



TWO OCEANS GRADUATE INSTITUTE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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Situational Analysis

The Tshwane Muslim School, previously known as Pretoria Muslim School, is a part of my community, Laudium; it is a part of my childhood school memories and in many ways, a part of who I am. It is where I schooled from the tender age of 11 years till, I matriculated in 2001. Two of my children, currently in Grade 7 and Grade 10, are students at the school. The Tshwane Muslim School has shaped who I am and still continues to shape who I become.

Historical conditions

Tshwane Muslim School was first established in 1990, in the small town of Laudium in Pretoria, Gauteng. First named the Pretoria Muslim School, it started with a handful of classes, a small teaching body and a vision to become an institution that was founded on excellence in both an academic and Islamic education. Many of the teachers and staff members have worked at the school for many years with one teaching commenting that the school has been her home for almost 25 years.

Tshwane Muslim School was one of the first Islamic schools that was built in South Africa and stands now as a well-established and recognised school across the country. From its humble beginnings, the school has evolved, had a change of name - post democracy, and has grown substantially. In 2020, the school's matric results listed them in the top-ten schools in the country. The school has had four principals since inception. The current principal, Mohamed Badsha, said that whilst there have been many new challenges over the last two-years, Tshwane Muslim School still remains determined and driven to provide distinction in education.

The school's website describes that its mission statement aims at, **"providing a sound Islamic and Secular Education in order to develop the child's moral, spiritual, intellectual and physical character in accordance with the Laws of Allah and the example of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)."**

This holistic look at education, with a strong link to the religion of Islam, forms the basis of much of the school's religious conditions, social conditions as well as the economic and even physical conditions of the school.

I remember the very first time I stepped into the school, it was only a fraction of the size with a handful of teachers – however, now walking in as a teacher and acknowledging the growth and development that has taken place; makes me reflect on the responsibility I have as a teacher; to give my best to this institution, whose history proves that it will take nothing less. This made me re-

assess my lesson observations, lesson plans and rationale behind becoming a teacher, as it was evident that this school had high expectations which I would have to meet. Looking at the historical conditions of the school gave me a fervour and newfound excitement for the upcoming teaching time.

Religious conditions

The school is registered with the department of education as an Islamic school. This means that the school incorporates both an academic-secular syllabus as well as an Islamic syllabus. The school therefore offers a variety of Islamic subjects such as Islamic history and Islamic jurisprudence. Following Islamic rulings, the school also has adjusted rules and regulations applicable to Islamic law. An example of this is that there are separate courtyards and classrooms for boys and girls from Grade 4 to 12. Secondly, the uniform follows Islamic dress code. There are also separate staff rooms for male and female staff and lastly, the school offers 'hifz classes' which are specialised lessons, aimed at the memorisation of the Holy Quraan. Whilst the school does incorporate an Islamic ethos, the deputy principal has mentioned that there is no legislation at the school denying students, teachers or staff members who are from different religious denominations. This he says, falls in line with Islamic teachings, where respect and kindness towards others is of utmost importance.

The school follows departmental regulations and rules in terms of time allocations, term dates, subject time allocations, ground rules, Umalusi regulations, as well as assessments. However, there are certain religious holidays, such as the two days of Eid (Islamic holiday) which the school recognises as a school holiday.

The school's ethos and focus are to bridge and develop learning through both an intellectual and spiritual connection. This means that whilst learners are expected to follow national education standards, the Tshwane Muslim School also teaches learners the importance of God consciousness and striving to a Higher Purpose. This is encapsulated in the school's motto, which reads, 'Learn Good. Do Good, Spread Good.'

Being an Islamic school, the school incorporates much of what is also important to me as a Muslim. Acknowledging the religious condition of the school, means that I too must practice and teach in a way that displays respect and regard for the Islamic ethos and environment. From the way I dress, to the topics and behaviour I display, I should at all times maintain good character as a teacher welcomed into this environment.

Physical Conditions

The Tshwane Muslim School was designed by local architect, Aziz Tayob with the aim and objective to create a space that promoted learning and well-being. The school spans approximately 10 000m² and houses 3 courtyards – a foundation phase courtyard (Grade RR – Grade 3); a boys' courtyard (Grade 4 – Grade 12) and a girls' courtyard (Grade 4 – Grade 12). The school has two tuckshops on site, two school halls, a prayer facility (Jamaat Khana), and four recreational areas, which include, jungle gyms, a Netball court, two soccer turfs and sporting grounds. Interestingly enough, the school does not have classrooms on another level, the majority of the school sits on one level, except for the female staff room and prayer facilities, which are accessible via one flight of stairs. The school lies adjacent to one of the largest mosques in the area, Darus Salaam Masjid. The school has facilities for many support staff members to stay on the premises. It has beautiful garden spaces with many trees and shaded areas, where learners can enjoy break time. Classrooms house approximately 24 - 30 learners and many of the classrooms have smartboards/projectors in addition to the chalkboard.

The school has one main office block, which houses the principal, deputy principals, secretaries, financial departments, as well as a printing room, where teachers and staff can do much of their printing and paperwork. There are three staff rooms, and many smaller management, or HOD offices around the school area. The school is situated close to many town amenities such as shops, clinics, and housing estates.

Many of the learners and teachers stay within a 5 to 35 minute driving distance from the school and there are many children who travel to school via school transport, taxi services or by foot.

The school offers a variety of extra-curricular activities, ranging from sporting activities such as soccer and archery to crafting and a cub scouts programme, which runs on a Friday afternoon.

The school has recently started a mentoring and life-coaching facility, on school premises, which learners can have access to at no charge. This is with an aim to promote empathy, kindness, and holistic development for the students.

The school has two representative council of learners (RCL), one from the intermediate phase (Grade 7) and the second in the senior phase (Grade 11-12). These learners are involved with assisting other students and teachers in daily tasks as well as co-ordinating projects, such as lunch-programmes, Winter drives, feeding schemes and events and activities which take place at the school.

The school's finance department said that the school's fees were fair and mentioned that the school offers many subsidies and bursaries to many of its students. The school is still expanding as it plans

to construct another recreational facility as well as a few more classrooms and offices, however, these changes will be applicable to next year.

The school uniform for grade RR and R learners is a navy pants and either light blue or navy blue t-shirt or golfer. From grade 1 to 12, the learners wear a navy Islamic uniform, with boys wearing a shirt style long top with a pants and girls wearing a dress and pants. Girls wear a white scarf and boys a white, Islamic hat called a, toppee.

In my first day, I realised that the school is very large and because of the spilt of girls' and boys' courtyards, coupled with the fact that teachers move to classrooms, not the students; I needed to wear comfortable shoes, so that I could move easily, efficiently and effectively. Also, the physical conditions of the school, allowed me to see and interact with learners from a variety of grades, as the school had learners from grades RR to 12. I observed many of the learners during break duty apart from classroom observations, which I gave me further sense of the context and profile of many of the learners and helped with my lesson planning.

Economic conditions

The student body at the school ranges from students across different income levels, therefore, the school has to take a variety of economic factors into account. One of which is that not all students have access to the same technological expectations, many do not have access to WiFi or a smart device. This means that the school cannot invest too much into online or technological systems, as the student body cannot be taught with these devices only. During the pandemic however, they school had to incorporate more training and online platforms such as zoom, and Google classroom. These platforms have been well-received with positive feedback from the teachers, students and parent community. In 2020, the school had to incorporate many new protocols regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. The school implemented various screening stations for staff and students, notice boards addressing Covid-19 protocol, new rules regarding learners being dropped off at school, separate areas for isolation, if the need arose as well as a change of classroom structure, to suit Covid-protocol. These changes affected many economical factors; however, the school deputy principal, highlighted, that everything needed to be in order and at a high standard of safety and precaution, as the learners and staff members health and well-being was of utmost importance.

As a teacher at the Tshwane Muslim School, I needed to understand that every student did not have access to the same economic environment. Through my observations, I realised that importance of

asking learners if they needed physically printed notes, as not all learners had access to e-copies. I also assisted with Covid-19 screening and protocol at assembly and needed to remind learners of the importance of social distancing and wearing a mask. Over the last week, I also realised, that as a teacher, the global economic environment can change quickly and affect teachers and schools drastically. For this reason, a teacher cannot work only at their “own” work, but must form part of the school, share the responsibility and workload and learn to adjust and assist the school as best as they can. By getting involved with the assembly, break duties, administration office; I realised to be a teacher meant more than just standing in front of a class and teaching your subject.

Social conditions

The Tshwane Muslim School believes very much in uplifting and working towards social upliftment of the community. The school is involved with many academic, cultural and community-based projects. Some of the academic activities include: Readathon, World Knowledge Olympiad, Mathematics, English and Afrikaans Olympiads, Story Championships, Book Launches. Some of the cultural activities include: father and son’s hiking morning, Quraan festivals and workshops, Islamic educators workshops and The Mothers and Daughters Day Fair. Some of the community-based projects are: outreach programmes – which include feeding schemes, winter warmth drives, water drives etc; stress-management workshops, Grandfathers’ club and the Ramadaan programme, where learners visit various underprivileged communities offering support. The chairman of the board, Mr Dockrat, said that giving back to those in need is a pillar on which Islamic belief is built and therefore, it forms an important part of the school ethos.

My classroom

As mentioned, at the Tshwane Muslim School, the classrooms are fixed to grades, not subjects, therefore, I did not have one specific classroom. However, most of the classrooms have a similar layout. They have face-brick walls, large windows, are equipped with a chalkboard and smartboard and have a heater/air-conditioning unit. Some classrooms have learners sitting at individual desks, and maintaining social distance; whilst others, are equipped with a Perspex screen to divide a dual desk. Learners must stand at the desk, when the teacher enters, and greet with the uniform Islamic greeting of peace. Teachers are allowed to walk around and check on learners’ work, however, both learners and teachers must wear masks at all times and keep a safe distance. I noticed that the boys’ classrooms were less decorated and did not have many charts and notices.

I spend the bulk of my time in a Grade 10 classroom, there are 18 boys in the class. The boys are well-behaved, respectful and eager to learn. However, they can get restless and lose focus, for this reason, lessons have to incorporate a variety of sources, such as videos, notes, written tasks as well as role play and discussion. Learners like to be engaged and should not be left with unnecessary “free-time”, this means that lesson plans have to be timed carefully and use interesting and exciting resources and plans. Learners thrive on discipline and a firmness that is respectful and acknowledging.

The Tshwane Muslim School feels very much like a community all on its own. There are clearly many long-running bonds between teachers, staff and board-members; as there is a feeling of closeness embrace learning and fun. Being at the school, has made me feel excited about teaching. It has given me a renewed energy to complete this degree because I like being in a teaching and learning environment. However, I do realise the responsibility and work ethic it takes to be a teacher, and there are many aspects of the profession, that are not necessarily confined to a manual, desk or classroom; I see that it is important for teachers to be open to learning new things, open to change and open to some good-old-fashioned hard work.

I think mostly, whilst writing this analysis, I have a greater respect for what teachers do, what management and board members strive to achieve at school and how much time and dedication it takes to be a teacher.

I have tried to include as many resources as possible, to better support this situational analysis.

Please see under Resource 1:

The school’s mission statement, the teacher’s pledge, and the school’s vision statement.

Please see under resource 2:

Some pictures of the school grounds, entrance, sporting grounds and classrooms.

Please see under resource 3:

Names and structure of teaching staff, school assessment policy, ground duty rules, a covid-19 policy which was drafted last year and this year’s term 1-4 Calendar.

Please visit the school's Instagram account @tshwane_muslim_school_tms for more information, there website is being re-done, however, can be accessed at,
<http://www.tshwanemuslimschool.co.za>



The image is a promotional graphic for Tshwane Muslim School. It features an aerial photograph of the school's campus, which includes a large building with a red-tiled roof, a green field, and a parking lot. In the top left corner, there is a circular logo for Tshwane Muslim School, established in 1990, with the motto 'KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT' and Arabic text. Overlaid on the image are several text elements: 'ADMISSIONS OPEN' in large, colorful, 3D block letters on a yellow background; '2021' in large, white, serif font on a yellow background; 'Grades RR-10' in white text on a red starburst shape; and a white box at the bottom containing the text: 'Only online applications will be accepted' and 'Link will be posted on our website and social media platforms'.

**ADMISSIONS
OPEN**

2021

**Grades
RR-10**

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platforms

References

Tshwane Muslim School, 2021. <http://www.tshwanemuslimschool.co.za>. [Online]
Available at: <http://www.tshwanemuslimschool.co.za/>
[Accessed 12 October 2021].