



SOWETO SCHOOLS MAGAZINE

LEARNER OF THE MONTH

LETHABO MOKWATSI

THE PRIDE OF IKANENG



A young star whose excellence shines across academics, sport, culture, and leadership – meet the unstoppable learner who claimed the 2025 Principal's Award.

Lethabo Mokwatsi: Ikaneng's All-Round Champion

Ikaneng Primary School recently held its annual Learners' Award Ceremony on 24 October 2025, a prestigious event celebrating excellence in academics, behaviour, sports, culture, and service.

But this year, one learner stood out above them all — Lethabo Mokwatsi, the 2025 recipient of the esteemed Principal's Award (Ngcobo's Award).

This honour is reserved for only one learner in the entire school that demonstrates exceptional dedication, discipline, leadership, and all-round achievement throughout the year.

Lethabo's journey to greatness is not a sudden success — it is the product of years of consistency, discipline, and passion.

From as early as Grade 2, she has dominated academically, achieving first

position in Mathematics, English, and Life Skills. By Grade 3, she had become a multi-award recipient across all subjects, proving that she is not only bright but driven.

In her senior years, she continued to soar: top positions in academics, third place in athletics, top performer in indigenous games (kgati), and a provincial CHES award in Grade 7. Her outstanding performance in the Numeric Maths Programme, where she took first place at cluster level, further cemented her status as a rising star.

This year, in Grade 7, Lethabo once again demonstrated excellence beyond the classroom. She secured top academic positions, excelled in Visual Arts, shone in Chess, and proudly carried herself as a responsible, well-mannered leader.

Her teachers speak highly of her reliability — assignments always submitted on time, projects completed with excellence, and a committed attitude that inspires her peers. Lethabo's achievements reflect not only talent but maturity, discipline, and a deep love for learning.



What makes Lethabo truly exceptional is her humility and heart for others. Despite her long list of achievements, she remains grounded, always willing to help classmates and encourage younger learners who look up to her.

Teachers describe her as a “quiet powerhouse” — someone who leads not by loudness, but by example, respect, and kindness.

At school events and academic projects, Lethabo often steps forward to assist, showcase leadership, and motivate those around her. She embodies the spirit of Ikaneng: confident, disciplined, and community-driven.

Looking ahead, Lethabo dreams of pursuing even greater heights in high school.

She hopes to continue excelling in Maths, Science, and leadership programmes — and one day become a professional in a field where she can inspire other young girls to believe in themselves.

Her journey proves that when talent meets discipline, and when a school invests in nurturing excellence, greatness becomes inevitable. Ikaneng Primary celebrates Lethabo not only for what she has achieved, but for the exceptional young woman she is becoming.



Recent Achievements

- Cluster level Numeric Maths Champion – 1st Place
- Top academic performer across all subjects
- CHES Provincial Award recipient
- 3rd place in Athletics & Traditional Games (Kgati)
- Excellence in Visual Arts and Chess
- Consistent top performer since Grade 2

Future Aspirations

Lethabo dreams of excelling in high school, joining science and leadership programmes, and eventually becoming a professional who inspires young girls in Soweto to believe in their potential.

What Her Teachers Say:

“Lethabo is a quiet powerhouse — disciplined, respectful, and consistently excellent.”

QUICK FACTS!

Name: Lethabo Mokwatsi (12)

Grade: 7

School: Ikaneng Primary School, Diepkloof

Award: 2025 Principal's Award (Ngcobo's Award)

Hobbies: Reading, mathematics challenges, visual arts, chess, and helping younger learners

Strengths: Leadership, discipline, responsibility, high academic performance

CELEBRATING OUR 10TH EDITION

THANK YOU, SOWETO!

Dear Parents, Teachers, and Friends of Soweto Schools Magazine,

As we proudly publish the 10th edition of the Soweto Schools Magazine, my heart is full of gratitude. To every principal, teacher, parent, and learner who has supported this magazine from day one — thank you.

What started as a small idea has become a powerful platform showcasing the excellence, resilience, and brilliance within Soweto's schools. You made this possible. Your stories, your achievements, your dedication — that is what keeps this magazine alive.

As we approach the end of the year, I want to speak directly to parents. Start saving now for your child's education. Opportunities are plenty, and the earlier you prepare, the easier the journey becomes. There are investment products in the market that start from as little as R100 per month, and others from R1000, designed specifically for long-term education planning. Even small amounts, saved consistently, can change a child's future. Give them the gift of choices — the gift of freedom.

I also want to repeat an important message: don't feel pressured to buy your child a smartphone. The global movement for Smartphone-Free Childhood is growing — and now it's here in South Africa. Research is clear: early exposure to smartphones and social media harms concentration, sleep, emotional development, and learning.

Let's delay the rush. Let's give our children real childhoods — more play, more books, more curiosity, fewer screens. It's okay to say not yet. You are not depriving your child; you are protecting their mind.

To all our readers — thank you for walking this journey with us. Thank you for believing in Soweto's children and their potential. As learners prepare for exams, we wish them strength, focus, and calm hearts. We believe in you. We are proud of you. Till we meet again next year — stay safe, stay encouraged, and keep supporting our Soweto schools.



*With gratitude,
Siphiwe Ngema
Editor*



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Rising Strong: Thaba Jabula's Class of 2025

The Matric Class of 2025 at Thaba Jabula Secondary in Klipspruit has officially completed their exams — and their journey stands as a powerful testament to resilience. Throughout the year, these learners faced academic pressure, personal challenges, and the emotional weight that comes with the final stretch of high school.

Yet, despite it all, they pushed through with determination, leaning on each other and acknowledging the teachers who supported them with extra lessons, motivation, and constant encouragement.

As they close the Matric chapter, the Class of 2025 is filled with gratitude and hope. They are proud of themselves for making it to the finish line and grateful for the guidance that carried them through. Now, they await their results with optimism, believing their hard work will shine through.

For Thaba Jabula Secondary, these matriculants are not just learners — they are a symbol of perseverance, unity, and the bright future rising from Soweto's classrooms.

ABSA BANK MAKES HISTORIC DONATION TO DITAWANA



Strengthening a partnership built on trust, community, and hope



Last Friday, the 28th of November 2025, Ditawana Primary School became a place of celebration, joy, and deep gratitude as ABSA Bank delivered the biggest single donation in the history of its long-standing partnership with the school.

The event marked years of collaboration built on genuine understanding – a relationship where ABSA not only supported the school but listened closely to its struggles and aligned its help where it mattered most.

For years, Ditawana Primary has battled a persistent challenge: a lack of water caused by malfunctioning pipes. This crisis affected nearly every part of school life – from sanitation to meal preparation – leaving learners and staff distressed and often forced to pause essential daily activities.

ABSA responded with a powerful solution: two large Jojo tanks that will ensure the school has reliable access to water at all times. This donation alone is life-changing, but ABSA went even further.

In an extraordinary gesture of care, the bank also donated 600 pairs of school shoes, making sure that hundreds of children walk with comfort, dignity, and confidence. For many families, these shoes relieve a burden that often goes unspoken. Alongside this, ABSA equipped the school with 17 brand new laptops, a major step forward in improving teaching, learning, and digital literacy for both educators and learners.

As the crowd gathered on the school grounds, the spirit of appreciation was undeniable. Teachers, learners, parents, and guests celebrated not just the items donated, but the meaning behind them — a recognition of Ditawana's needs, its resilience, and its value as an educational institution serving the Soweto community.

Principal Miss Sonto Luvuno expressed heartfelt gratitude during the ceremony, saying:

"On behalf of Ditawana Primary School, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to ABSA Bank. Your generosity has touched the lives of our learners in ways that words cannot fully capture. The Jojo tanks will protect our school from water shortages, the laptops will strengthen our teaching, and the shoes will bring confidence and joy to our children."

She continued, highlighting the partnership's sincerity and importance: "What moves me most is that ABSA took time to understand our challenges. They didn't just donate — they listened. They cared. They walked with us. This partnership is a true blessing, and we are honoured to continue this journey together."

The event was filled with singing, cheering, and proud smiles from the youngest learners to the senior staff. The donations symbolize more than resources — they represent hope, restored dignity, and a belief in the potential of Ditawana's children.

This is a reminder that when corporate partners and schools work hand in hand, real transformation becomes possible. And for Ditawana Primary School, ABSA's support will be remembered for years to come as a defining moment in their pursuit of excellence.



FNB HEROES TRANSFORM TSHEBEDISANO PRIMARY



In a heart-warming display of community spirit and compassion, Tshebedisano Primary School in Pimville, Soweto, recently received a life-changing makeover – thanks to a remarkable group of FNB employees who volunteered their time, money, and effort to uplift the school.

What started as a simple desire to make a difference quickly grew into a powerful project that touched the lives of hundreds of learners.

Seeing the urgent need for dignified sanitation and a safe food-preparation environment, these dedicated volunteers initiated the renovation of both the boys' and girls' toilets, as well as the school kitchen, which is used daily to prepare meals for learners.

They didn't wait for big budgets or long proposals – they opened their hearts and their wallets, contributing from their own pockets, with additional support from FNB itself.



Their commitment has brought hope and dignity to Tshebedisano.

Clean, functional toilets and an improved kitchen mean healthier learners, improved wellbeing, and an environment where children can focus on what matters most – learning, growing, and dreaming big.

The school community extends their deepest gratitude to these everyday heroes for reminding us that ubuntu is alive and well.



Tshebedisano Primary salutes the FNB team for choosing to be part of the solution and for proving that when communities and corporates join hands, incredible change can happen.

School Trip Guide

Because learning doesn't only happen in class!

The day was filled with activities designed to inspire a love of reading. Learners participated in group reading sessions, performed poetry, and dramatized stories during assembly. Some even represented the school at Constitutional Hill in spelling bees, public speaking, and reading competitions. Notably, Ntando Nkabinde from Grade 5B secured 1st place in reading, while Boitumelo Sithole proudly took 2nd place. These achievements underscored the school's commitment to developing confident, expressive learners who see reading as both enjoyable and empowering.

Every month, we'll bring you a fresh list of exciting venues where schools can host unforgettable trips, graduations, year-end parties, or even team-building events.

Because let's be honest — sometimes the best lessons come with muddy shoes, picnic snacks, and stories learners can't stop sharing when they get home.

This Month's Top 5 Picks

1. Hennopspride Lifestyle Resort

Location: Centurion

This resort has 9 swimming pools, 20 water slides, hiking trails, caves, train rides, and picnic spots — this is the ultimate adventure getaway! Perfect for school trips, graduations, or team-building.

Entrance Fee is R150 per child

Website: <https://hennopspride.co.za/>

WhatsApp : 083 288 9915

Email: info@hennopspride.co.za

2. Green Tree Farm Yard

Location: Eikenhof

This venue is just an hour from Soweto, this farmyard offers mini-soccer, jungle gyms, trampolines, animal encounters, and so much more. A fun-filled outdoor learning experience!

Entrance Fee: R50 per child

Website:

3. The Playhouse

Location: Alberton

A fantastic indoor play venue with trampolines, climbing structures, and a cozy café for teachers. Ideal for graduation parties or fun day trips. Don't forget socks!

Entrance Fee is R100 per child (teachers free)

Website: <https://theplayhouse.co.za/>

4. Beans & Stikkies Adventure Park

Location: Honeydew

Adventure galore — waterslides, putt-putt, bike tracks, and jungle gyms. This venue guarantees kids will come home buzzing with excitement and stories.

Entrance Fee is R60 per child

Website:

<https://www.beansandstikkies.com/web/>

5. Hee Haw Party Venue

Location: Kempton Park

This place is great for graduations and year-end celebrations, this venue offers loads of entertainment to keep learners busy and happy.

Entrance fee is R50 per child

Website:

<http://heehawpartyfarmyard.co.za/>



HENNOPS PRIDE LIFESTYLE RESORT



For corporate events/ family reunions or any other big gathering, Hennopspride also offers a Private Venue with swimming pools, slides, klosk, lapas, etc for enjoyment of everyone.

Hennopspride Lifestyle Resort, situated next to the Hennops river, gives you a feeling of being out in the country.

The park at present has 9 swimming pools, 20 water slides, huge shady picnic spots, off road scenic trail, volley ball, train rides, jungle gyms.

This trail is also suitable for mountain biking as well.

ACTIVITIES ON SITE

- Scenic drives
- Big chest board
- Volley ball
- Jungle gyms
- Accommodation available

SCHOOL PACKAGES

- R120 adults
- R100 kids

CONTACT US



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083 288 9915

www.hennopspride.co.za

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Farm 48 R511, Hartebeespoort Road
Hennops River Centurion Pretoria

Beyond the Classroom: Welizibuko's Journey of Growth and Glory

Welizibuko Primary School continues to rise as one of Soweto's most inspiring examples of commitment, passion, and holistic development. Their cricket journey, which only began in 2023, has already placed the school firmly on the map.

After being adopted by Central Gauteng Lions, the team has shown remarkable growth – so much so that two of their young players were selected as ball boys for the iconic Proteas vs India match on 17 December 2023. This was a proud moment not only for the learners but for the entire school community.

The success didn't stop there. At the Soweto East Cricket Schools League Awards on 8 November, three Welizibuko players walked away as some of the best cricket players in Soweto, an achievement that reflects the school's dedication to developing sports talent.

Welizibuko's transformation is also rooted –literally—in the soil of their thriving school garden. With strong support from the SGB, the garden has become one of the school's proudest projects.



Learners participate actively, planting, watering, and nurturing vegetables that are later used in the school's daily meals.

The garden teaches responsibility, teamwork, and the importance of sustainability, while also introducing children to the world of agriculture and food production. This hands-on learning experience helps learners understand where food comes from and encourages a healthy respect for nature and nutrition.

Together, the cricket achievements and the flourishing garden project tell a powerful story: Welizibuko is growing champions – on the sports field and in the soil – shaping confident, skilled, and grounded young leaders for the future.



HOW EVERYDAY FAMILY LIFE SHAPES OUR CHILDREN'S FINANCIAL FUTURE

The Special Edition: When the letter arrives

There is a moment many young people dream about long before they know its weight. A message arrives, 'You have been accepted'. A simple sentence that carries years of sacrifice, prayer, small miracles, and quiet hopes.

In many homes, this moment is shared. It belongs to everyone who stretched, saved, and sacrificed so a child could reach this point. It is a family victory.

But there is something most families do not realise: Acceptance does not guarantee a space at university. Registration is first-come-first-served. And in the same way that money gets stretched at home, opportunities can slip away quietly if action is delayed.

Why acting fast matters

South African universities receive hundreds of thousands of applications each year – far more than they can accommodate.

- One university processed 693,990 applications for just 10,900 spaces.
- Another had 290,600 applications for 8,600 spots.

Nationally, millions apply, but only about 200,000 first-year students are placed.

This means an acceptance letter is not a guarantee; it's a race against time.

Registration is first-come-first-served, and spaces can close within days. Families who wait for NSFAS confirmation or delay decisions risk losing opportunities that were already earned.



Home: The Hidden Classroom of Money

Before the Letter: Quiet financial readiness at home

In households where resources are tight, planning is often done in whispers:

'Let's keep R200 aside.'

'Let's not touch that money.'

'Just save a little, you'll need it in January.'

This is the home preparing for a moment it hasn't yet seen, but deeply believes in.

When matric results are released, acceptance letters follow within days. Registration opens almost immediately.

Families who are not financially ready at this point risk losing a place that was already earned.

These whispered plans teach children something profound: money is not only saved for emergencies, sometimes it is saved for opportunities.

When the Letter arrives: Joy meets urgency

An acceptance letter feels like the finish line, but universities make something very clear:

Spaces are limited and registration cannot be guaranteed.

Being admitted does not guarantee registration. Registration will be allowed on a first-come-first-served basis.

If all spaces get filled... registration will close.

💡 Takeaway: What this means for Parents & Students

- A university acceptance letter is not the finish line - it is the starting point.
- Registration is first-come-first-served, and spaces fill fast.
- Do not wait for NSFAS confirmation before registering.
- Save in advance so finances don't delay you when the moment arrives.
- Check email and portal updates, that is where official information lives.
- The family's readiness shapes the child's opportunity.



About the author

Boniswa Siwundla Madikizela CA(SA) is a financial literacy advocate, educator, and founder of FLIC_SA. As a Senior Lecturer at the University of Johannesburg, she brings over a decade of experience to her mission: helping families and communities understand how financial habits are passed down and how to shape them with intention.



THEMBU PRIMARY: RISING STARS OF SOWETO SPORTS



Soccer and Netball Teams Bring Home Glory and Inspire a New Generation of Champions

Thembu Primary School in Pimville continues to cement its reputation as one of Soweto's most dynamic schools in sports development. Under the dedicated leadership of Principal Ms EN Ntabeni, the school prides itself on nurturing confident, disciplined, and well-rounded learners through a strong culture of sport and teamwork.

The soccer team recently brought great honour to the school after securing 2nd place in the Soweto School Soccer Tournament.

Their journey began through a Casamia Biscuits challenge, where schools collected empty Krunchy Nax packets to qualify for the Top Five Tournament. After overcoming three tough opponents, Thembu's boys advanced to the finals and claimed the R2 000 second prize, alongside 15 bales of snacks, participation incentives, and a full soccer kit.

Their determination and sportsmanship have inspired pride across the school community.

Not to be outdone, the school's netball team continues to flourish. With coaches who begin nurturing talent from as early as Grade 1, Thembu has built a strong foundation for future stars.

Their commitment was rewarded when they were invited to participate in the District Pep Mini Netball Tournament at Laerskool Esperanza. The experience exposed the learners to peers from diverse schools and offered exciting activities such as face painting, team T-shirts, sports bags, bibs, balls, and treats.

Every player walked away with a certificate and a Pep voucher, boosting their confidence and igniting dreams of becoming future South African netball champions.



Junior MCs from Hlakaniphani Shine at the Back to School Party



Two bright learners from Hlakaniphani Primary — Confidence Ndlovu and Sinazo Madi — were given the incredible honour of serving as Junior MCs at this year's Back to School Party, a high-profile national gala hosted by the Adopt-a-School Foundation under the leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The annual event brings together business leaders, educators, and community stakeholders to celebrate education and raise funds for school improvements across South Africa.

As part of their role, Confidence and Sinazo helped guide the programme with confidence, clarity and charm — representing not only their school but the entire Soweto learning community with pride.

One of the most unforgettable moments of the evening was when they had the rare opportunity to meet President Cyril Ramaphosa in person. For the two young stars, shaking the president's hand and sharing the stage with national leaders was a life-changing experience that they will cherish forever.

The event itself raised millions to upgrade infrastructure, provide resources and support wellbeing programmes for under-resourced schools. But for Hlakaniphani, Confidence and Sinazo, the night meant something far deeper.

It was a powerful reminder that discipline, excellence and dedication can open doors to places many young people only dream of. Their achievement has inspired learners throughout the school, proving once again that greatness lives in our township classrooms.

Hlakaniphani, we salute you — and to Confidence and Sinazo, may this milestone be the beginning of even bigger dreams!





IKHONO LOKUKHOLWA NEMIGOMO – ISIZINI YOHLELO NEMIKHOSI

Umlayezo kaMfundisi Nkosi

Sesifikile futhi isikhathi esikhethekile sonyaka – isizini yamaholide nemikhosi. Yisikhathi sokuphumula, sokuba nomndeni, nokujabulela izibusiso esizitholile unyaka wonke. Kodwa futhi yisikhathi lapho izingane zethu zidinga khona ukuqondiswa, ukuthandazelwa, nokuvikelwa kakhulu.

Bazali bethu abathandekayo, ngiyanicela ukuthi njengoba singena kule sizini ejabulisayo, ningakhohlwa ukubeka izingane zenu emthandazweni nsuku zonke. Siyazi ukuthi uma sekuyisikhathi samaholide, izingane ziyathanda ukuzijabulisa, zikhululeke, zidla – kodwa lapho kukhona inkululeko enkulu, kudinga ukuvikeleka okukhulu. Ukuthandaza yisivikelo esikhulu esingasinikeza izingane zethu.

Ngiyanikhuthaza futhi ukuthi nilondoloze ubudlelwano obuhle emakhaya. Hlalani nioxoa nezingane zenu, nibafundise ngothando, ngenhlonipho, nangokubaluleka kokuhlala beqaphile. Izikhathi zamaholide ziye zibe yingozi kwezinye izingane ngenxa yokungabikhona kwesiqondiso. Bazali, indawo ephephile iqala ekhaya.

Ekugcineni, ake sikhumbule ukuthi lo nyaka ubunzima bawo, izinselelo zawo, kodwa nangaphezulu, izibusiso zawo. Masibonge kuNkulunkulu ngokusihambisa kuze kube lapha, masimthande, simhloniphe, sihlale sisondele kuye. Nginifisela nonke amaholide aphephile, anothando, anezibusiso. Futhi izingane zethu – ziphathe kahle, ziphumule kahle, zibuye ziphephile.

BOOK REVIEW

Book Review: This Book is Boring!

By Benoit Knox

Last month, I found myself at Exclusive Books in Mall of Africa — and let me tell you, I walked straight into a magical world of storytelling. The launch of *This Book Is Boring*, a children's book by the energetic and wonderfully imaginative Benoit Knox, was nothing short of spectacular. You'd think a book with that title would be dull, right?

Well, the author proved us wrong the moment he opened the first page and brought the story to life right there between the bookshelves

Parents gathered on one side, kids on the other — but soon EVERYONE was leaning in, eyes wide, with little bursts of giggles filling the space.

Benoit didn't simply read; he performed the story. He acted out the scenes, shifted voices, animated his face — and the room was SOLD.

Even adults who came just to browse forgot what they were looking for and joined the crowd, captivated like children.

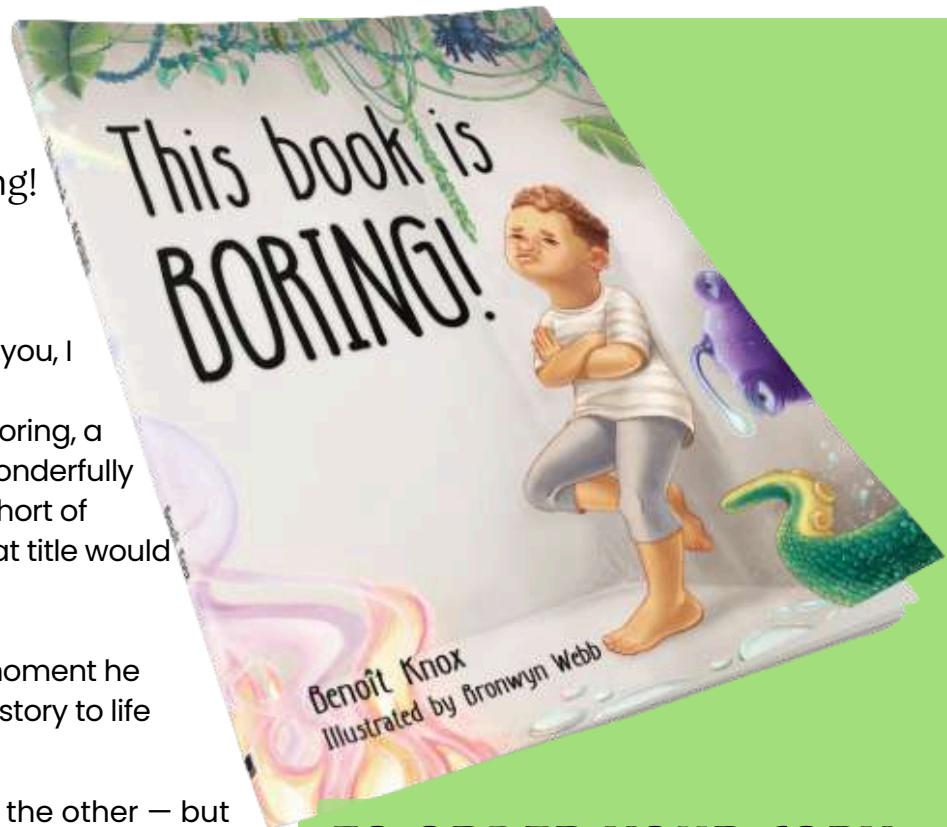
The book follows a young boy who is terribly bored. His mother suggests he reads a book instead of sitting in front of the TV. Like many kids, he resists — after all, "reading is boring," right?

But what unfolds is clever reverse psychology: through humor, simple sentences, and expressive illustrations, the book pulls children INTO the story. They laugh, they point, they start completing lines, and before you know it — they're READING.

That's the magic of this book. It's light. It's fun. It's beautifully illustrated. And most importantly, it's an easy and inviting read for children who don't think they like reading. As I watched the kids react at the launch, I saw exactly why this book works. It doesn't force them — it entices them.

The launch was a massive success, and as a parent, teacher, or anyone raising a young reader, I can confidently say this book is a MUST-HAVE. With the festive season around the corner, *This Book Is Boring* will make an amazing Christmas gift — especially for children who are still warming up to reading.

Trust me, nothing about this book is boring.



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Soweto Schools Magazine is now distributed to more than 10 000 parents in Soweto via Email & WhatsApp.



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13 December 2025 – 13 January 2026

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- 3 Interact daily with **Dr. Anke DeBeer** to ask questions, receive support and further advice if needed
- 4 Reflect, learn, be challenged, laugh, love and reconnect with your family, ready for the new year!

