

Mandela school hand-over

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THE steel manufacturing giant, ArcelorMittal South Africa, officially handed over a R45 million newly built Mandela Park Primary School in Slovo Park, Mthatha last Wednesday.

The school was handed to the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga and the community of Mthatha in a ceremony at the school. The hand-over was specially done to coincide with Mandela Day.

The Eastern Cape school has been built using ArcelorMittal's alternative building technology like steel frames, a technological development worth watching within South Africa's building market.

ArcelorMittal's alternative building technology solution was developed with Agrément South Africa and said the long-term objective is to extend the alternative building system for use in multistory facilities.

"This technology has many environmental advantages as the material can be infinitely recycled and is quicker to construct when compared to masonry construction building methods, further, the use of innovative Arval steel panels and alternative building technology is in line with the the government's objective of promoting energy-efficient and alternative cost-saving building methods," said ArcelorMittal chief executive Nonkululeko Nyembezi-Heita.

She said that the material is also less labour intensive, has low carbon emissions, saves on water, reduces material wastage and is well insulated.

The new school structures were built on the same grounds where two old buildings used to house about 1 000 pupils since 1996. The initial structures comprised of make-shift classrooms and a huge hall which was sub-divided into eight partitioned classrooms, with each class averaging 60 pupils.

The school will accommodate 1 200 pupils in an environment conducive to both learning and teaching as once championed by our former president and respected icon, Nelson Mandela, after whom the school is named.

"We are pleased to hand this gift to the pupils and community of Mthatha. We are excited to continue the legacy of our former president Nelson Mandela who is firm in his belief

that education is key to future success. Providing quality facilities is a pillar to that success.

I cannot compare the gift of education to anything else in the world and as a company we are proud to be the ones giving it to the community of Mthatha today," said Nyembezi-Heita.

The new state-of-the-art educational facility is equipped a laboratory, a media centre with a computer room, eight vegetable tunnels, a garden, a fully equipped nutrition centre, two sports grounds, an administrative building with meeting rooms, offices for the principal and vice-principal, staff room and a reception area.

Motshekga said she feels very emotional at the state the school is in, compared to what she saw when she visited the school few years back. "To be where we are, in such a fine structure, is very humbling and for me it is a miracle to be where we are within a year of the sod turning," said Motshekga.



Minister for Basic Education Angie Motshekga with ArcelorMittal CEO Nonkululeko Nyembezi-Heita at the opening of the new school.

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