

Creating a School of Possibilities

Education is not merely the acquisition of technical knowledge, but the understanding with sensitivity and intelligence of the whole challenge of living... the whole structure of human existence.

by Robin Booth, Synergy Schooling, Noordhoek

Synergy Schooling is about creating opportunities for children to grow up differently.

It is about providing opportunities for parents to become more conscious of how they impact on their child's development.

It is about creating space for teachers to explore their own ideas and their own learning.

So we asked some of the parents of the school to share with us their views and experiences of choosing Synergy Schooling.

Marlene is the mother of Olivia, age 7 and joined at the beginning of the school year. I had already gone through 12 years of schooling with my older boys. When my "laatlammetjie" approached school-going age, I found myself in a real dilemma. The truth was that I did not look forward to another 12 years of homework, school sirens or the inevitable rule book for parents and learners. My other options did not excite me either. I wanted to be excited about sharing this journey with my little girl! I cautiously decided to try Synergy Schooling.

Seven months later, my daughter and I are part of a team of optimistic people who recognise the need for exploring new realities in a world that requires change in order to grow. Experiential education accepts my daughter as an individual human being with unique abilities and challenges. She is carefully nurtured. She is growing in relation to herself and the other children in a way that has made her stand firm with self confidence.

My deepest sense of relief comes from the Synergy team's belief that a new consciousness, including emotional intelligence and positive self-esteem, have become essential building blocks in our changing world. How do we value a traditional curriculum, when we are at war with each other? How do we grow when we are afraid to take risks? In a country with the highest divorce rate in the world, what is it that we need to heal

our lives? These are a few of the questions I needed to engage in.

In this process of responsible exploration, I have found an unexpected gift. As I have witnessed how the teachers respect my daughter's voice and her personal rights, I have grown more confident in expressing my voice and rights as a mother in the context of the school.

We do not pay lip service to each other as we engage in the growth of the school community—our talk centres around issues such as authenticity and integrity. I feel safe enough to be vulnerable and honest, as I realise that this is an essential ingredient when one truly desires change. It needs great courage to say "I do not know the answer—let us explore solutions together." It requires trust.

Stephne is the mother of David, age 9 and also started at the beginning of the year.

I sent my child to Synergy so that he could be part of a learning environment that cares for him as an individual discovering how to

live in this complex world. I have found that Synergy addresses children with deep caring, honour and respect. And for me this is an essential element of life that allows a child to develop their true essence, joy and full potential.

Since my son has joined Synergy, he has such a love for school. He is positive and enthusiastic. He comes home from school and enjoys sharing the new experiences he has had and the new information he has been introduced to. He is confident in his expression and definitely has shown a confidence in his nature. I believe Synergy's intimate and holistic approach has broadened his understanding of himself as an individual and in relation to others.

The school encourages parental involvement in a way that enhances the sense of community accountability for the development of the children. I.e the development of the children academically and socially has more potential when parents are included in this relationship.



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Dean is the father of Joshua, age 5. Our whole family experience at Synergy Schooling in Noordhoek has been uplifting and enlightening experience. The dedication of the Synergy Team is totally inspiring and unique... and as concerned parents Gina and I have certainly searched around seeking out the best form of schooling for our children which is always a top priority in our family development.

The focus seems to be on teaching children and parents GREAT communication skills, as we all know that ineffective communication leads to misunderstandings, and often a downward spiral. We have noticed how the Synergy Team builds the children's confidence, allowing him equal opportunity to lead and to share in each other's growth. Collectively this forms a unified spirit within the school creating a bond between parent, children and teacher.

We are privileged to be part of this process. What an empowering and creative learning environment!

Perhaps what is most clear in the sharings of the parents above is that this school is not about new age theories, or some new breakthrough technique. It seems to be about people, their relationships and about how we can all live and learn together.

The learners are encouraged to reflect on their own thinking and actions, and those of others. Here they can learn a way of living that is integrated, sane and intelligent. This process is liberating, for as we grow in awareness and understanding of our behaviour, we can see the immense potential of life and the possibility of changing our world for the better 🌱

For further information see their website at www.synergyschooling.co.za. Their discussion of some of things they do is an inspiration to anyone or any other school. Or just telephone them to see the school in action. Tel. (021) 785 5500.

OUR CHILDREN

