

Established 1950



GLENRIDGE

Pre-primary

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Mission Statement and Historical Background

as of April 2026



Please note that throughout this document, the use of 'parents' will refer to biological parents, adoptive parents or legal guardians/caregivers.

1. Glenridge Pre-Primary School's mission statement and historical background:

MISSION STATEMENT

Glenridge pre-primary is committed to:

- Providing a child-centred approach to early childhood education which is directed towards the realisation of the individual potential of each child.
- Ensuring optimal social, emotional, physical and academic development of learners through the employment of committed and well-trained educators and the involvement of parents, families and the community in all aspects of the child's development and school life.
- Offering a friendly, supportive, caring atmosphere, within which parents and educators operate as partners in engendering a sense of stability and security in the children, which will lay a firm foundation for their later development into effective and responsible adults.
- Promoting tolerance, respect and understanding of the diverse values, cultures and beliefs, which form part of South African society and the school community.
- Guaranteeing a well-managed and financially sustainable organisation which is committed to accountability and transparency.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The present Glenridge Pre-Primary School was started in the Meyrick Bennett Park in Chelmsford Road, Durban. It occupied a couple of rooms in the old Bennett family homestead, a building which was approximately 120 years old and which was bequeathed, by the last member of the Bennett family to the City of Durban "to be used in perpetuity as a park and playground for children and the house thereon to be used as a museum or for some kindred purpose at the discretion of the City Council".

The school shared the premises with the Meyrick Bennett Child Guidance Centre, with whom the school initially worked in close liaison, using the school children as an observation group in order to further their studies.

Glenridge originally began as a small play group for 4 – 6 children, running three mornings a week. Approximately eight months later, the school was started properly under the direction of Miss Eunice Webb. She was a fully qualified nursery school educator and was helped by various mothers. The mothers were not in favour of the children staying as late as 2 p.m., as was the case with the few other nursery schools operating at the time. In fact, Glenridge was the first school to obtain a provincial subsidy without having to supply lunch. Other schools soon followed suit.

The school got off the ground financially when it was allocated a stall at a fete held at the Old Pavilion to raise money for nursery schools in Durban. As the school had no money, the founders were, in fact, lent 10 pounds to begin with. They then relied financially on public support and fees, which were set at 6 pounds per quarter.

The school was registered with the Natal Education Department in July 1951 with an enrolment of 16 pupils and received a certificate of recognition from the Nursery School Association of South Africa that same year. It was named Glenridge as it was in Glenwood and on the Ridge.

By 1960, pupil enrolment had increased to about 37 pupils. However, from as early as 1957, problems had been experienced with the building in which Glenridge was housed, and over the years, alternative accommodation was periodically sought. The search, which involved the Provincial Administration and many others, all proved fruitless.

In July 1975, Glenridge successfully applied to become provincially controlled, and this marked the beginning of a new era. An integrated programme was introduced with qualified educators in charge, and the school gradually built up a good selection of educational equipment. The waiting list for children grew every year, and for years, the full quota was maintained. Under pressure from the Natal Education Department (NED), Management Committees continued to look for alternative premises, as there was no kitchen, principal's office or sickroom. The small entrance was also used as a secretary's office, and the cloakrooms encroached on the area utilised by Meyrick Bennett Child Guidance Centre, who were co-tenants in the building. The indoor play area was limited to two rooms.

Although the school maintained a lovely atmosphere, the difficult decision was finally taken to buy land when a suitable piece of land became available in Rif Road, Randrus. The school purchased the land in 1983, and some extensive fundraising followed, as well as prayer, laughter, tears, excitement, apathy and also tremendous goodwill and support. The Chairman took the bull by the horns in 1984 when he called a general meeting to receive the parents' approval to start building, even though it was not known where all the capital would come from! The NED assisted the building fund by honouring the request for a building grant that they had agreed to years earlier. On the 11th of January, everything was moved from Chelmsford Road to Rif Road, even though there were no floors laid, and there was no fence around the school to secure anything. However, the school opened for the children on the 15th of January (4 days later) with floors, fencing and every room ready for occupation. That really would not have been possible without the educators and several parents being totally committed to starting the New Year on time.

Grass was planted over the weekend of the move, so the outdoors was not used for the first 10 days, which allowed the roots to take. One energetic and competent Mom and her brother worked many hours to level the surrounding grounds and planted indigenous trees, and everything proved to work out really well, in fact, beyond all expectations.

On the 5th of June, the Director of Education, Mr W. Van Rooyen, officially opened the school, and the children were given a special programme on the 6th of June to celebrate the special occasion.

Today, the school can accommodate 100 children, and we feel very happy and grateful to have achieved all we have. With the tradition of actively involved parents, we can continue to provide quality education for many years to come.

The Management Committee reserves the right to make relevant changes to the Policy Document from time to time.

First Ratified June 2007
Last updated on 6 April 2026