

Progress Primary School



The Fifth Primary School in Lenasia – Celebrating 55 Years in 2025

1. A Proud History of Progress

Established in 1970 in Extension 3, Lenasia, **Progress Primary School** celebrates **55 years of existence in 2025**. It was the fifth primary school to be established in Lenasia and was born out of the urgent need for a local school as the community rapidly expanded during the 1960s.

2. The Call for a New School

By the latter half of the 1960s, Lenasia was growing rapidly, especially in Extension 3. The three existing primary schools were too far and already overcrowded, leaving many families struggling to find accessible education for their children.

Local parents began lobbying intensively for a school that would meet the area's growing needs. As more families moved from areas like Fordsburg, Vrededorp, Sophiatown, Doornfontein, and Central Johannesburg, the pressure increased. Eventually, the **Department of Indian Affairs** recognized the demand and approved the construction of a new school.

3. The First Brick School in Lenasia

The result of this community effort was the **first brick-built school** in Lenasia. At the time, all other schools—both primary and secondary—were made from prefabricated asbestos materials. The approval for a permanent brick structure marked a significant milestone in the area's educational history.

4. Humble Beginnings: Original School Facilities

In its early years, facilities at Progress Primary were extremely limited. The **Department of Indian Affairs** provided only the bare essentials:

- A principal's office and a secretary's office
- A staff room (which doubled as a sick bay, kitchen, PE equipment storeroom, and needlework room)
- A stock room and multipurpose room
- Caretaker's quarters
- 20 general-purpose classrooms

No provision was made for a library or specialist rooms. Practical subjects like woodwork and metalwork were taught outside on the veranda.

Despite these limitations, a strong partnership between parents, teachers, and principals laid a solid educational foundation for learners.

5. Leadership and Vision: Mr. Dolly Pather

The first principal of Progress Primary was **Mr. B. Pather**, affectionately known as **Dolly Pather**. A respected disciplinarian, he played a critical role in shaping the academic culture of the school and was widely admired for his commitment to quality teaching and learning.

In 1982, Mr. Pather and 12 staff members were seconded to Novena Primary School (then located at the old Teachers' Centre, now known as Lenz Public School in Extension 11). This move was seen by many in the community as an attempt by the Department to shut down Progress Primary.

The local parent community and Educator Committee, under the leadership of **Mr. Y. Mia**, rallied to keep the school open. Their successful resistance gave the school a new lease on life.

6. Continued Leadership and Development

Following Mr. Pather, the school was led by:

- **Mr. Choonara**
- **Mr. P.G.P. Naidoo**
- **Mr. M.H. Patel**
- **Mr. A.I. Mohamed** (appointed in 1986 after Harmony Primary School closed)

Mr. Mohamed continued the campaign for better facilities but eventually opted for early retirement in 1990 due to ongoing frustrations with the Department.

7. Renewed Hope: Mr. Rooney Khan's Tenure

In 1991, **Mr. M. "Rooney" Khan** became principal and resumed efforts to expand the school's infrastructure. The breakthrough came with the appointment of **Mr. P. B. Peters** as Lenasia's School Planner.

By **1993**, the school had completed a major infrastructure upgrade that included:

- Specialist classrooms
- A new library
- A multipurpose classroom
- Change rooms for PE
- A modern administration block

These new facilities were officially opened on **26 August 1995** by **Gauteng MEC for Education, Ms. Mary Metcalf**.

8. A New Era: Democracy and Diversity

In 1998, **Mr. M.G. Moonsamy** was appointed principal. Under his leadership, the school adapted to the democratic transformation of South Africa and continued to be a leading institution in the area.

Notably, Progress Primary had already begun embracing diversity in **1982**, when it admitted learners of different racial backgrounds, defying apartheid's Group Areas Act and the policy of "Indian schools for Indians only."

After 1995, the opening of private religious schools in the area led to a demographic shift. Many local learners moved to private schools, while Progress Primary welcomed more learners from **Greater Soweto, Orange Farm, Lawley, Eldorado Park, Waterworks**, and nearby informal settlements.

9. Infrastructure Investment and Sporting Excellence

In **2006**, the school successfully applied for **R750,000** in funding from the **National Lottery**. With additional funds raised by the school community, the following upgrades were completed:

- A borehole and irrigation system
- Two multi-purpose sports courts
- Two cricket practice nets
- Renovation of the school's football field

Today, the school proudly hosts major **Lenasia Derby Day** sporting events, including finals for soccer, netball, volleyball, and chess.

10. Continued Excellence: Present-Day Progress

In **2012**, **Mr. M. “Duggy” Naidoo** became principal following Mr. Moonsamy’s retirement. Under his stewardship, the school continues to uphold its reputation for academic and extracurricular excellence.

Currently, Progress Primary accommodates:

- **912 learners** (Grade R to Grade 7)
- **25 educators** (3 funded by the School Governing Body)
- **8 support staff** (2 funded by the SGB)

A significant portion of school fees is allocated to maintaining quality human resources.

The school’s community—including learners, staff, and parents—is representative of South Africa’s rich diversity. There is a strong collective will to ensure **quality education**, with active initiatives to support underprivileged learners in areas such as uniforms, excursions, and child protection.

11. Embracing Technology

Progress Primary now boasts a:

- **Modern ICT Library**
- **Large ICT Media Room**

In both form and function, the school stands proudly among the finest institutions in Lenasia.

12. Legacy of Achievement

Academic Excellence

Progress Primary has produced outstanding alumni in fields such as:

- Medicine
- Law
- Accounting

- Pharmacy
- Education
- Business

The school has consistently achieved top honours in **Mathematics and Science Olympiads** and academic fairs, thanks to its sustained focus on STEM education.

Sporting Glory

The school has a proud sporting history. At one point, it boasted the **best soccer and cricket teams in Lenasia**. In recent years, its athletes and cricketers have continued to bring honour to the school.

Notable cricketers who have represented **Lenasia** or **Gauteng** include: **Paresh Vala, Bipin Gopal, Riaz Desai, Ebrahim Parak, Zaheer Patel, Shalin Pillay, Siddique Mohamed, and Roshan Bhana**. The proud moment for the school arrived when **Denisha Patel** and **Chetan Nathoo** made the South African Team in Table Tennis and currently are still in the team.

13. A School That Lives Up to Its Name

Since 1970, **Progress Primary School** has lived up to its name—demonstrating progress through **resilience, excellence, and community spirit**. The school’s journey is a testament to the dedication of its learners, parents, educators, and community.

As we celebrate 55 years in 2025, we honour a legacy built on determination, unity, and the pursuit of educational success for all.

Year/s	Name of Principal at Progress Primary
1970 to 1983	Dolly Pather (not sure about the dates) followed by Mr Choonara and Mr P G P Naidoo
1983 to 1986	M H Patel
1986 to 1991	A I Mahomed
1992 to 1997	Mervyn Kahn
1998 to 2011	Martin G Moonsamy
2012 to 2025	Myan Naidoo

Some of our Sporting and Academic accolades are listed below:

1998 -District D11 Mini World Cup Soccer Winners (Boys)

2001 to 2006 -Chess School of the year

2006 - Lenasia Schools Sports Mini World Soccer Cup Runner-up (Girls)

2007 - Lenasia Schools Sports Mini Cricket World Cup Winners

The following learners attained Gauteng Colours:

Swimming B Jairam (2001 and 2002)

T Jairam (2005 and 2006)

Gymnastics D Jairam (2005 and 2006)

F Adam (2006 and 2006)

Cricket S Pillay (2005 and 2006)

S Mahomed (2011)

TableTennis C Nathoo – SA Colours

D Patel – SA Colour

2010 – Hosted the Mini Soccer World Cup

Hosted the ETS Book Quiz

2011 – Winner the Nedbank National Spelling B Gr 4 – 7

2014 – District Spelling B Champs Grade 6 level

2017 – District Performing Art Champs Gr 3

2019 – Provincial Library Book Quiz Gr 7 Champs

2023 – Top Primary School in the area selected for the Twinning Schools Project

2024 – Provincial Performing Art Champs Gr 3

Photo Gallery



2024 Staff



Arbor Day



2000 Staff



A I Mahomed

M Khan





Mid September 2011

Cricket's coming king: Siddique Mohamed (13)

by Mems Moosa

The stars of Lenasia seem to be getting younger by the day...take Siddique Mohamed – he's but 13 years of age, a grade 7 learner at Progress Primary School...

But, during the recent KFC Lenasia Premier League (LPL) Junior Mini Cricket Tournament, he stood out like a true shining star!

Thus far, in the seven games played to reach the finals of the competition, he has recorded 306 runs...an average of approximately 44, with four of his innings not out, and the highest 110, for his cricket team. It is no wonder the team find themselves in the finals after their emphatic semi-finals win over SBSM at the Lenasia Cricket Stadium.

So far, the Progress Primary team has not lost a single match in their march to the finals, to be played on September 18.

This young star of the future also scooped last year's Lenasia Cricket Club outstanding player award, and was also selected to play against the touring U-12 English side.

Redowan Patel, Gauteng Cricket Board area coordinator, told the *Lenasia Sun*, "At the rate this young lad is playing, he is a likely candidate for selection in his age category for the Gauteng provincial team."

The still rather shy Mohamed

added, "The support I enjoy from my family, manager and coach inspires me to excel..."

The dry wicket was blasted for the low runs recorded on the pitch for the semi-final match. Many senior players, who started the senior LPL event immediately after the junior semi-finals, were also disappointed by the dry surface.

With mild spring weather, flowers blossoming and the country alive with possibility and the promise of growth, Mohammed's last game against SBSM - knocking 110 not out - brought some much-needed warmth for the youngsters and others watching him play. Like the new season, he is filled with new promise.

Finally, let's pray for rain! Get those rain-dancing shoes on and pray for a thunderstorm!



Cricketer's already a star at 15

TENZHIA NAIDOO

A LENASIA teenage cricketer is still celebrating his South African record victory over Zimbabwe.

Shayden Pilly, 15, was the youngest member of the national squad.

The all-rounder and his teammates returned to South Africa a fortnight after a two-week tour during which they won all seven matches.

"I was really excited. We won the series. I think we played well," said Pilly.

"I didn't think I would make it because I was so young, that I was happy when I got the call to go and I had made it. I was told I would just be a replacement, but I ended up playing most of the games."

Pilly, who is on a full cricket scholarship at prestigious King Edward VII School in Howick, was named as one of the top players of the series.

He said he was delighted when he became one of the youngest players to be selected for the KFC first XI in Grade 6.

Post captain of the school in 2009, Pilly said he was "exceptionally talented cricketer with both bat and ball."

"This talent was recognized at a very young age, and the decision was made to select him for first-team cricket in Grade 6. While there is no doubt as to his talent, he is also extremely committed and shows a maturity beyond his age."

School principal Mike Fennell said he was "impressed and delighted to see a huge success both on and off the cricket field."

clude Proteas captain Graeme Smith, former Proteas batsman Neil McKenzie and Vaughn van Jaarsveld, who plays for the Highlanders.

"At the time when I was accepted to play cricket for the first team, it was very scary, but now, looking back at the performance, it was good. But it all felt very easy."

Pilly, who regularly All de Villiers and Sachin Tendulkar as his role models, has been quoted in the sport for most of his life.

He made the under-13 Cricket side and the under-15a before being chosen for the under-18 side.

He said he was looking forward to the under-19 Cricket World Cup, which would take place in 2012 in Australia.

"I just want to enjoy my cricket career, take it as it comes and hope for the best."

Pilly, who has type-one diabetes and must take insulin four times a day, said it did not hamper him from playing the game he loves.

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ALL ROUND TALENT: Lenasia teenager Shayden Pilly was selected to represent South Africa's under-19 cricket squad on a recent tour of Zimbabwe. PICTURE: KEVIN SUTHERLAND

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Progress Primary Art is in demand

Progress Primary School in Lenasia has a unique way of fostering interest in art among its learners.

The school encourages art students to create works that go on exhibition and are then sold off to the highest bidders in order to help boost the school coffers to allow more students to explore their creative horizons better.

Recently the Progress Primary exhibition at the Trade Route Mall shopping centre in Lenasia.

Lenasia attracted a lot of attention as a variety of works of art by the learners, from abstract paintings to mosaics and hand-crafts, went on display.

The Principal of the School, Martin Moonsamy, lauded the teachers who had inspired and motivated learners to excel in art as a subject, to the extent that the school is acknowledged as a leader in the field in Lenasia.

Staff, learners, parents and members of the Education Committee at the Exhibition - Kanta Eira, Martin Moonsamy (Principal), Reshma Maharajh, Tyrone Naidoo (deputy principal), Felly Daya, Nazier Amod, Amina Mayet, Shakira Amod and Sunita Thakordas.

School has unique way of inspiring its Art pupils

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Staff, pupils, parents and members of the Education Committee at the Exhibition, from left, Kanta Eira, Martin Moonsamy (principal), Reshma Maharajh, Tyrone Naidoo (deputy principal), Felly Daya, Nazier Amod, Amina Mayet, Shakira Amod and Sunita Thakordas

Picture: FAKIR HASSEN

New blood for Progress Primary

PROGRESS Primary School this month welcomes new principal, Myan Naidoo (38).

Known as 'Duggy' to many in the teaching fraternity, Naidoo's appointment as principal has come as no surprise. Despite his still youthful smile, Naidoo has been teaching for the past ten years at Progress Primary.

Having taught English, Social Science and Technology, as well as his strong enthusiasm for sports, Naidoo's all round skills has set old Principal Martin Geoffrey Moonsamy's heart at ease.

"We would like to congratulate Mr Naidoo on his appointment as principal; Mr Naidoo has remarkable management skills and a good rapport with the parents, staff and learners. This augurs well to take the school into a new mode," stated Moonsamy, who has been the principal of Progress Primary for some 15 years.

"Progress is one of the best schools there are in Lenasia. I've had the best mentor in Mr Moonsamy, through his experience I've learnt a lot," said Naidoo.

Previously deputy principal of Progress Primary for three years, Naidoo is well equipped to take over the reins. Having taken a 'gap' year and travelling to Europe after completing his matric, Naidoo returned to the country to study at the Johannesburg College of Education (JCE) at the University of Witwatersrand.

Having the community at heart from a young age, Naidoo's activism involves everything from him being the SRC chairperson at Iopaz Secondary School to being part of the Seaside Fund that sponsors underprivileged children to Durban annually.

Naidoo has also been a football coach for 20 years and himself played soccer until 2009.

While Naidoo's record is one of note, he maintains that "commitment, dedication, and hard work" is what makes a good principal. He

added that he will go the extra mile. "Education is my passion. Our mission is to educate South African learners," he ended.



2018 LSS Mini World Cup Champs





School Memories



SURNAME: Daga
 STD. / YEAR: Std 4 / 1996
 TEACHER: Mrs S. S. Singh

NAME: Anshu Daga
 SCHOOL: Progress Primary
 PRINCIPAL: Mr M. Khan

Photograph By:
 BALA GOVENDER & SONS

SCHOOL MEMORIES



