

Lighting upgrade at Cliffview Primary



Graham Burne

With a strive for excellence by teachers and parents alike, Cliffview Primary have acquired a lighting system from DWR Distribution comprising of a Strand 200 Plus and LED Parcans.

Situated in Northcliff, Johannesburg, Cliffview Primary is a government school with a private school mentality. Dance and drama form part of the curriculum and an external resident ballet teacher has been based at the school since the 1970s. In addition, the busy school hall is also used by other schools and nursery schools in the area and is fully booked from October to December this year.

“Having upgraded the sound system in 2017, our next focus was on lighting,” explained Karen Weirich, Facilities Manager. “We previously had a few stainless steel parcans and two big spotlights that really chomped power! The lights could either be switched on or off and there was no dimming or colour. The new system is a huge change for us and we now have enough gear to put on a little show.”

DWR installed the system which includes four Longman F8UP LEDPars and eighteen Longman FacePar 900 LEDPar fixtures. Jannie de Jager of DWR presented training on the new Strand 200 Plus which features 12 Effects playbacks, with each effect having up to 48 steps.

“We used the console for our first production at the end of last year,” explained Graham Burne, Facilities Assistant. “DWR came in to show us how to mix colours, how to use effects with time delays and to cover the basics. At first it was very daunting, but as we played and applied what we were told, it has become fun and we are constantly challenged to outdo ourselves! In the past, we just had lights on stage but now we are able to set moods for plays and events as the stage is needed.”

For Schalk Botha of DWR this was a simple yet effective solution that has the capability of being expanded on in the future. “It’s refreshing to see Cliffview Primary explore new technologies and invest in drama,” said Schalk. “I often see schools using old bulb driven fixtures and old lighting desks which limit them. For some reason they seem to upgrade other equipment first such as curtains or the stage platform. This has been a cost-effective system that will offer longevity and, as an added benefit, save power.”

The school hall is a four hundred-seater, and Cliffview Primary charges a small fee for the hire of the space which covers maintenance costs. "In addition, we have our own production every year, and for the children, the new lighting is something extra," said Karen. For many of the little ones, it will be their first time to encounter a stage and coloured lights!

"We are very fortunate to have a strong parent body and governing body," Karen ends, who has worked at Cliffview for the past eleven years and whose three children also attended the school. "We have more fee-paying parents than many other schools, but obviously a lighting system like this does not come out of school fees but rather the drive and hard work from the parents' fundraising campaigns and involvement."