



**WINTERBERG
SCHOOL TRUST**



ISASA

Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa
Quality Values Diversity

ANNUAL REPORT

TM 1272 (E)
PBO 18/11/13/1688

020-729-NPO
18A Tax Status

2025



ABOUT US

The Winterberg School Trust (WST) is a deep rural, non-profit and community-based organisation in the Eastern Cape providing access to quality education whilst allowing children to remain living at home with their families. The approximately 120 children that the trust supports are largely the children of isiXhosa farm workers living in isolated rural areas.

THE TRUST PROVIDES:

- Education from ECD to Grade 7
- Provision of all books and stationery
- Opportunities to develop sporting abilities
- Exposure to computer skills and coding
- Daily transportation for all learners and staff
- Nutritious meals
- Wellness initiatives aimed at improving access to health care
- High school bursaries for achieving learners
- Staff development opportunities
- Parental engagement and support
- Employment opportunities
- Resources accessible to the whole community



Vision

To create opportunities through Education



Mission

To be a progressive country school offering a holistic approach to education and empowering the Winterberg Community



Values

Honesty, Kindness, Inclusiveness, Respect, Resilience
We abide by Christian values

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

As we reflect on the past year, it is with immense pride and gratitude that we share the achievements and milestones of the Winterberg School Trust in 2025. Our mission to empower the Winterberg community through holistic education has continued to thrive, thanks to the unwavering dedication of our donors, volunteers, staff, and community.

In 2025, the WST successfully provided quality education to over 120 children, recognising potential and expanding opportunities in a nurturing environment. We served over 14,500 nutritious meals, maintained a learner attendance rate of 93%, and achieved a remarkable 91% pass rate. These outcomes are a testament to the school's solid foundation built on our values of honesty, kindness, inclusiveness, respect, and resilience.

Our fundraising initiatives, from the Winterberg Farmers Cattle Project to the successful bazaars, and the launch of our first crowdfunding campaign, were crucial in sustaining and expanding our reach. The support from numerous individuals, trusts, and corporates, together with the contribution of volunteers, has been vital. Your generosity not only sustains our core educational programme but also allows us to expand our reach to have a greater positive impact on children and their families.

Looking to the future, we are committed to expanding our impact through enhanced high school bursaries, the development of our clinic project, and a refreshed strategic plan. We anticipate another year of growth, with plans to increase staff development, broaden access to IT resources, and pursue sustainable multi-year funding.

As we journey forward, we invite you to work with us so that together we can continue to transform lives and make a brighter future accessible to every child in our unique and incredible Winterberg community.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in our vision.

Amy Bryant [Chairperson, Winterberg School Trust]



OUR IMPACT

2025

99%



Teacher attendance



4

High School students supported



797

Books borrowed

91%



Pass rate

133 927

Kilometres travelled



93%



Learner attendance

120

Learners educated



9



Professional development opportunities provided

37



Farms reached

102

Diagnoses through the Wellness Day



Community meetings held

14 552
Meals served



OISESA AUDIT

Every five years, all private schools affiliated with the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA) have to undergo an independent audit by the Office of Independent Schools Evaluations Southern Africa (OISESA). In 2025, we underwent our first OISESA audit.

OISESA's mission and vision state that "In the rapidly changing world of 21st-century education, it is more important than ever for agile leaders to evaluate and reflect on how their schools operate and to seek innovative ways to strengthen and adapt their governance structures and teaching and learning programmes to meet the expectations of their stakeholders."

We had three months to complete a 21-page self-study report covering every aspect of the school. All staff received online training from our mentor to guide and prepare us for the visit.

Completing the self-study report was a massive team effort, with every staff member contributing. The mentor visited the school for three days in March, meeting with teachers, students and parents. Staff members responsible for the various sub-sections of the self-study reports were also interviewed. Questionnaires were also completed by staff and students.

The process was a great learning curve, highlighting what the school is doing well as well as areas for improvement.

We received positive feedback in the mentor's final report and are proud to have received our OISESA Accreditation.



I found the dedication of all the staff to be most impressive, and they were willing to engage with me throughout the whole process. Their resolve to improve and to uphold the highest standards in every respect was most noticeable.

The students displayed a tremendously positive eagerness to learn, and their excellent behaviour and superb manners were most appreciated.

I found my visit to be incredibly inspiring, and I hold in the highest regard all who have been and all who presently are so deeply committed to the school. The vision and legacy of the founding farming community has continued during the past thirty years; it remains committed to upholding a remarkable reputation of providing a dynamic, quality education in a wonderfully caring and nurturing environment.

In the context of community-based education initiatives in rural South Africa, Winterberg School Trust is truly an 'Inspiration to the Nation'.



Extract from the mentor's conclusion about the audit



OISESA

Office of Independent
Schools Evaluations
Southern Africa

FUNDERS & FUNDRAISING INITIATIVES

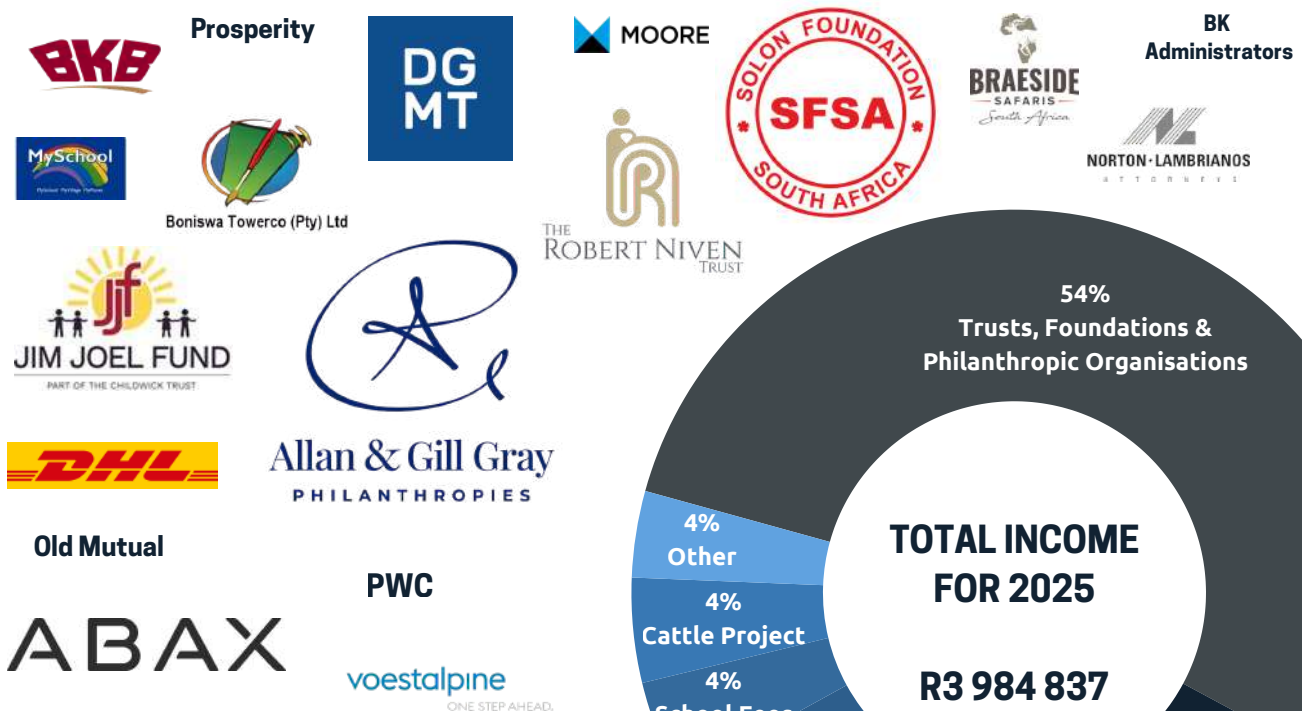
Without the generosity of our supporters, the work of the WST would simply not be possible. Our mission to empower the Winterberg community through education rests on a foundation of partnership and shared belief in a better future for our rural families. The majority of our learners' parents are farm workers earning a low income, and while they do contribute towards school fees, they are not in a position to cover the full operational costs of the school. Their commitment is deeply valued, but it is through the continued support of individuals, trusts, foundations, corporates and government partners that we are able to sustain and grow our impact.

As a **Level 1 B-BBEE** Service Provider, the WST provides companies with a valuable opportunity to contribute towards their Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment goals while investing meaningfully in rural education. As a registered **NPO**, we are also able to issue **Section 18A Tax Certificates**, and all donations are tax-deductible in South Africa.

We extend our sincere thanks to every donor and supporter who partnered with us during 2025, whether through financial contributions, volunteering time or donating goods and services. Your support enables us to continue nurturing potential, expanding opportunities and strengthening our community. The impact of your generosity is reflected throughout this Annual Report.

We are so grateful to the following funders who walked the journey with us in 2025.

TRUSTS, FOUNDATIONS & CORPORATES



INDIVIDUALS

Barker Family

Felicity Lotter

Beth & Stephen Curl

Fleuriet Family

Joan Levy

Cummans Family

Graham McNichol

Millar Roberts

Delphine Govender

Harold Boyd

Paula Nankervis

Derek Cherne

Hilary Curl

Peter Anwyl-Harris

The support received from our funders was supplemented by the following:

CATTLE PROJECT

Our cattle herd, run by one of our long standing Trustees, William Pringle, has continued to grow steadily; however, due to limited grazing capacity, we have capped the herd at 40 cows. The project remains an important income-generating initiative for the school, with weaners sold annually through the Winterberg Farmers' Association Online Video Sale.

SCHOOL FEES

Parents are asked to contribute a minimal fee of R150 per month for their child to attend school. This contribution remains essential in encouraging parental involvement and accountability in their children's education. We are grateful that, despite challenging circumstances for many families, parents made every effort to settle their fees by the end of the year.

INTERNAL FUNDRAISING

The WST fundraising committee continued raising funds to support school projects. Our tuck shop was very well-supported, opening every Wednesday and Friday. On special occasions and dress-up days children also contributed R5 towards the committee's fundraising efforts.



PLANT STALL

Since 2019, **Beth Curl** from the United Kingdom has run an honesty plant stall at the bottom of her garden. Over the years, this little stall has raised more than R196 000 for WST! We are so grateful for her ongoing support, it really does make such a difference.

BACK A BUDDY CAMPAIGN

We ran our very first crowdfunding campaign to raise funds to insulate our ECD Centre. We managed to raise an incredible R109505 towards this, thanks to the generosity of our WST friends and family. The builders finished installing the insulation just before we closed for December holidays and the little ones moved into a much cooler space.

BAZAAR

The 2025 Bazaar was once again a great success, raising nearly R15 000 for the school. A wide variety of clothing and household items were sold, with a jumping castle and delicious food which added to the festive atmosphere. We are so grateful for all the generous donations received, including contributions from many new donors. The bazaar continues to be a highlight on our calendar and is a wonderful way to bring the community together in support of the school.

RECIPE BOOK

Years ago, the local farmers' wives compiled a recipe book to sell as a fundraising initiative. In 2025, we continued to sell copies of the 3rd addition of this book.

SOCIAL & RAFFLE

We held a successful fundraising event at the Farmers Association Club, where community members joined us for a steak meal and to watch the SA vs Italy rugby match. We also ran a raffle with four lucky winners, which was very well supported bringing in additional funds for the school. Thank you to our raffle prize sponsors: **Kwandwe Private Game Reserve, OldSchool** and **B's Beauty Hive** as well as to our Winterberg families & friends for supporting this event and raffle.



DONATIONS & VISITORS

We were incredibly fortunate to receive generous in-kind donations and welcomed a number of visitors to the school in 2025.

FoodForward SA continues to support us with monthly food parcels collected in Komani for our feeding scheme. This consistent support is vital in sustaining the programme and supporting learners' health and readiness to learn.

We were grateful to receive another **Shoprite** voucher, which helped us buy food to supplement the in-kind donations we receive and ensure we can prepare meals that are balanced and nutritious.

A huge thank you to the **Rotary Club of Queenstown** for the credit at Hessels which we are able to use to purchase supplies for our feeding scheme.

Braeside Safaris and the Cummans family provided generous support through regular donations of meat for our feeding scheme. This has made such a difference in helping us provide hearty, protein-rich meals that fuel our learners throughout their long school days. We were lucky to have **Ann Cummans** and **Kristy Phillips** visit our school in 2025 and it was wonderful to be able to thank the Cummans family in person for the amazing support they continue to show us.

We are also so grateful to the **Scott family** for their generous donation of cabbages and other fresh vegetables, which added important nutrition and variety to our meals.



We received a Blue Bag full of Easter eggs from **Tams Safaris** which brought great excitement to our children. A big thank you to **Amy Bell Charities** and the **Safari Club International Foundation** for this wonderful donation.

We had the privilege of welcoming four amazing healthcare specialists to our school. They provided much-needed screenings for eyes, skin and teeth to all our children, staff and community members. A HUGE thank you to **Drs Sarina Drusinsky, Fanie Kriel, Stef Kriel and Johan Botha** for giving our community access to such important specialist care and for donating sixteen pairs of glasses, as well as eye drops for allergies and toothbrushes and toothpaste. Thank you to the **Winterberg Ladies** for their assistance with covering the follow up medication and travel costs.

Thanks to **ABAX Development Trust**, our Foundation Phase learners received brand-new, colorful school bags made from fabric off-cuts. Each bag has a built-in rain poncho, which is especially useful for those who walk home from the bus drop-off points.

Three more iPads were donated by **Mike and Jill Stein** from Ben Pringle Safaris, which have been so useful for integration of technology into lessons.

A special thank you to **Johan and Sarona Pretorius** for donating a TV, which is being used in our Library to provide engaging visual learning opportunities.

Stef, Fiona and Steffen Kriel kindly donated a whole lot of second-hand items, including laptops which have been much-needed additions in our computer lab.

Light From Africa Foundation NPC donated reusable sanitary pads which we were able to give out to our senior primary girls, helping them stay comfortable, healthy and in school.

We are also thankful to **former colleagues and parents of Kandas Botha**(our Principal) for their generous stationery donations, ensuring our learners have the basic tools they need to succeed in the classroom.

Thanks to our ex-principal, **Charmaine Peter's, friend** who donated a number of uniform items for those in need, including grey skirts and pullovers.

We received 1 700 amazing new books from **Book Dash** and the children were so excited to be able to take home their very own copies.



We are grateful to **Wynberg Boys' Junior School** for donating a whole bunch of learning materials, which have helped support teaching and learning across various grades.

We are extremely grateful to the **Charles Glass Society** for donating jackets to each of our learners, keeping them warm during our chilly winter days.



We were delighted to receive a beautiful piano from **Ruth Stasiak**. This special gift will no doubt bring much joy in the years to come.

We loved having **Sarah Saputo** and **Charlotte Mackie** visit us. They surprised our little ones with special goodies all the way from Florida, and the children had such fun blowing bubbles and playing together.



A big thank you to **Ansunelle** and **Derick van der Nest** at The Story for donating some wonderful tennis rackets.

SACS Junior kindly donated sports kit, helping to equip our learners for matches and practices.

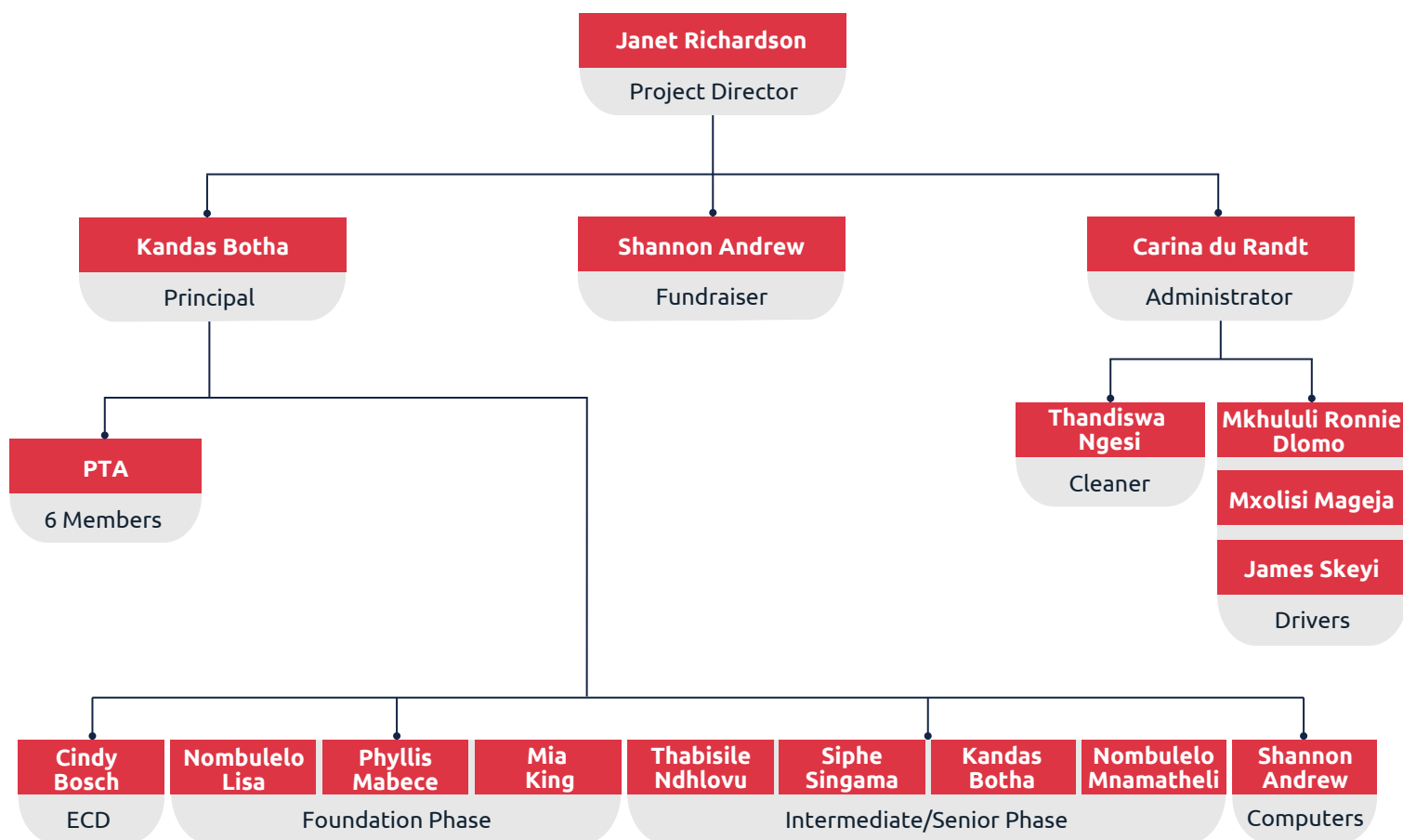
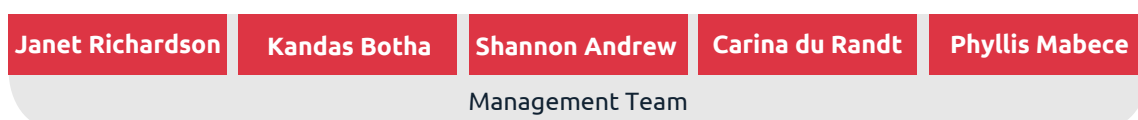
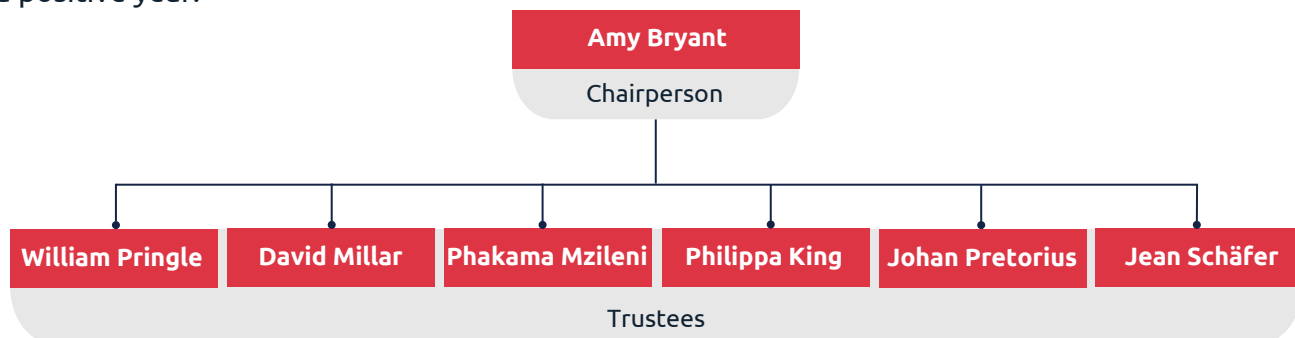
Sealand Bags generously donated a bag to each of our teachers as a token of appreciation for their dedication and hard work.

Throughout the year, we welcomed several international visitors to the school. Thank you to our community members, and especially **Braeside Safaris**, for bringing your guests to spend time at our special little school.



THE WST TEAM

The achievements of the WST this year are a testament to the dedication of our staff, who always go the extra mile to provide a supportive and enriching environment for our learners. We are also grateful for the guidance of our Trust body, whose insight, involvement and passion continue to strengthen the work of the school. Thank you to everyone who played a role in making 2025 such a positive year.



STAFF NEWS

2025 was a year of significant change at the WST. After Joanne King retired at the end of 2024, Janet Richardson took over as Project Director and Shannon Andrew stepped into the fundraising role. Our principal also left, and we welcomed Kandas Botha, who has had a very positive impact, bringing the team together and offering strong guidance. He has focused on giving teachers more responsibility, appointing our Grade 4 teacher, Thabisile Ndlovu, as Senior Phase Head. She has been a great support in planning and moderation within the phase.

Staff have remained highly committed, maintaining an impressive 99% attendance rate in 2025. Staff morale is very strong, with colleagues supporting one another and often going above and beyond in their roles. They have adapted well to the new initiatives introduced by the principal and continue to embrace new challenges with openness and a strong willingness to learn and grow.

We are proud of the professional growth of our staff. Nombulelo Lisa, our Grade R teacher, completed the third year of her B.Ed. Foundation Phase degree through the Centre for Social Development, traveling to Makhanda for exams and receiving excellent feedback following a classroom observation. Cindy Bosch completed her ECD Level 5 qualification through the Teachers Learning Centre, and is now a fully qualified ECD practitioner. Shannon Andrew also attended several professional development opportunities to strengthen her fundraising skills, including conferences and workshops on fundraising, proposal writing, crowdfunding, and a peer learning exchange series. Kandas Botha completed a First Aid Level 1 course, giving the school four trained staff in first aid.

The year also brought challenges with staff turnover, as two teachers left us and one went on maternity leave. This increased the responsibilities of other staff, who pulled together to keep the school running smoothly. We are always working on ways to improve staff retention and support wellness.

This year, the Trust introduced a staff retirement annuity plan as a benefit, and we have continued with monthly staff teas and special lunches to acknowledge and appreciate the team's hard work.

We welcomed Siphe Singama as the Grade 5 and Senior Phase isiXhosa teacher. She has quickly become an integral part of the team, bringing enthusiasm and dedication to her role. Nombulelo Mnamatheli, one of our learner's parents, provided relief support in Grades 2 and 3 during Mia King's maternity leave and later stepped into the Grade 7 class mid-year.

The year ended on a high note with a staff Christmas function at the local bowling club, where everyone enjoyed a meal and some friendly competition on the bowling green, celebrating a year of dedication, teamwork and resilience.



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

In 2025, our ECD programme continued to be a special and happy space for our little ones. Cindy Bosch, our ECD practitioner, brings such care and patience to the classroom, making sure each child feels safe and supported.

The focus in the ECD phase is on holistic growth. We strive to help children develop socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively, while laying a strong foundation for lifelong learning and well-being. This year, the Joint Education Trust shared a wonderful curriculum with us, which Cindy has really enjoyed implementing. It has added helpful structure and fresh ideas to our daily programme.

We made some exciting improvements to the ECD Centre in 2025. Insulation was installed in the building, which has been a real game changer, as the classroom is made from an old shipping container that becomes extremely cold in winter and very hot in summer. We also purchased new ECD tables and chairs, new balance bikes, and added a fantastic sand and picnic table to the play area, all of which have been thoroughly enjoyed by the children.



One of the major highlights of the year was the outing to Wheatlands Farm, where the children fed the animals, played with new toys and had great fun decorating cupcakes.

By the end of 2025, all seven children who were age-ready to move on to Grade R met the requirements to progress. Those who are still too young to progress will continue in the ECD programme in 2026 to grow and develop.

Attendance remains the biggest challenge in this phase, particularly in winter, when parents often choose to keep children at home. We continue to encourage regular attendance, as consistency makes such a difference at this important stage.

ELOM TESTING

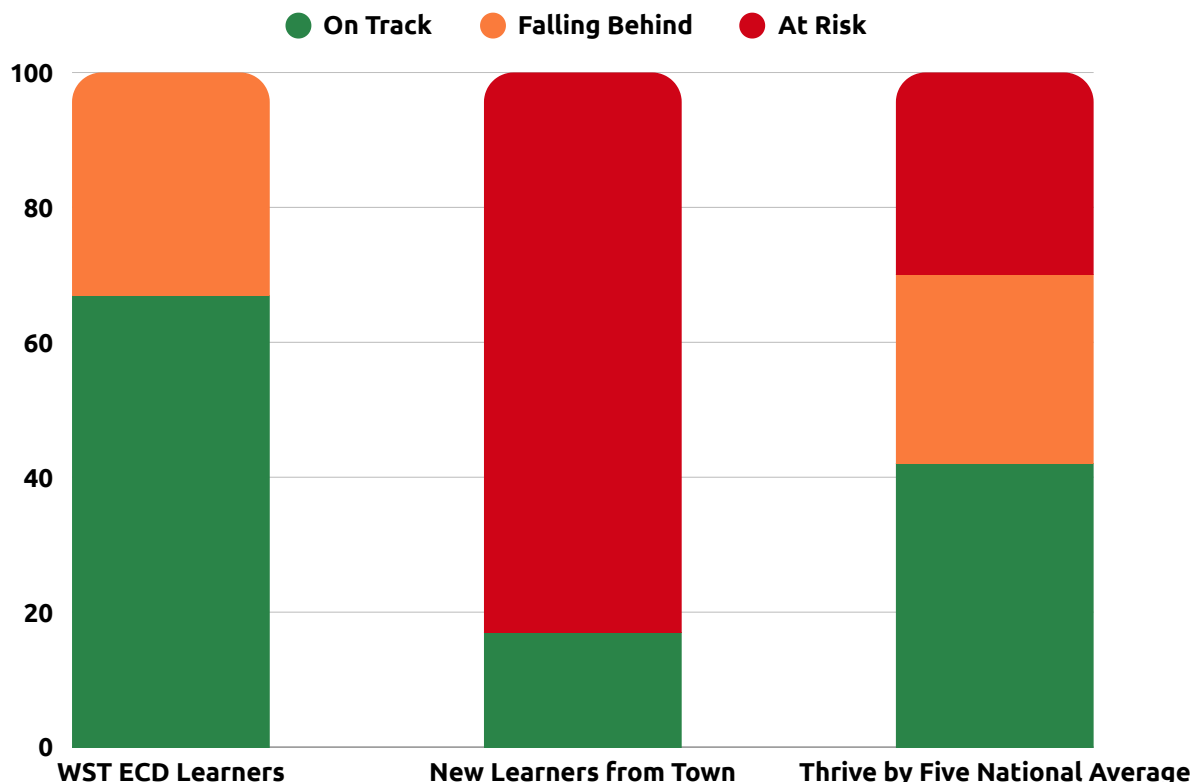
Each year, our Grade R Educator, Nombulelo Lisa, selects a small sample of children aged 4–5 who are transitioning from ECD to Grade R to participate in the Early Learning Outcomes Measure (ELOM) assessments. At the end of 2025, a total of 12 children were assessed: six learners who will be entering Grade R at WST from our ECD centre and six learners from town who will also be joining WST for Grade R in 2026.

The results showed that our WST ECD learners demonstrated strong performance in Gross Motor Development, Fine Motor Coordination and Visual Motor Integration and Emergent Literacy and Language. Emergent Numeracy and Mathematics, as well as Cognition and Executive Functioning, remain areas where further support and development is needed. However, it is encouraging to note that none of the WST learners fell into the “At Risk” category in these areas.

In comparison, learners assessed for entry into WST in 2026 from town were significantly behind our ECD learners, with 83% falling within the “At Risk” category. It is also noteworthy that WST is performing well above the Thrive by Five National Average, where only 42% of learners are on track to start Grade R. These results highlight the strong foundation provided by our ECD centre and affirm the quality of early learning taking place at WST.

2025 ELOM RESULTS

Assessment of Grade R Readiness for Children in WST’s
ECD Centre Compared to Those Coming from Town



FOUNDATION PHASE

GRADE R

In 2025, the Grade R class was a large group, which kept their teacher, Nombulelo Lisa, on her toes. She is great with this age group and always brings out the best in the learners. They all made great strides in both behaviour and attitude throughout the year. The focus was on giving the learners a strong foundation for formal schooling, including early literacy, numeracy, expanding vocabulary, developing listening skills and encouraging creativity through play-based learning.

The Grade R graduation at the end of the year was a highlight. The learners dressed up in their graduation outfits and put on a show for the rest of the school and their parents. Each learner received a new school bag for 'big school', thanks to the generous support of Abax Development Trust.

GRADE 1

Reading was the main focus in Grade 1. The learners loved exploring the Book Dash books and engaging in activities based on the stories. At this age, parent involvement is very important, so this was a key focus throughout the year. The children also learnt what is expected of them in "big school" regarding behaviour and time management. Phyllis Mabece, their teacher, used rewards and fun strategies to motivate the learners, keeping them engaged and eager to learn. One challenge in this group was catering to the wide range of abilities, as some learners joined from town without the same foundation as those who had attended WST pre-school.

GRADE 2 & 3

In 2025, Grade 2 and 3 were combined, which came with its challenges, particularly with discipline and giving the Grade 2s the individual support they needed. The Grade 2s were a difficult group and needed a lot of support particularly with English. It was also Mia King's first time teaching a multigrade class.

The focus was on English speaking, reading, and writing, as well as basic number operations to make sure they had a solid foundation to build on. With an English-speaking teacher, they were encouraged to speak English all the time and they made great progress as the year went on.

Grade 3s' favourite topic was Space and Earth and it was eye-opening for them to see pictures of outer space. Grade 2s enjoyed learning about the provinces and locating themselves on a map. They were an energetic and curious group who thrived on hands-on learning and particularly enjoyed the Arts and Culture programme this year.



INTERMEDIATE-SENIOR PHASE

GRADE 4

Grade 4 had a wonderful year with Thabisile Ndlovu as their teacher. They started with a few areas to develop, including basic math, reading and spelling, but made excellent progress and finished the year much more confident in these areas. The Eduten app, introduced by the Joint Education Trust, was invaluable as it gave them extra support in Maths in a fun, interactive way. Learners improved on baseline tests by an impressive 24%. The year was full of hands-on learning, with highlights including the history museum project. Learners created a museum display with historical objects from home, interviewed members of the Winterberg community and built a timeline showing how history unfolds over time. They even acted as museum guides, sharing their work with other learners. The Grade 4s also went on an outing to the Tarkastad Primary School play which was an exciting experience for them.

GRADE 5

Grade 5 was a small, delightful group whose strong academic abilities were matched by their kindness, respect and helpfulness. Throughout the year, Siphe Sigama, their teacher, focussed on nurturing critical thinking and problem-solving skills as well as fostering a sense of community. The learners loved celebrating birthdays together and even had their own class party at the end of the year. A highlight of the year was a day trip exploring the local landscape, tying in beautifully with their Geography theme on the physical features of South Africa.

GRADE 6

The key focus in Kandas Botha's Grade 6 class was creating a love for reading and focusing on reading for understanding, comprehension and expression as these were areas that they struggled with. Time was allocated daily for either silent reading or reading aloud. Students were also introduced to various study methods. Technology was incorporated into lessons by allowing students to do research online and opening their eyes to the world outside the Winterberg. They had great fun doing Natural Science experiments with the highlight being building electric circuits, and even experimenting using different types of fruit to get a digital clock to work.



GRADE 7

This year, the Grade 7s faced some disruption with having two different teachers, but they adapted well and ended the year ready to take the step into high school. Focus was placed on building their independence and responsibility, with some of them getting good leadership experience through our Grade 7 Monitor programme. One of their highlights was Entrepreneurs Day where they stepped into the world of business, gaining valuable practical experience. The learners also enjoyed two exciting outings: a visit to Orange Grove School to see their science projects and brave the zipline and climbing wall, and a tour of the high-tech Voestalpine Automotive Components plant in East London which was an eye-opening experience for them.

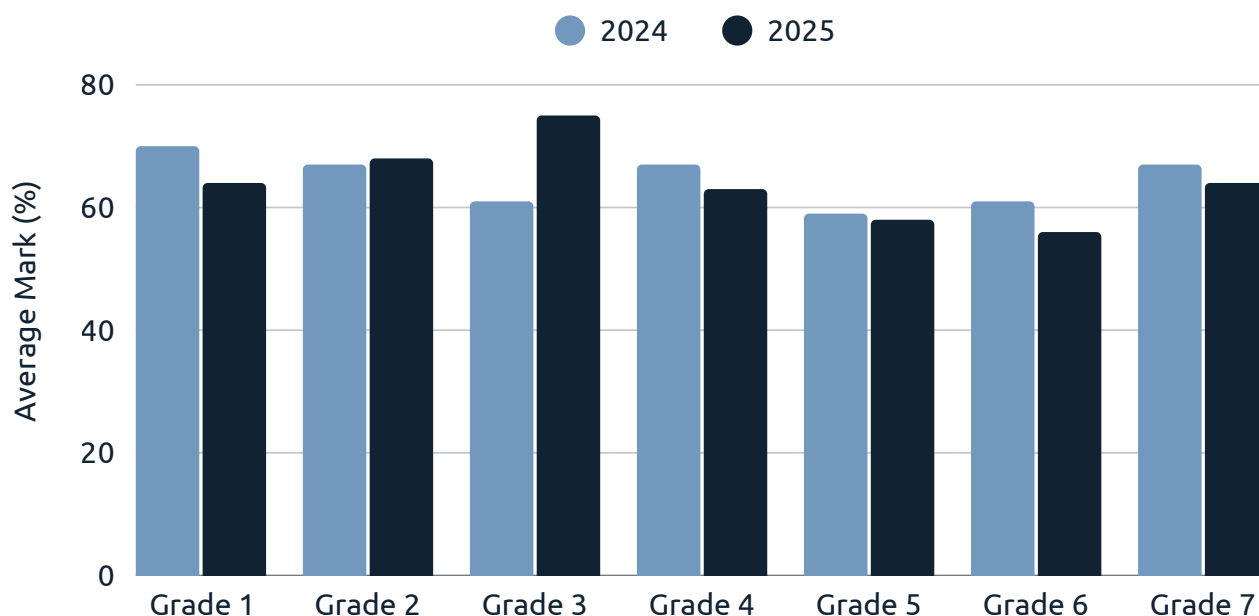
ACADEMIC RESULTS

The WST has remained a success for over thirty years because it combines the essential elements of a strong school: learners who are eager to learn, dedicated teachers, quality education and effective systems.

Academic oversight remains a priority. Weekly academic plans are submitted and monitored to ensure adherence to the Annual Teaching Plan and the timely completion of the curriculum. All formal examinations are pre- and post-moderated by the Head of Phase and the principal. Clear guidelines, aligned with DBE standards, are followed when setting papers to ensure an appropriate balance of lower-, middle-, and higher-order questions. Quarterly book moderation further ensures curriculum coverage, progression from grade to grade and consistent marking practices.

Grade averages have remained strong, with most classes achieving results in the 60% range. These outcomes are supported by high attendance rates, made possible by our reliable transport system and parents who value education and prioritise consistent school attendance. As evident in the results below, the Grade 6 class of 2025 was a weaker group academically. Many learners joined WST later in their schooling and therefore missed some of the important foundational learning provided in earlier grades, which has impacted their performance.

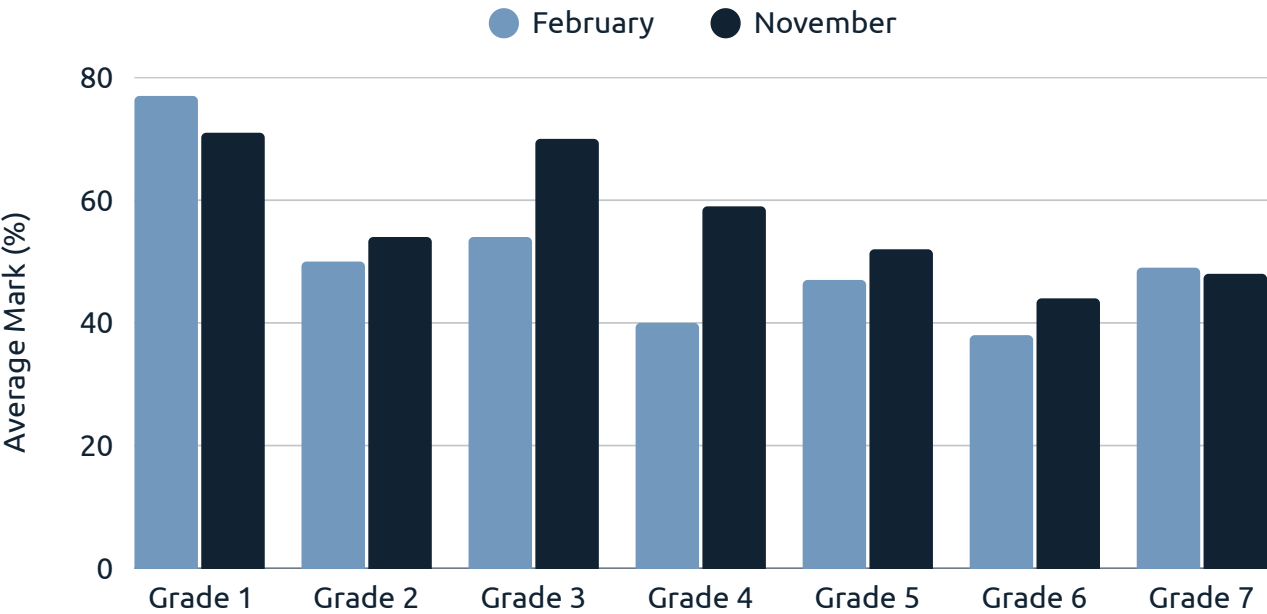
2025 YEAR AVERAGE PER GRADE (CAPS CURRICULUM)



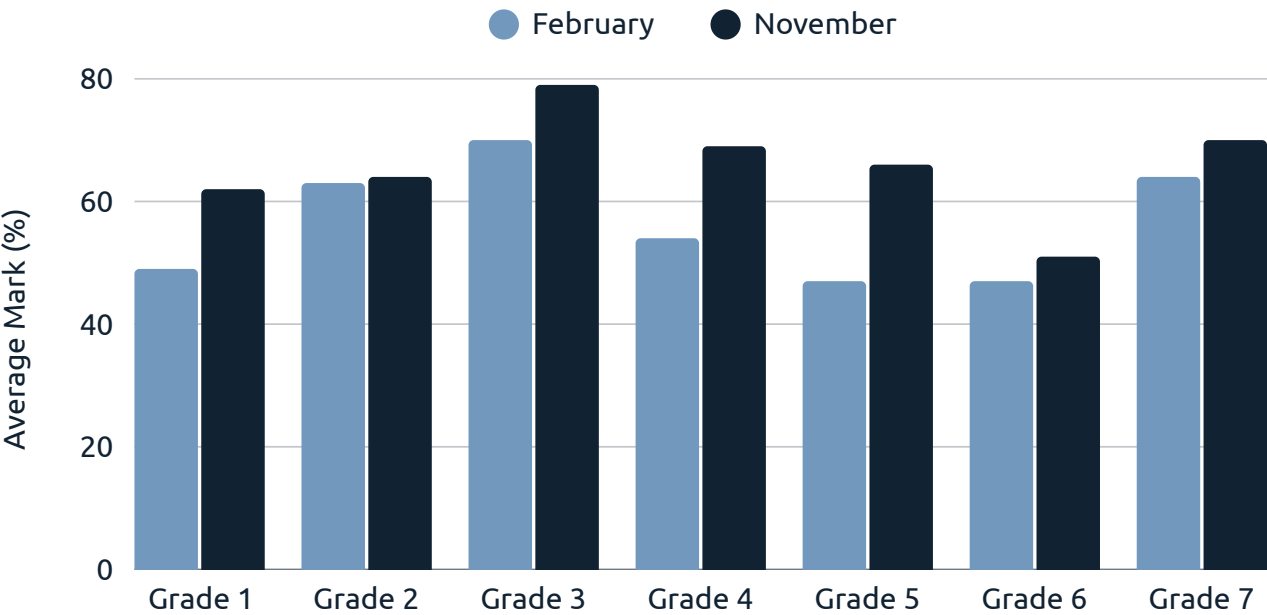
At the beginning of each year, teachers conduct baseline assessments to identify learning gaps and guide their planning. Endline assessments are then conducted later in the year to measure progress. As reflected in the baseline results shown below, most grades showed improvement between the baseline and endline assessments. However, Grade 7 Mathematics results declined; which was largely due to a change of teachers and a disruptive year for that class.

To address learning gaps and support learner progress, many teachers provide additional Mathematics and English lessons before and after school and supervised study sessions are held each afternoon to support homework and reinforce learning.

2025 MATHS BASELINE TEST - AVERAGE PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS



2025 ENGLISH BASELINE TEST - AVERAGE PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS



CODING & ROBOTICS

In 2025, Shannon Andrew continued to provide weekly computer lessons for all learners from Grade R to Grade 7. Many of our learners have limited access to technology at home, making IT lessons both exciting and highly valuable, especially in today's digital world.

For our younger learners, the focus was on foundational computer literacy, including using a mouse and keyboard and learning basic computer terminology. Literacy and numeracy skills were reinforced through interactive educational games. Coding and robotics were also introduced, helping learners develop problem-solving skills, pattern recognition and critical thinking. Foundation Phase learners particularly enjoyed working with the Sphero Robotic Balls. The drive and draw functions are excellent for developing spatial awareness and teaching the importance of giving clear instructions. Learners practiced navigating their robots around obstacles and to specific points. The Grade 3 learners even played soccer with their robots, creating players using paper cups and straws and driving them across the field to score goals for their team.

In the Intermediate and Senior Phases, learners focused on more advanced skills, including Microsoft Office programmes, typing and block coding. Typing skills were developed and tracked using the Typing Cat program, which really helped improve their speed and accuracy. Sphero Robotic Balls continued to provide hands-on learning, with learners navigating complex courses featuring twists, turns and even some inclines. Older learners designed their own courses and challenged each other to code their robots successfully. Sphero Education's challenge cards encouraged experimentation with advanced functions, helping build critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Learners also completed projects in Word, PowerPoint and Excel, which incorporated research skills and they even got a chance to explore video editing on the tablets.

A key part of IT lessons focused on good device care, digital citizenship and online safety. Learners learnt how to start up and shut down computers correctly, save and access their work and navigate programmes responsibly. Grade 7 learners were also introduced to educational AI tools such as Google Lens and ReadAlong, adding an exciting new dimension to their IT experience.

We are incredibly fortunate to have access to these technologies, thanks to the generosity of our donors over the years. They provide our learners with the digital literacy skills, confidence and curiosity they need to navigate the modern world and prepare for future learning opportunities.



EXTRAMURAL ACTIVITIES

SPORTS

We recognise that sport plays an important role in the holistic development of our learners. Although transport logistics limit how much sport we can offer, both staff and learners remain committed to making the most of the time available. 2025 was a busy and exciting year, with more fixtures and interschool events than in previous years. Our learners demonstrated excellent sporting potential and showed good conduct and sportsmanship throughout the year.

In the first term, we took 35 athletes to compete in track and field events at the annual Tarkastad Interschools Athletics Meeting. The day was a great success, with 13 athletes qualifying for the Zonal Athletics Meeting in Nxuba, where they competed against strong opposition. For many learners, this was their first opportunity to participate in events outside of Tarkastad, so it was very exciting for them. One athlete went on to qualify for the District Athletics Meeting held in Komani.

During the second term, soccer and netball season began. We hosted Whittlesea Get Ahead School, Orange Grove School, Tarkstad High School as well as Bedford Country School for netball and soccer matches, with three netball teams and two soccer teams competing across different age groups. Hosting these events created a wonderful atmosphere on our campus, with learners, staff and parents all coming together to support the teams. In the third term, soccer and netball practices continued, and teams played matches against Tarkastad Primary School in town.

In the fourth term, preparations began for the Orange Grove School Interschool Athletics event. We took 35 learners to compete in a variety of track and field events. Our athletes performed exceptionally well, achieving 8 first places, 16 second places and 19 third places.

We were grateful to be able to have brand-new soccer goalposts made and installed, making a significant improvement to our sports facilities. The field area is beginning to take shape, with new trees planted, a bench added and the new goalposts in place. In 2026, we hope to repair the old stands to create additional seating for spectators.



ARTS & CULTURE

We started an Arts and Culture Programme mid way through the year where learners engaged in weekly Art, Music, Drama and Dance activities. What was encouraging about the programme was the staff's total commitment. No one had any experience teaching dance, drama, music or art, but all were willing to try it and thoroughly enjoyed it. Although resources for these activities remain limited, this did not deter the staff from giving it their all. The children loved doing something new and it proved to be a great opportunity for them to explore their hidden talents and express themselves creatively.

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

VALENTINE'S DAY

Our learners enjoyed celebrating Valentine's Day by dressing in Valentine's colours and taking part in fun classroom activities and special treats planned by their teachers.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Human Rights Day was marked by sharing the history and importance of the day with our learners. This was combined with our Grade 7 monitor elections, where learners experienced the full voting process and exercised their right to vote, bringing democracy to life in a meaningful way.

EASTER CELEBRATIONS

Our learners enjoyed creative Easter art activities in their classrooms and ended the day with a fun Easter egg hunt.

NUMERACY DAY

We wrapped up Term 1 with our annual Numeracy Day, where learners explored Maths through fun, hands-on activities. This has become a highlight of the year and continues to build enthusiasm and confidence around numeracy.

WORLD BOOK DAY

World Book Day was celebrated with learners dressing up as their favourite book characters and sharing stories, encouraging a love for reading across all grades.

MANDELA DAY

To honour Mandela Day, our learners braved the cold weather to spend 67 minutes cleaning litter along the Winterberg farm roads. This was a valuable opportunity to teach the importance of giving back to the Community and caring for the environment.





30 YEAR CELEBRATION

We celebrated 30 years of the WST with a special bring-and-share lunch with past and present trustees and staff, appreciating all those who have played an important role in the school's journey. Trees were planted around the soccer field, and a bench was erected in honour of Joanne King, who retired at the end of 2024 after 30 years, recognising her dedication and lasting contribution to the school.

WOMEN'S DAY

Women's Day was celebrated with lots of fun as learners and teachers dressed up as grannies, celebrating and honouring the strength and wisdom of women.

SPRING DAY

Spring was welcomed with our annual Spelling Bee, where learners impressed us with their confidence and spelling skills. Learners also dressed up in creative spring outfits made from recycled materials, showcasing wonderful creativity and effort.

HERITAGE DAY

Term 3 concluded with a vibrant Heritage Day celebration. Learners came dressed in traditional attire, enjoyed cultural food prepared by teachers, and showcased dance, drama and music as part of our Arts & Culture programme.



PRIZE-GIVING

We ended the year with a wonderful Prize Giving Concert themed "Rainbow of Achievement." Our guest speaker, Phakama Mzileni (one of our Trustees), shared the message, "Inside each one of you is a rainbow," reminding learners of their unique strengths and the hope that guides them forward. Each class performed a dance, song or play. We also had the privilege of awarding a new Fellowship Award, in honour of Joanne King, to a learner in Grades 4–7 who demonstrated kindness, respect, empathy, positive social behaviour, a willingness to help others, strong work ethic, and who is an all-round learner we are proud to have at WST.

COMMUNITY CARE & DEVELOPMENT

PARENT MEETINGS

Parent involvement remains an important part of school life. Quarterly parent meetings were held throughout the year, creating space for open communication between families and teachers, as well as discussion of key school matters. Attendance remained strong, with an average of 37 parents present at each meeting, reflecting ongoing commitment to their children's education.

During the year, it became clear that the governing structure previously operating as an School Governing Body was actually functioning as a Parent-Teacher Association. As a result, we have formally shifted to a PTA model to better reflect its role in supporting school activities and strengthening the partnership between parents and staff.

A number of school events brought families together as well. The annual Bazaar once again proved to be a highlight on the school calendar, drawing enthusiastic support from the community. Many parents also came out to support their children at the various sports events that took place. The year concluded with our end-of-year concert, which was well attended and provided a joyful opportunity for parents to celebrate their children's progress and achievements.



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The school's book and toy libraries continue to provide families with access to books and educational toys that support early childhood development at home. Our soccer field is open to the community on weekends, and it was great to see many people coming together to enjoy the space and play soccer throughout the year.



LUCENDO

The Lucendo Ladies initiative began as a group of previously unemployed women from farms in the Winterberg community who were upskilled by the WST to sew and create items for sale. At present, Nomawethu Qoma is the only lady still actively involved in the project, with others assisting occasionally when demand requires it. WST continues to provide transport and a dedicated space to support this work. Lucendo continues to make and sell the school tracksuits for our learners, which allows Nomuwethu to earn an income while also ensuring that parents can purchase high-quality tracksuits at an affordable price.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

At the end of November, we hosted a Wellness Day where two optometrists, a dermatologist and a dentist screened our learners and community members to identify and address health concerns. It proved to be a much-needed day where a number of issues were identified. The Winterberg Ladies kindly assisted with covering cost of the creams and medication to treat the skin conditions identified, 16 pairs of glasses have been generously donated for those in need, 6 patients were referred for further eye tests to be done in East London in early 2026 and several learners were referred for dental treatment. Ahead of the Wellness Day, we painted the Clinic room and used it as one of the screening stations. In 2026, we hope to improve this space further by installing blinds on all the windows to create more privacy. We are hopeful that our Clinic initiative will gain more momentum in the year ahead.

33

**Skin conditions
found**



47

**Dental issues
detected**



22

**Vision impairments
identified**



FEEDING SCHEME

In 2025, we continued prioritising learner nutrition as an essential part of supporting academic success. Our ECD and Grade R learners received daily meals through the Department of Education subsidy and the feeding programme for Grades 1–7 continued three times a week.

This was made possible through the generous support of our partners: FoodForwardSA, from whom we collect monthly food parcels in Komani; Shoprite, who provided a voucher to supplement the programme; the Rotary Club of Queenstown, for Hessels store credit; Braeside Safaris, for regular meat donations; and the Scott family, for cabbages and other fresh vegetables. Their contributions have made a meaningful difference to our learners' well-being.

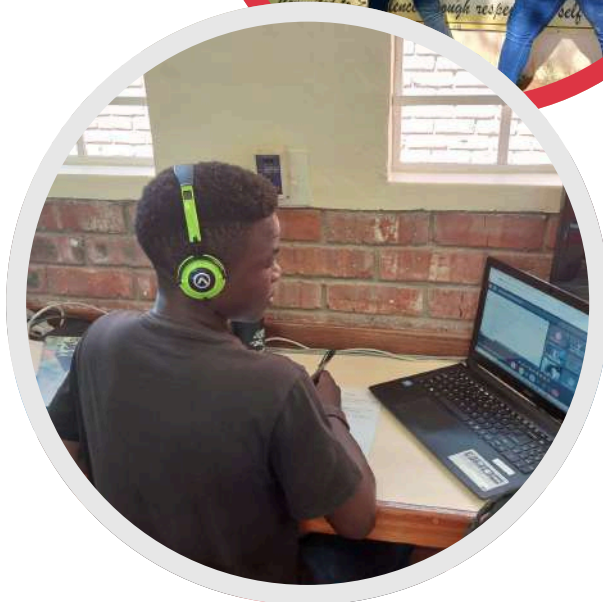
While we would like to provide cooked meals five days a week, current capacity does not allow for this, as meal preparation is managed by one staff member alongside her other responsibilities. Despite these limitations, the feeding scheme continues to have a significant impact. Many learners travel long distances and spend many hours at school, often arriving without adequate food. We have found that regular meals improve concentration, energy levels, and overall well-being, and we remain committed to strengthening the programme in a sustainable way.

BURSARY STUDENTS

In 2025, we supported four high school learners through our bursary programme.

Linomtha Mnazo completed Grade 8 at Tarkastad High School. He performed exceptionally well, finishing in the top five of his class and receiving several awards at the end of the year. We are incredibly proud of his achievement. He stayed in the hostel, which was not always easy, particularly with ongoing water challenges in town. Thanks to the Winterberg Ladies who supported him with tuck, toiletries and airtime each term. Linomtha also had to take Afrikaans, as the school does not offer isiXhosa and this proved to be a significant challenge for him. After careful discussion and consideration, we offered him the opportunity to move to UCT Online High School for 2026, which he has gratefully accepted.

Siphamandla July completed Grade 10 through UCT Online High School, studying from our campus. This was his first year studying through UCT and it proved to be a really well-structured option and allowed us to mentor him and monitor his progress closely. The year was not without its challenges as he learnt to navigate the online platform and took responsibility for his learning, sometimes learning from hard mistakes. However, he showed resilience and determination and ended the year on a positive note.



Linathi and Zoe completed Grade 11 at Tarkastad High School and continued to receive support from WST. Due to no transport, they have had to stay with relatives in town during the school term, which has brought its own challenges. Despite this, both learners have persevered and remain committed to their studies.

Our high school bursary students attended a series of one-on-one life coaching sessions during the year. These sessions were designed to support their transition into high school and, for our older learners, to help them begin thinking more intentionally about their future goals and career pathways. The sessions also created a safe space to talk through the pressures of home life and to learn healthy ways of navigating these realities.

Isivile Ncana, our top achiever in our 2025 Grade 7 group, has been offered a bursary to UCT Online High School for Grade 8 in 2026. As a result, we will have three learners studying online from our campus next year. We are excited to see this part of our offering continue to grow and develop.

PRINCIPAL FORUM

The Eastern Cape branch of the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA) established a forum for new principals in the region. Kandas Botha joined this and they met every second week to discuss their experiences as new principals in predominantly private rural schools. The ISASA management members in the group were very supportive and provided necessary guidance on the challenges that are faced. The ISASA members are also a phone call away should we need advice on any school-related matters.

Kandas Botha has also connected with the high school principals of the schools our past students attend to establish how they are doing and how WST could support them. The feedback from the principals has been overwhelmingly positive. In 2026, the plan is to also meet with the WST past pupils to form a connection, follow their progress and offer support where possible.



TRANSPORT

Reliable transport is essential to the success of WST, particularly in our rural community where public transport is unavailable. Many learners live on farms, some up to 50 km from school, and without our buses, access to the quality education we provide would not be possible.

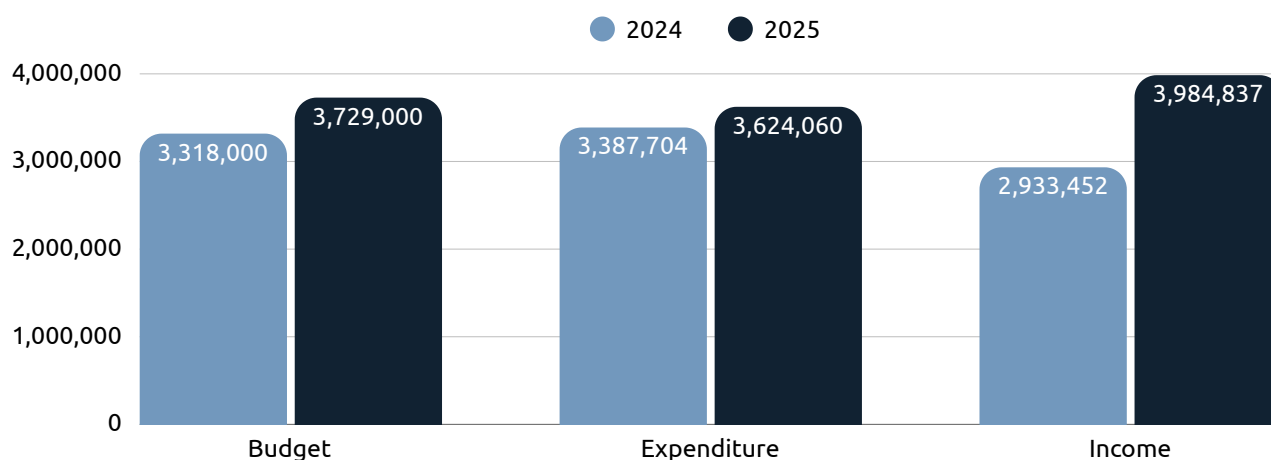
Each day, we safely transport all learners, teachers and Lucendo staff. Our three Trust-owned Quantum buses are driven by experienced drivers who navigate the challenging Winterberg dirt roads, covering approximately 700 km daily, with routes starting at 5 am and finishing around 5 pm.

Transport remains one of the Trust's largest expenses, due largely to the wear and tear caused by poorly maintained dirt roads and fuel costs. In June, the school closed for two days when slippery roads and flooded bridges made travel unsafe, as learner and staff safety is always our top priority. To improve reliability and reduce maintenance costs, the Trust adopted a strategy of purchasing a new Quantum bus annually, and a new bus was acquired in March 2025. This led to a substantial 43% reduction in maintenance costs compared to the previous year.

Previously, most transport costs were offset by a Department of Transport contract for taking high school learners to schools in Tarkastad. This contract was awarded to a different operator in 2024, creating a significant funding gap. In 2025, we covered transport through alternative funding, but we remain hopeful that the contract can be regained in the future, ensuring Winterberg children continue to have safe and reliable transport.

FINANCIALS

Our total recorded income for 2025 was R3 984 837, exceeding our budget and covering our operating expenditure of R3 624 060. This was a significant improvement compared to the previous year, when we fell short of our budget due to the loss of the Transport Subsidy. The surplus income will provide a strong start to 2026, and we hope to continue this positive momentum with the ongoing support of our funders. Apart from our operating costs, we purchased a new Quantum bus to ensure reliable transport for our learners and staff and to reduce vehicle maintenance costs. This capital expenditure was funded from the Trust's investment savings and is not included in the income and expenditure figures below.



INCOME STATEMENT

January - December 2025

INCOME	2025
Trusts, Foundations and Philanthropic Organisations	2 134 493
Corporates	533 319
Individuals	465 821
Government Subsidies	361 568
Cattle Project	175 990
School Fees	168 354
Other	145 292
INCOME TOTAL	3 984 837

EXPENSE STATEMENT

January - December 2025



EXPENSES	2025
Implementation	2 193 683
Transition Planning	86 700
Workshops - Community	19 787
Materials and Stationery	130 457
Excursions	3 615
Sport	26 925
Feeding Scheme	4 194
Equipment	42 335
Toy Library	3 172
Bursary Students	73 775
Staff Development	17 450
Administration	280 694
Transport	458 072
Networking	53 012
Maintenance	99 030
Cleaning	9 227
Cattle Project	121 932
EXPENDITURE TOTAL	3 624 060

REFLECTION ON THE YEAR

GOALS SET FOR 2025:

Explore new income streams to reach funding target

Revamp website for better marketing impact

Expand Arts & Culture opportunities

Improve the soccer field with necessary upgrades

Integrate technology into lessons

Continue working on setting up the clinic

Strengthen literacy and numeracy skills

Increase staff development opportunities

Collaborate with local schools through the Principal's Forum

Make upgrades to the ECD building

PROGRESS:

Welcomed new donors, ran a crowdfunding campaign, hosted our first fundraising event, and launched a sponsorship programme

Our new website is now live and can be updated internally going forward

Introduced weekly art, drama, music and dance sessions

Installed new goal posts, planted trees around the field and erected a bench

Teachers increased use of the IT room for research and tablets were borrowed more frequently for classroom use

Although funding is still required to launch the clinic, the room was painted and used to host a wellness station

Continued literacy and numeracy focus days and piloted the EduTen Maths programme with Grade 4 learners

Several opportunities were provided, with whole-staff development to be prioritised next year

The principal joined a forum for new principals and also met with principals from neighbouring schools

Insulation was installed in the ECD building



LOOKING AHEAD

GOALS FOR 2026:



— Improve numeracy skills



— Provide more whole-staff development opportunities



— Encourage teachers to schedule lessons in the IT room



— Upgrade Wi-Fi to support increased use of technology



— Expand our High School bursary programme



— Continue working on the clinic project



— Conduct farm visits and train parents on learning through play



— Track past pupils and gather data



— Secure more multi-year funding



— Develop a new five-year strategic plan





**WINTERBERG
SCHOOL TRUST**



Phone Number

+27 (0)45 848 0004



Visit Our Website

www.winterbergschool.org



Email

fundraiser@winterbergschool.org



Physical Address

Winterberg, Tarkastad,
Eastern Cape, 5370



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