

Pupils' dignity returns with upgrades

SITHANDIWE VELAPHI

THE principal of the newly built Mandela Park Primary School in Mthatha, Xolisani Neti, says their state-of-the-art school has brought dignity to its pupils, teachers and community.

Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga officially opened the school last week, built by steel company ArcelorMittal South Africa, at a cost of R45m.

Built in 1996 by community members, the school previously had eight make-shift classrooms and a hall to accommodate about 1000 pupils. The average number of pupils in a classroom previously was more than 60. Now the school has 24 classrooms which will accommodate about 1200 pupils in an environment conducive to both learning and teaching.

Neti said it was difficult to advance their teaching and learning methods under their previous conditions. "A pupil from the class would be disturbed by the teaching in another class. So you can imagine how desperate and difficult our situation was."

He said the conditions became



NEW HORIZONS: Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga watches as CEO Nonkululeko Nyembezi-Heita of ArcelorMittal SA cuts the ribbon and MEC Mandla Makupula looks on during the official opening.

unbearable to some pupils during the winter season. Some pupils opted to stay at home because the classrooms were cold. "The new classrooms will bring back dignity to our pupils and confidence to our teachers," Neti said.

Nonkululeko Nyembezi-Heita, CEO of ArcelorMittal South Africa said: "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 the key to future success. Providing quality facilities is a pillar to that success." Motshekga thanked ArcelorMittal for the partnership.

The new state-of-the-art school is

equipped with facilities such as 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, a staff room and a reception area.

provinces@thenewage.co.za