

## New Head For Oprah Academy

Written by Rudi Prinsloo

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The Academy for the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls had appointed Anne van Zyl as its new head.

The school's board of directors said on Thursday she would take up the post in the new school year starting in January 2010.

She joins the academy from Bridge House School in Franschoek, Western Cape, where she has served as head of school since 2003.

Before that she served as executive head of Stanford Lake College in Haenertsburg and was the founder head of St Stithians Girls' College, an independent school in Johannesburg.

She began her career as an English teacher at Pretoria High School for Girls, holding positions of increasing responsibility and eventually becoming the school's headmistress.



During her tenure, the school opened its doors to children of all races before apartheid ended.

"Anne has led a prominent and admirable career in education with proven success in school management and academic development for girls... she also has long embraced the Academy's core values of service and leadership and has been committed to instilling those values in young people," said Oprah Winfrey in a statement.

"I believe that Oprah Winfrey's vision to give girls from economically disadvantaged backgrounds the best possible education and preparation to become leaders is exactly what South Africa needs," said Van Zyl.

"I'm looking forward to working with her [Winfrey], the board, the academy staff, the parents and the girls to help provide a global education that celebrates multiculturalism and shapes the future leaders of our nation."

The academy has about 300 pupils, from all nine provinces, in grades seven to 10.

The school recently suspended seven pupils accused of trying to force other girls into lesbian relationships and touching their private parts.

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In October 2007, a tearful Winfrey apologised to parents and students at the school for the conduct of dormitory matron Tiny Virginia Makopo, who was suspended following allegations that she indecently assaulted some girls and encouraged others to perform indecent acts on one another.

Makopo was eventually indicted on 13 charges, after a joint investigation by the South African Police Service, American investigators and child abuse experts appointed by Winfrey.

The school's principal, who allegedly failed to protect the girls, was placed on paid administrative leave.

Source : Sapa /mm/clh

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