

## Description of Class One

We are fortunate to have 20 children in our class one. This is the pioneering class, the group that will forever be a part of the foundation of the school. They are history in the making because there are very few examples of a Waldorf class like ours. We, at the Work For Love School, are committed to creating a legacy of schooling that addresses, directly, the difficulties that children from the surrounding, disadvantaged communities are facing. Based on experience, it is our conviction that Waldorf schooling is the most suited to address these issues.

The children are from Masiphumelele and surrounding disadvantaged communities. For every child, English is their second language and perhaps, even their third or fourth. For this reason we have a wonderful Waldorf-trained Xhosa-speaking assistant who helps by teaching Xhosa 3 times a week and leading the class in traditional songs, dances and plays. In the meantime she is pursuing her own studies to become a Waldorf teacher. The main classes are all held in English so that children are exposed to English on a regular basis and can use it on a regular basis as well. We also use traditional stories as part of the curriculum so that the children retain their connection to their own culture and traditions while, at the same time, being able to embrace first world culture through the education they get, which takes them to the same place, academically, that a conventional education would.

Our class one children are taught using, among other forms of educational discovery, stories, music, art and dance and thoroughly enjoy their experience at school. In this way the children do not build up a resistance to being educated and are not made to feel as if they are not coping. In a conventional school, children with a language disadvantage often fail and are required to repeat a year. They are overwhelmed with homework in a language they are not wholly comfortable with and are therefore greatly stressed by their situation. To pass is really quite a monumental task. In our class the children do not feel this pressure. They are learning every day and they do not fear; they are eager for more. Because our curriculum is a Waldorf school curriculum, the children are taught in a child-centred way. We do not treat the child as a head that needs to be filled with information. Each child is a full human being and therefore we teach the whole child through methods that appeal to their minds, their hearts and their wills.

Our teaching is based on the Waldorf educational impulse which bases its curricula on the young child's phase of development in each year. The curriculum is designed to help the child through each phase of development so that they are prepared for the world and are empowered to lead fulfilling lives.

It is a wonderful privilege for the teacher to be one of the guides that lead the children, in this gentle way, across the bridge between where they are and where they can be.