



## Contents

- From the Director p. 1 - 2
- Primary News p. 3
- Secondary News p. 4 - 8
- Other News p. 8



[Facebook](#)



[Instagram](#)



[Twitter](#)



# THE ORYX

*The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### WIS Exam Successes

Our Grade 10 students (and, every year, a handful in Grade 9) are studying for International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) qualifications. These are awarded by a [branch of Cambridge University](#).



## Cambridge Assessment International Education

At the same time, our Grade 12 students are working towards the prestigious International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma.



Ordinarily, IGCSE and IB DP exams would be conducted in May. This year, of course, that was not possible. Nevertheless, drawing on their decades of experience, these two exam boards gathered an abundance of relevant evidence and awarded certificates and diplomas based on internal assessments, predicated grades, 'mock' exam results, and, indeed, each school's recent record of exam success. In this regard, our long association with Cambridge and the IB (two decades in each case) probably worked to our advantage. They know us to be a well-established school with a long history of exam success.

### IB Diploma

Every year we compare ourselves against international averages. But with comparatively small cohorts (we've been averaging 13.4 IB DP candidates over the past ten years) it is more meaningful to look at five- or ten-year rolling averages.

Over the past ten years we have entered 134 students for the IB Diploma with a pass rate of 88% and an average score of 31 points.

Over the past five years we have entered 77 students for the IB Diploma with a pass

## Teacher Feature



**Lize van Rensburg**  
**IGCSE and IBDP Chemistry**

### ***What is your educational background?***

I hold a Diploma in Tourism and Public relations (Durbanville College), a B.Sc.Hons from the University of the Free State (UOFS) and a post-graduate certificate in education from the University of South Africa (UNISA).

### ***Where did you grow up?***

Born and bred in the fair Free State of sunny South Africa, I grew up in a small agricultural town in the Maize heartland of the country, called Wesselsbron.

### ***Where were you before Namibia?***

After teaching in South Africa for a number of years (don't ask, it's not polite), I spent the last 7 years in international schools in the UAE (ENS), Sudan (KICS), and Mozambique (AISM).

### ***What motivated you to be a Teacher?***

Serendipity ... I initially didn't want to become a teacher, because my mother is one, but then agreed to help out at a school for a little while. A little while turned into a lifetime!

**Continues on page 3**

rate of 90% and, again, an average score of 31 points.

Worldwide in 2020 the average was 30 points and the pass rate was 79%.

### **IGCSE**

As for IGCSE, over the past ten years we have received 2,584 subject results (each student usually sits 8, 9 or 10 subjects). Student work is assessed on an A to G scale with A\* being awarded to particularly excellent achievements. Of our two and a half thousand results, 23% have been A or A\* and 71% have been A\*-C.

### **An Inclusive School**

We are not an academically selective school; we are proudly inclusive. We take pride in helping all students to achieve – or even exceed – their potential whether it is achieving 44 points in the IB Diploma or just getting across the line with 24 or 25 points.

Congratulations to all our successful students, their proud parents and, of course, their teachers!

### **WIS Health & Safety COVID-19 Response Protocol**

The school is currently open for learners in Grades 10, 11 and 12. Admin staff and a number of teachers are also working at school.

In time (and soon, we hope), the school will reopen for all Grades.

It is essential that we have in place a comprehensive and rigorous protocol to ensure the wellbeing of all those who enter the school now and when all learners return.

## WIS HEALTH & SAFETY COVID-19 RESPONSE PROTOCOL

All parents should have received yesterday a copy of the *WIS Health & Safety COVID-19 Response Protocol*. It can also be found on D6 and on the [school website](#).

Please read the document thoroughly and familiarise yourself with its contents.

Note, also, that this is a living document and is likely to be updated as circumstances change and our knowledge of the virus increases.

I want to thank our nurse, Sharon Gorelick, for leading our response to the current situation and for preparing this protocol.

**Peter MacKenzie**

## Teacher Feature Continued

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

The laughs! The classroom banter, the interactions with students, the progress kids make when learning something new. That fuzzy feeling of doing something worthwhile...

**What do you think are important qualities an international school teacher should have?**

An open mind! International school teachers should have a genuine interest in people – understanding (or at least wanting to understand) the differences that make us all unique – culturally, politically, socially, economically, personally.

**What are your hobbies?**

Reading, camping, playing the piano, learning to play the Cello, and other generally lazy pursuits ...

**How would you describe your personality?**

Generous, kind, fair, diligent, honest, frank, practical, resourceful, witty, grumpy in the morning (better after coffee), with a dash of generalised anxiety.

**What is your favourite educational motto that you use with students?**

If you can read and count, you can conquer the world!

## PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year, a special welcome to all of the new families. Who would have imagined this time last year that we would be starting a new school year in remote learning? Preparing for the start of this year has certainly been different than any of us have experienced and it has also been the most challenging.

As an IB World School I believe our teachers and students are better prepared than many other schools for the challenges remote learning brings. The Learner Profile attributes of *inquirer, knowledgeable, thinker, communicator, balanced, caring, open-minded, principled, risk-taker and reflective* contribute to this and couldn't be more needed than now.

Based on what I have read and heard about facing and overcoming these challenges the key is having a positive mindset and maintaining well-being. Students have been encouraged to be open-minded, to look at what they can do and to see opportunities for growth. They have been reminded to be balanced, ensuring there is a time for work and a time for play and rest.

We are fortunate that our students are confident in their use of technology. They know how to post their work and reflections about their learning on Seesaw. Both teachers and students are able to communicate through Seesaw, Zoom or Google Meets meetings. Reflection is an important part of learning, not only for students but for teachers as well. As a school we are constantly reflecting on what we do and how we do it. The feedback from parents, students and teachers has contributed to (and will continue to) the revision of remote learning.

While these are challenging times I see opportunities for teaching and learning. Through remote learning our teachers have sought out ways to up-skill their own technology skills. Collaboration with colleagues has increased, enhanced by being able to do so online. Students are gaining more independence and responsibility for their learning; they are improving in their time management skills. They are also becoming more adept at reflecting on a piece of work.

I am optimistic that we will all be back on campus soon with learning taking place face to face. Until then, let's focus on what the students are gaining through this experience and what's going well.

Here's the link to our first remote learning Assembly for the year [Remote Learning Assembly 14 August 2020](#).

I look forward to working with you in supporting your children's learning for the 2020-2021 school year be it remotely or face to face.

Regards,  
Beth Smith

## SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

### Welcome back to a continued different learning situation



A time where VUCA is so clearly prevalent - Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity. I find this video inspiring and appropriate as a message to everyone at the start of a new academic year: [How to manage in a VUCA world:](#)

- Counter VOLATILITY with VISION.
- Meet UNCERTAINTY with UNDERSTANDING.
- React to COMPLEXITY with CLARITY.
- Fight AMBIGUITY with AGILITY.
  - Stay adaptable even in uncertain times.
  - Encourage people to learn new skills, stimulate debate, and embrace creativity

We're back in school - partially face-to-face, but mostly remotely. The Grade 10 - 12s are permitted to be in school, but the rest of the classes will still learn remotely until at least the end of August.

We need to get used to this new way of connecting and interacting with each other. Sometimes, we get frustrated and feel helpless and overwhelmed, because there just does not seem to be an end to something that is uncertain, unpleasant at times and unpredictable. But we can be thankful for a lot of things and this should give us the drive and motivation to continue and adapt to a new way of doing things - these difficult times should be seen as an opportunity.

In school, for the Grade 10 - 12 students, the first week has been positive, with the incoming IBDP1 students enjoying a two day induction, receiving their IGCSE results and getting back to learning face-to-face. The Grade 10s had the opportunity to be in school before the break - for them the second year of IGCSE starts with the challenge to establish where they are in their learning and for them and their teachers to devise strategies to get them up to speed with the expectations for the IGCSE. Our Grade 12s continue with the second year of the IBDP and certainly also have a challenging 9 months ahead.

**We wish all of our students the necessary perseverance, motivation, dedication and patience to get through this.**

In our Middle School, we welcome a cohort of Grade 6s - we are happy to have you in the Middle School. We are conscious of the difficulties this poses - you are entering a new phase in your school journey, but it is difficult to start driving along the road that you have just entered.

**We will support you and make every effort to make this transition as smooth as can be.**

Grades 7 & 8 continue their remote learning. We have adapted the routine and the way we do this and hope that this helps you manage and motivates you to hang in there.

The Grade 9s are starting a difficult journey - again, also remotely and starting a new programme, the IGCSE.

**We will make sure that we support and assist you along the way so that you can be confident that you are well prepared, even if we work with you remotely.**

Regards,  
Maggie Reiff



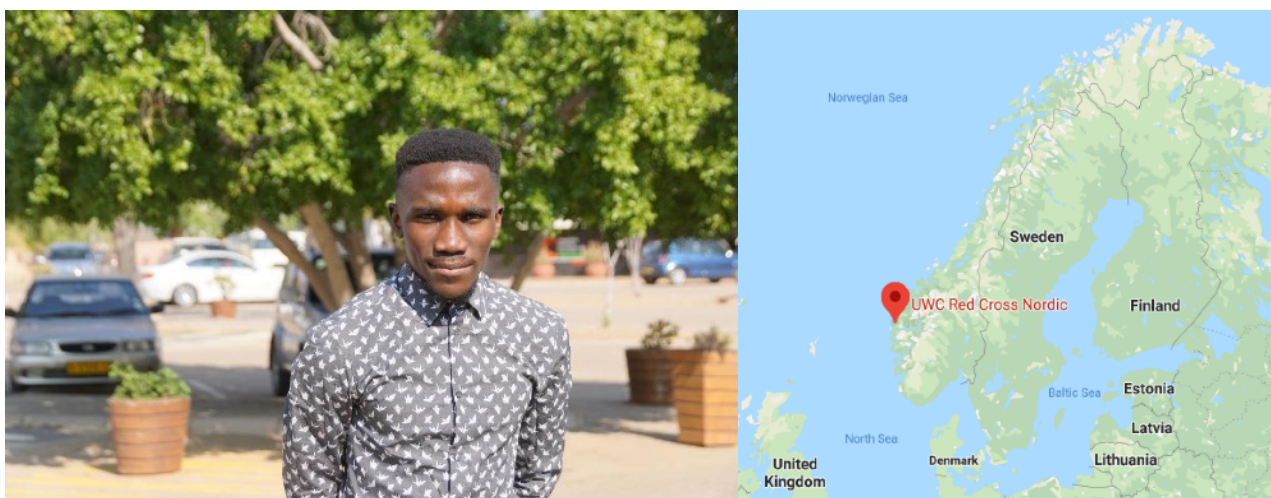
## Rafael SHILENGITHA

Windhoek International School is very proud to have a Scholarship Programme for Namibian learners from government schools.

We currently have eight scholars on 100% scholarships and, had COVID-19 not intervened, we would now have twelve. It is still our intention to add four more in 2021.

Learners to whom we award scholarships must be highly motivated and demonstrate a record of academic success. But, even more importantly, we are looking for tomorrow's leaders. We are looking for young people who are resilient, ambitious, principled and responsible.

These are the same qualities that the United World College (UWC) movement looks for so we are very pleased and very proud that one of our WIS scholars, Rafael Shilengitha, has been offered a place at the [UWC Red Cross Nordic](#).



Rafael will make the journey to the west coast of Norway later this month and will take with him our very best wishes.

He would like to thank the many members of the WIS community whose generosity has made his journey possible.

Congratulations, Rafael. We are all very proud of you!



## How to Change the World

Welcome back to WIS for another great year of learning, growing, and sharing together! As you know, we have begun the year with Remote Learning (for most of us) from home until at least September.

This is a different year of school and is unprecedented. There has never been another school year like this. Although this isn't the preferred way to start a school year we are confident we will overcome this bump in the road together and will grow to thrive as the year goes on. Words you will hear a lot this year will be RESILIENCE, GRIT, and DETERMINATION.

At the same time MOTIVATION is important. We all need a cheerleader and a reminder that yes, indeed, we are making a change in the world.

To this end I wanted to share this video with you. This video is taken from a U.S. university commencement speech given by the U.S. Navy Admiral William H. McRaven, a Navy Seal. He talks about his experiences in Seal Training and the lessons he has learned and how they apply to life. [Here is the link to the video.](#)



These lessons apply to us perfectly in our current situation and fit with the idea of how to make the most of your Secondary experience here at WIS - even in Remote Learning.

His Suggestions to help you change the world:

1. Start the day with a task completed (make your bed!).
2. Find someone to help you through the hard times (you are not alone in this journey).
3. Respect everyone (everyone deserves your respect!).
4. Life is not always fair, keep moving forward.
5. Don't be afraid to fail (it will happen - learn from it!).
6. Take risks (go on, but be reasonable).
7. Step up when times are toughest (this shows your character!).
8. Face down the bullies (yours and for others).
9. Lift up the down trodden (be the change!).
10. Never ever give up.

**Jeff Bonazzo (Grade 6 Teacher)**

**W.O.R.D.**  
**Mathew Varghese in Gr. 8 still reading for WORD during remote learning!**



## Learning the Ropes within the WIS DP

### Grade 11 Orientation – August 10-11th

After an extended break from school the Grade 11 WIS learners were anxious to return to school and be thrown right into the IB programme. Fortunately a thoroughly planned orientation awaited us - the anxious learners - the incoming Grade 11 class of twenty-one students.

Hesitant at first, the students complied with their coordinator's enthusiasm and exercised their "Risk-Taker" IB learner profile. We were given the opportunity to learn about the new students that joined the programme through various ice breaker activities. After some inspiring words from Mr. Fitzpatrick as to what to expect in the upcoming two years, we were given a thorough talk about various subjects concerning the IBDP. This gave us an insight as to how to approach the new workload we would be facing. Further into our exciting orientation, the new CAS coordinator, Ms. Teresa gave us a perceptive presentation regarding CAS. After a lunch break we were directed to Mr. Jackson-Read and Ms. Audrey for a fun team building activity. This helped us bond with the new students. Although little did we know, however, that there would be a misplaced wheelbarrow in the middle of the playing field. To end the day, we attended an assembly along with the rest of the school about safety procedures that we had to respect and how to deal with the global pandemic.

On the second day of the well-planned orientation, Ms. Sharon shared some excellent tips about health and wellness and overall that session was very informative as she told us about how to stay healthy mentally and physically during the rigorous two year academic programme. Directly after that we headed to the auditorium and had the opportunity to listen to 7 very successful people in a panel discussion entitled '*Defining Success: My Work, My World, My View.*' This session was truly inspiring because we saw how one of our classmates was very successful. Another thing we took away from this talk is that no matter what background you come from, if you work hard enough you can achieve anything. Afterwards we were given the opportunity to talk directly to these successful people and that was special because we were able to go more in-depth about what had been talked about during their presentations. One of the things that kept on coming up was that success had a different meaning for each individual and that it was distinct to one's views.





After this we nervously awaited our IGCSE results, the two of us were relieved to receive pleasantly good results. After a break, we had a talk with two former IBDP students about universities and the IBDP in general. This was intuitive because we were given a lot of significant advice from these two WIS IBDP graduates. In the end this 2-day orientation was a lively start to our IBDP journey filled with advice, motivation, and wheelbarrows.

**Padjependa Shidute & Mathis Piebac, WIS IB DP Class of 2022**

**Car Security Stickers**  
Please collect your 2020 - 2021  
windscreen sticker at the Office!



## More Car Park Progress

We are nearing the end of the work that will significantly improve our ability to control access to the campus. The projected completion date is the end of this month.

Most of the major work has been completed and we are now adding the finishing touches. Excitingly, this was the week when the CCTV cameras (six of them) were installed. They are already active.

