de Vos (Archbishop's Representative) and Tebogo Skwambane (business woman and Old Herschilian). The Archbishop is ex-officio the Visitor to the school and has been consulted on significant issues deliberated by Council. In 2018 the Council Chair will continue to work closely with the Vice-Chairs and Heads to proactively seek out new Council members, through our elected Council representatives and network of contacts, to raise the diversity and skill-set profile of Council.



Goal 7: To assist in the transformation of the South African economy by supporting Black Economic Empowerment-compliant companies in our procurement and tendering policies.

This year Herschel's Procurement Policy was extensively revised to ensure that Herschel does business with suitable black suppliers, contractors and tenders, wherever possible. The revised draft policy was submitted to the Finance Committee at its last meeting this term for discussion. It will be finalised by FinCom and presented to Council for ratification in 2018.

Goal 8: To include Diversity and Transformation on all future Executive and Council agendas with the express aim of ensuring that these issues are addressed regularly and in a focused and purposeful manner.

Diversity and Transformation has been a fixed agenda item at all Council, Management, Executive, Preparatory PA and EduCom meetings in 2017 and has been discussed at the Senior Class Representatives meeting. This has ensured that all key committees of the school have held discussions and strategized on how best to permeate key diversity and transformation imperatives into every aspect of the school.

Goal 9: To plan, implement, monitor and report to Council on the Herschel activities relating to these transformation goals.



The termly written reports to Council by the two Heads provide a quarterly update to Council on Diversity and Transformation. The Diversity and Transformation Committee meets termly and its minutes are tabled at each Council meeting. We anticipate that these meetings will occur more frequently as we establish focus groups to assist with the implementation plan.

The Human Resources Committee also meets termly and part of its agenda is the tabling of a report with feedback on all staff recruitment and interview processes. Each recruitment process records the number of diversity candidates who applied, went through to each round of interview and the reasons for the final selection. If the successful candidate is not a diversity appointment, HR expects the process to record the reasons as to why one was not appointed.

It is the intention to prepare an annual transformation report to be circulated to the wider school community setting out each transformation goal, the implementation plan to achieve that goal, and monitoring the progress including statistics.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart West'.

Stuart West
Head

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lin Heidmann'.

Lin Heidmann
Head of Preparatory