

*Our Lady of Fatima*  
*Dominican Convent School*



*Prospectus*

*April 2014*

## PROSPECTUS

### **A) THE HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL AND ITS ACHIEVEMENTS– WHERE WE HAVE COME FROM:**

The roots of Our Lady of Fatima Dominican Convent School can be traced to the foresight of Archbishop Dennis Hurley for it was he who approached the Newcastle Dominican Sisters to establish a school to serve the growing Catholic community in Durban's northern suburbs. The land had in fact been purchased by Bishop Henri Delalle in 1926 with two further lots secured in 1948.

It was during her visit to Durban in 1948 that Archbishop Hurley asked the Prioress General of the Newcastle Dominican Sisters, Mother Bruno O'Grady, to build a convent and school in Durban North. In 1950, on a visit to England, Archbishop Hurley met the General Council at Rosary Priory and the final arrangements were made.

Two separate buildings – convent and school – were officially opened by Archbishop Hurley in the Marian Year of 1954 and were dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima.

The school was opened for classes at the beginning of 1954 when 110 pupils were enrolled from Class 0 to Standard 4. Due to the small number of pupils and teachers, the Standard 4's had to leave Fatima at the end of their first year. It was thus the first Standard 3 class that went on to become the school's first Matrics in 1961.

In addition to providing for the education of the area's Catholic children, local residents attended daily Mass in the convent Chapel and in the school hall on Sundays.

In February 1963 the Parish Church, sharing a dedication to Our Lady of Fatima, was blessed and opened. With the convent, school and church in effect sharing the same property, a close relationship developed between the Sisters, the Parish Priest and, in later years, the parish's pastoral staff. However, the Sisters also involved themselves in education and pastoral work in the neighbouring parishes of St Michael's in Red Hill and Blessed Sacrament in Virginia.

Partly as a consequence of The Second Vatican Council (1962-65), but also as a result of fewer Irish Sisters coming to South Africa, the laity began to play an increasing role in the school. Whilst there had always been lay teachers, the numbers began to increase appreciably from the early 1970's and even more so as the school increased in size from the late 1980's. This shift was exemplified by the appointment of Mrs Yvonne Eldon as the school's first lay principal in 1978, a position she was to hold with distinction until her retirement at the end of 2002. She was in turn succeeded by Mrs Audrey Jones who was principal for 11 years. The current Principal, Mrs Dee Horsfall, took over at the beginning of 2014.

Further evidence of the increasing reliance of the Sisters on the laity, was the establishment of the first Board of Governors in 1987, under the leadership of Mr John Evans.

In January 1987 catastrophe struck when workmen working on the roof of the convent were using a blowtorch and set the roof alight. Fire quickly took hold of the building. It destroyed the first floor within an hour. Fortunately nobody was injured. Every personal possession of the Sisters and most of the school's historical records were destroyed.

After three hours the fire was extinguished; the convent was gone but the school was saved. Out of the disaster, however, opportunity presented itself.



**A) THE HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL AND ITS ACHIEVEMENTS– WHERE WE HAVE COME FROM: (continued)**

The destruction of the convent and the insurance that was paid out, enabled the former quarters of the Sisters to be redesigned and rebuilt as part of the school. The reduced number of Sisters could be accommodated in a large dwelling house. After initially renting accommodation, a house adjacent to the school property was purchased by the Sisters for their convent. In 1993 a second property, next door to the first one was purchased by the school.

The incorporation and linking up of the 'old' convent building to the original school building enabled the school to improve its facilities and increase its pupil enrolment. Evidence of this is the fact that in the ten years following the opening of the new wing in 1988, the school was able to increase its enrolment by sixty percent.

A particular challenge has been the need to constantly upgrade the facilities to deliver an expanding academic and extra-curricula offering. The location of the school and the limited potential for expansion has meant that innovation and creative ideas have been necessary to optimise space.

In 1997 the Sr Catherina block was opened, providing four senior primary classes and a junior drama room. In 2005 a new wing was added to provide more science and technology laboratories, aftercare facilities, increased space in the art studios and new corridors to link the two buildings and all the classrooms on each floor. More recently, investment has been made in upgrading technology and installing air-conditioning to ensure that classrooms are comfortable and equipped for modern teaching methods.

Despite a lack of some on-site facilities, the school has been able to compete successfully in a number of different sporting codes. This has largely been due to an enthusiastic coaching staff and the use of off-site facilities such as Riverside Sports. A wide variety of cultural and outreach programmes are also offered by the school.

The school aligns itself with the norms and standards of the national education system. It writes the IEB Matriculation Examinations – an independent examination board accredited by Umalusi. We follow the CAPS Curriculum from Grade R-9 and SAGS from Grade 10-12. Our Lady of Fatima Dominican Convent School has achieved a 100% pass rate in the Senior Certificate Examination for the past thirty five years!

Continued affiliation with ISASA and the IEB has meant that the learners are well prepared to cope with the demands of tertiary education. The success of our 'old girls' and the contribution that they have made in all walks of life is testament to the foundations that are laid at Fatima.

Guiding the school throughout its first sixty years has been its commitment to uphold the values of its founders. It is this Catholic Dominican ethos that permeates every aspect of the school and which defines its uniqueness. It is this special charisma and character that is manifested by an on-going commitment to fulfil its **VISION** of:

**“Educating young women through the pursuit of  
Truth, Integrity, Loyalty and Social Justice,  
enabling them to realize their full potential.”**

It is this that will guide Our Lady of Fatima Dominican Convent School as it looks to build on the foundations laid, the successes achieved, and the lessons learned during the first sixty years!



## B) MISSION

Our Motto “VERITAS” embraces the pursuit of TRUTH in all its forms. Within our nurturing Catholic environment we work to engender an awareness of the needs of all, and extend mutual respect to the faiths and philosophies of the community we serve.

We strive to offer holistic development through quality education and the recognition of individual talents, encouraging personal growth, responsibility and critical awareness in our learners.

We are committed to ensuring that each individual’s sense of confidence, self-esteem and worth is valued and affirmed in our Christ-centred family atmosphere.

**“If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow in all ways.”  
Ephesians 4:15**

## C) CORE VALUES

Our Lady of Fatima Dominican Convent School strives to uphold and live out its **SIX** Core Values. These are:

- The Pursuit of Truth;
- Self-Discipline;
- Integrity;
- Respect;
- Loyalty; and
- Social Justice

Catholic schools do not provide education for society as it is, but for society as it should be, as envisioned in Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom of God. We have something that society needs, not that society wants. It follows that a Catholic school cannot be anything but an agent of transformation. We are oriented toward what may be, rather than toward what is. This is the great adventure of Catholic education!

## D) GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

During strategic planning workshops held with all stakeholders over the past few years, the following goals/objectives were identified for the school:

- **Catholic Dominican Ethos:** To ensure that our Catholic Dominican Ethos is manifested through a visible and tangible commitment to living our Dominican values.
- **Academics:** To ensure that our Academic Curriculum teaches values, knowledge and skills, and is supported by appropriate technology and resources, so that our learners fulfil their potential, learn to live ethically and are able to provide leadership and service in a changing world.
- **Sports:** To ensure that our Sporting Curriculum, supported by appropriate resources and facilities, enables our learners to develop their potential in an



environment that facilitates competitiveness and promotes participation and teamwork, and teaches life skills.

- **Humanities:** To ensure that our Humanities Curriculum, supported by appropriate resources and facilities, enables our learners to explore their potential and develop their talents and skills.
- **Social Responsibility and Outreach:** To ensure that our school develops a lifelong service ethos in our learners and staff, through the facilitation of meaningful involvement and contribution, for the development of local communities.
- **Staffing:**  
To ensure that our school has a skilled and motivated staff that is aligned with the school's values and supported by employment best practice within an environment that promotes harmony.

For more information on the above goals/objectives and their implementation, see the "VISION 2014 and into the future..." booklet produced by the Board of Governors.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
**SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

**This Prospectus was compiled by:**  
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