

New science lab at Hyde Park Primary

LILLIAN AMOS
LILLIAN.AMOS@ACM.CO.ZA

Hyde Park Primary School in Fairways is the latest school in the Grassy Park area to receive a science laboratory, thanks to a partnership between non-profit company Advancing Knowledge, Garden Cities Archway Foundation and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED).

Launched last month, the modern science laboratory is expected to make the learning and teaching of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) a lot easier.

Professor Shaheed Hartley, director of Advancing Knowledge, said the project started in 2004 with a focus on teacher development in science.

"Initially it was a training programme for teachers, and then learners became involved when science clubs were developed at schools and from there on it exploded.

"Our aim is to build a culture and passion for science learning, as many learners shy away from Stem subjects. Science happens in a laboratory and none of the schools had laboratories.

"I approached Garden Cities

Archway Foundation, and in 2011, we launched our first laboratory in Robertson. In 2016, the WCED came on board. We split the cost between the three.

"The process is that we offer training, look at the passion and commitment from the teachers, security, and management structure of the schools before we bring the infrastructure.

"We have to start with the basics in terms of supporting teachers to have the confidence to teach science with an advanced level of understanding, knowledge and skills. Similarly, we have to be creative in providing learners with opportunities that will draw their interest and willingness to learn science."

John Matthews, the CEO of Garden Cities Archway Foundation, said: "Most schools don't have this facility, and with it, they can compete on an equal footing with other institutions. We would like to do more of this, but we need other corporates to partake."

Principal Malcolm Pinto was confident that the new facility would play a vital role in teaching as well as practice and hopes that it will plant a seed in the minds of their pupils to become the next generation of engineers, technol-



■ Principal Malcolm Pinto, Professor Shaheed Hartley, Myrtle February from the Archway Foundation and WCED circuit manager Thandi Jaftha.



■ The new science lab boasts equipment that will help with the learning and teaching of science, technology, engineering and maths.

ogists and scientists.

"This is one of the best opportunities that our learners are going to have and we can ignite a spark, interest and love of science in them. You never know, maybe one of the kids who learn from these science labs will be able to solve our energy crisis because it is such a good foundation," he said.



■ Hyde Park Primary School principal Malcolm Pinto in the new science lab.