



WOODRIDGE PREPARATORY

MORE THAN A SCHOOL, AN EXPERIENCE



THIS ISSUE

HEAD'S EDITORIAL

WALKING WILD WITH: JOSÉ A. NEVES

GREAT TRI/Y TRAINING

MERRELL MAMMOTH ADVENTURE RACE

RIVER RACE

SAVE THE DATE : PUPIL-LED CONFERENCE

INTERHOUSE GALA

CRICKET & WATER POLO FESTIVAL

FUN DAY



FEBRUARY 2026 / issue #3

www.woodridge.co.za



Homework vs Consolidation at Woodridge Preparatory

Dear Families,

The past few weeks at Woodridge have been full in the very best sense of the word.

From the energy and determination of the River Race, to the colour and camaraderie of our Inter House Gala, to hosting nine schools for our Girls Under 13 Water Polo Festival and seven independent schools for our Cricket Festival, our campus has been alive with spirit and connection. Our 90th Spitbraai was another special highlight, families gathered under the stars, staff and parents sharing conversation and laughter, celebrating both our heritage and our shared future.

These moments remind us that school life is rich. It is vibrant. It is relational.

Yet they also remind us of something important.

Children's days are full.

They are learning, competing, performing, thinking, socialising, and growing. They are stretched academically and physically. They are navigating friendships, expectations, and their own developing sense of identity.

Which leads to a vital question:

What should happen after school?

If we are intentional about what happens during the school day, we must be equally intentional about what happens beyond it.

That is why, at Woodridge Prep, we are clear about our approach to homework.

So, *why are we a "no homework" school - and what do we send home instead?*

Jenna Louw, our Prep Head of Academics, shared the following information to guide parents on this topic.

At Woodridge, we are intentional about what happens after school. Family time, sport, downtime, reading for pleasure, play, sleep, and children simply being children are not "extras"; they are part of healthy development and, ultimately, part of academic success too.

That is why Woodridge is a no-homework school in the traditional sense.

What we mean by "Homework"

When parents hear "homework," they often picture what many of us grew up with: pages of extra work, long tasks, projects completed late at night, and children spending hours at a desk after an already full school day.

The research on this kind of homework is clear enough to guide best practice:

- A major review of homework studies found little to no relationship between homework and achievement in primary school, with stronger effects only appearing as pupils get older.
- Researchers have also highlighted that too much homework can reduce well-being, increasing stress and cutting into sleep and family time, which, ironically, can work against learning.
- The American Psychological Association summarises the overall picture well: the impact depends heavily on age, quantity, and quality, and "more" is not automatically "better."

None of this means we lower expectations. On the contrary, we are deliberate about protecting the practices that genuinely improve long-term learning.

So, at Woodridge, we avoid volume-based homework (busy work), because it does not reliably add value for younger learners and can create unnecessary pressure at home. Instead, we send home short, targeted consolidation.

What we mean by “Consolidation”

Consolidation is:

- Purposeful practice of an essential skill already taught at school.
- Short and doable tasks (think minutes, not hours).
- Confidence-building, not conflict-creating tasks.
- Consistent; small steps, repeated over time.
- Focused on automaticity (so core skills become secure and free up thinking for deeper learning).

This is not about “more work.” It’s about the right work. As Mrs Kennedy so beautifully put it, consolidation is like brushing your teeth. Do it every day; wonderful, miss a day or two: it’s not a disaster. But stop altogether? That’s when problems start to show.

What ‘Consolidation’ looks like across the school

Foundation Phase (Grades R–3)

You may see consolidation such as:

- Reading (decodable / levelled / reading for enjoyment, depending on the child).
- High-frequency words/phonics words.
- Number bonds and basic facts.
- Times tables foundations (where developmentally appropriate).

These are the building blocks. When they become automatic, children cope better with the increasing complexity of learning in later grades.

Grades 4–6 (Intermediate Phase)

Consolidation continues, still short and focused:

- Reading (fluency + comprehension through regular reading).
- Spelling/word study.
- Number bonds, tables, mental maths practice.

Mastery of these core skills, combined with balance and well-being, produces learners who perform strongly not just in primary school, but in high school and beyond.

Grade 7 (Preparing for the College)

Grade 7 does look different, and intentionally so. As we prepare learners for the expectations and structure of the College (including subject teachers and more formal assessment demands), Grade 7 pupils receive subject-specific homework tasks.

This shift is not “more for the sake of more.” It is a supported, structured transition into a new phase of schooling, building independence and responsibility in measured steps.

Why we believe this is the best approach

Our goal is to develop pupils who are:

- Secure in the basics.
- Curious and engaged.
- Able to think deeply (not just to complete tasks).
- Healthy, balanced, and ready to learn each day.

The evidence consistently warns against excessive homework, particularly when it becomes a nightly battle or a drain on well-being. At younger ages, the academic gains from heavy homework loads are, at best, limited. We therefore choose a model that values *quality over quantity* — one that strengthens mastery, protects well-being, and keeps families onside rather than overwhelmed.

How parents can help at home (without turning home into “school”)?

The most powerful support is simple:

- A calm routine (sleep matters more than another worksheet).
- A reading habit (even 10–20 minutes daily adds up).
- Quick recall practice when sent home (words/bonds/tables).
- Conversation: ask your child to explain what they learnt during the day.

These habits build confidence and reinforce learning without eroding family life.

In Summary

Woodridge Preparatory is not “anti-learning at home.”

We are anti-busywork and pro-balance.

We hold high expectations.

We value mastery.

And we will always prioritise what truly helps our pupils grow — academically, emotionally, and socially — increasing independence and responsibility appropriately as pupils move toward high school expectations.

Yours Sincerely

Cliff Reed



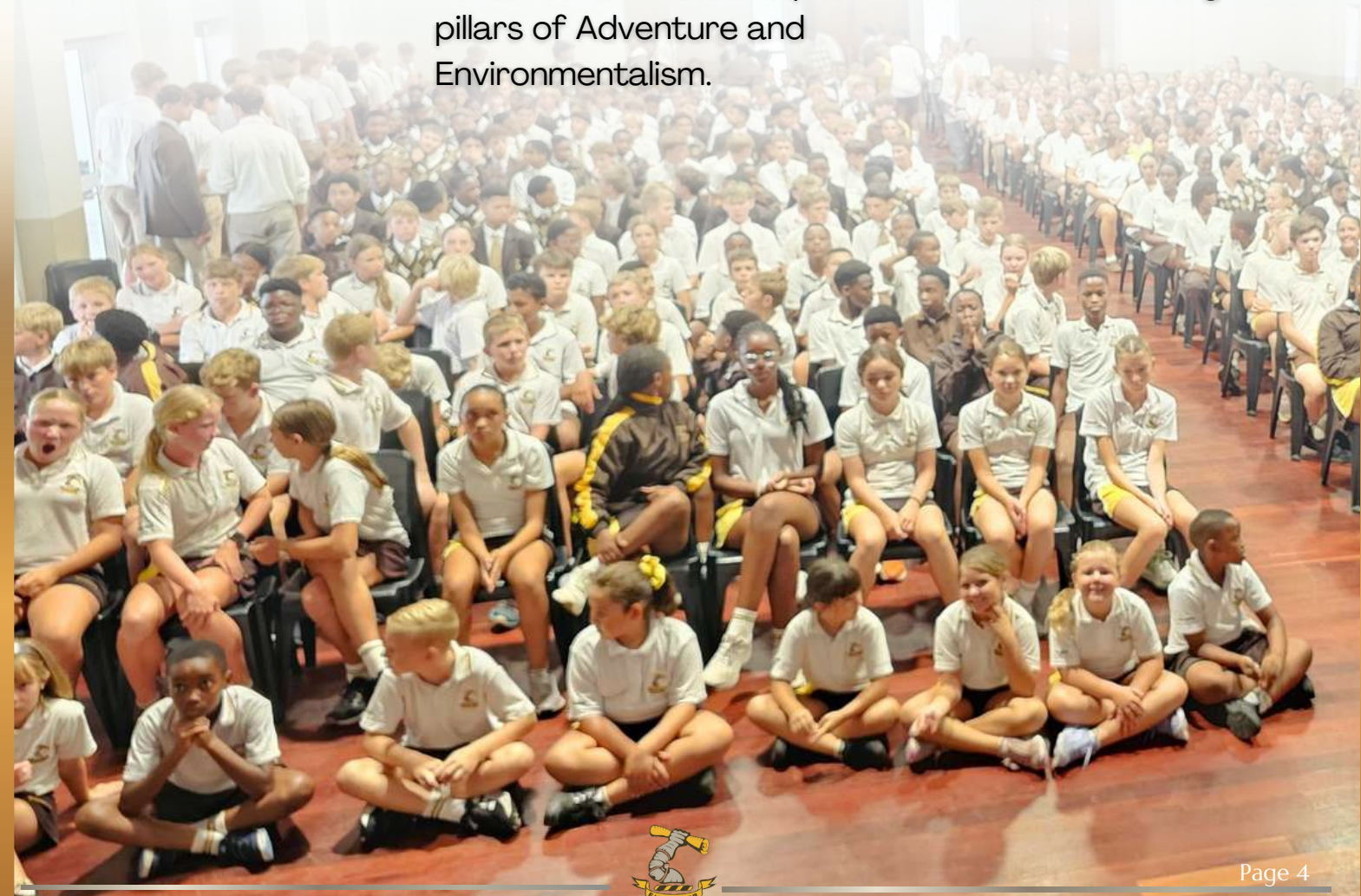
WALKING WILD WITH:

José A. Neves

José captivated pupils with stories from his remarkable 605 km, three-year journey walking the full length of Kruger National Park — fence-free, wild, and untamed.

More than an adventure tale, *Walking Wild* is a compelling memoir of survival, conservation, and deep respect for the wilderness. From nights under the stars with wildlife nearby, to navigating rivers, storms, and real conservation challenges, his experiences strongly reflected our Round Square pillars of Adventure and Environmentalism.

An author, businessman, endurance athlete, and nine-time Ironman, José embodies resilience, purpose, and a strong commitment to conservation. We are grateful for his visit, his inspiring message, and his generous donation of books to our library.





G R E A T T R I / Y T R A I N I N G

We are incredibly proud of our Grade 7 pupils for embracing the challenge of the upcoming Great Tri/y and showing admirable resilience and grit in their preparation. We wish them well as they prepare for this outdoor expedition, which will stretch them beyond their comfort zones while building teamwork, perseverance, and confidence.



MERRELL
MAMMOTH
WOODRIDGE
ADVENTURE RACE

10 - 12 April 2026

**WOODRIDGE COLLEGE, PORT
ELIZABETH**



Mammoth Woodridge AR

Adventure racing is typically a multidisciplinary team sport involving navigation over an unmarked wilderness course. The principal disciplines in adventure racing include...

 Mammoth Woodridge AR



RIVER RACE

At our recent River Race, the children had a wonderful time enjoying the sunshine, competing together, and earning points for their houses

Kingfisher emerged as the overall winner, and all pupils showed commendable behaviour throughout the day.

The children were also delighted to spot some beautiful dolphins at the beach — **a rare privilege** — and they watched the sight in awe.



SAVE THE DATE

*Come and see our learning
come to life!*

17 March 2026

Pupil-led Conference

Time: 14:00 – 18:00
Venue: Prep Classes





The annual Inter-House Swimming Gala was an outstanding success, with pupils competing fiercely for valuable house points while showcasing house pride and spirited competition.

The pool was alive with healthy competition, while the stands echoed with vibrant cheers. In a closely contested showdown, Kingfisher was ultimately outplayed by Loerie.

Our sincere thanks to Mrs Van Eck for her meticulous planning and seamless execution of a truly memorable event.



As part of our 90th-anniversary celebrations, Woodridge Prep hosted two exciting sporting events during the half-term break.

The U13 Boys Cricket Festival featured 7 teams from other schools from as far as Zambia, Cape Town, and beyond, enjoying perfect weather and competitive matches.

The inaugural U13 Girls Water Polo Tournament (see picture on the next page), welcomed 9 teams from Somerset to East London, with players showing impressive skills and team spirit over three days on campus and at the Seaview Eco Pool.

Thank you to our participating schools, coaches, parents, and staff for celebrating 90 years of sport, community, and excellence at Woodridge Preparatory School.



U13 BOYS
CRICKET FESTIVAL



WATER POLO FESTIVAL



1936-2026
92
WOODRIDGE
PREPARATORY

U13 GIRLS
WATER POLO TOURNAMENT



1936-2026
92
WOODRIDGE
PREPARATORY



FUN DAY



The Foundation Phase Fun Day was a perfect chance to unwind, play games, splash in the pool, and soak up the sun with friends. Smiles were everywhere as the children zoomed down the foaming, slippery water slides and posed for photos—an exciting day, full of laughter and fun!

