



Schools Evaluation Authority

Accountability • Quality • Respect



John Graham Primary School Report



School: John Graham Primary School
Address: Milford Road,
Plumstead, 7800
Circuit: C8
District: Metro South
Province: Western Cape
Category: Public Ordinary (Fee-Charging)
Principal: Ms M Rhode (Acting Principal)



Areas of Evaluation:

	Learner Achievement	To evaluate the knowledge and skills that learners have acquired, progress made by learners over a period of time and recognition of learners.
	Teaching & Learning	To evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
	Behaviour & Safety	To evaluate the level at which the school creates a positive learning culture, good behaviour, and a healthy, safe and secure environment for everyone.
	Leadership & Management	To evaluate the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school.
	Governance, Parents & Community	To evaluate the effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its key roles and responsibilities including financial duties, and the effectiveness of the school in building good relationships with its stakeholders.

Summary:



Overall performance



KEY:



Main Findings



1. Learner Achievement 4

Learner achievement in the Grade 6 WCED Systemic Tests is outstanding.

Over the past four years, the results for Languages were 91.2% (2016), 88.8% (2017), 86.1% (2018) and 83.1% (2019). The Grade 6 WCED Systemic Test results for Mathematics were 90.4% (2016), 89.6% (2017), 92% (2018) and 94.6% (2019). The results are substantially above the provincial results and compare well to similar schools in both Languages and Mathematics.

Most learners read, speak, listen and write well. However, lesson observations, learner and school management team (SMT) interviews confirm that learners struggle to read with comprehension. Learners speak with confidence. Most learners listened attentively in class and were able to carry out instructions. Their writing skills are good.

Most learners handle numbers and do calculations well, both mentally and using electronic devices. They were able to solve problems at the level expected of their age and phase of education.

The school is recognised as an Eco school, where learners are engaged in the classroom and through practical experiences tackling environmental issues. Four sporting codes, namely cricket, cross-country, soccer and netball, are offered at a competitive level. The range of co-curricular activities offered include cooking and crafts, art, speech and drama and general knowledge clubs, as well as music. Interviews with teachers and learners indicate that learners' participation and achievement in these are limited.



2. Teaching and Learning 3

A positive learning environment is created consistently within the classrooms and school.

All teachers were present and actively teaching in lessons observed. Teachers are consistently respectful and inclusive of learners, as shown in the language used and relationships observed. For example, every day the principal comforts a distressed learner upon his arrival at school and helps to settle him. All classrooms are organised, neat and tidy. In most cases seating arrangements are designed for learners to work in groups. However, in a few classrooms the seating arrangements hamper learners from observing the work on the white boards. Learners' work is displayed inside the classrooms and very effectively along the corridors. The display of learners' artwork enhances the environment.

The quality of classroom teaching practice is good. Most teachers engage learners through frequent questioning and application. They acknowledge the answers and give encouraging comments. More thought-provoking questions are required to challenge more able learners. Most teachers do not notice that a few learners misunderstand concepts and do not change their pace and style to accommodate them. In cases where the pace and style of teachers changed, the impact was clearly evident. Although planning of lessons is well done, some teachers do not change their methodologies in cases where learners are disengaged. Most teachers know their subject matter well and give useful feedback and challenge the learners to correct their errors. A variety of resources are used to enhance teaching and learning. There are two functional computer laboratories, but the well-resourced library is underutilised.

Learners are supported well, so that they learn effectively. Most sampled workbooks indicate a range of appropriate exercises. While all workbooks are marked, only a few are signed and dated by teachers. Written comments are useful to learners. A few teachers do not correct the spelling and grammatical mistakes made by learners in their workbooks. Most teachers do not use effective strategies, use mainly the question and answer methodology and do not set differentiated tasks. Formal and informal assessments are done regularly. Since 2016, the school has identified Grade 4 learners requiring support and a teacher skilled in special education is allocated to this class. The teacher tracks the performance of learners from this class up to Grade 7.



3. Behaviour and Safety 4

There is a disciplined and purposeful environment and the ethos is positive.

The values of honour and integrity are evident among staff and learners. Respect and trust are visible between staff and learners. Learners greet visitors and display exemplary behaviour. The wearing of their school uniform reflects the pride learners have for their school. Learners feel that they are listened to, safe and secure. They use the available channels to report misdemeanours or problems. Most learners attend school regularly and are punctual. The Code of Conduct, printed in the learners' diaries, is implemented effectively. Procedures for late arrival and absenteeism are followed.

The school provides effective care for vulnerable learners. They are supported by a social worker twice a week, a school-based support team (SBST), a full-time Learning Support Teacher (LST), and a 'Care Group'. Motivational speakers and members of the South African Police Services (SAPS) are invited to address learners on various matters relating to safety. The school premises are safe. All entrance gates are locked during the day and after school, a camera monitors the main entrance gate, and at least one security guard patrols the school grounds. Generally, any broken panes that pose a danger to learners are replaced immediately. Cleanliness is visible in most areas. Toilets are cleaned before school and after both intervals. However, in parent and learner interviews, it was mentioned that the toilets are not up to the required standard. One danger was the presence of a large lawnmower in the area the learners use during breaks. Once mentioned, it was promptly removed. Sufficient fire extinguishers are visible, in working order and strategically placed. The school's effective safety procedures prevent unauthorised people from entering and/or bringing dangerous objects and illegal substances onto the premises. The tuckshop offers healthy options, but the servers do not always wear gloves. A specific pre-fabricated building is available for after-care. Before and after-school activities, as well as cultural activities, are offered.



4. Leadership and Management 3

The SMT gives clear direction to the school. The vision, mission and ethos are embraced by all stakeholders. Respect, empathy, responsibility and integrity are promoted and each of the school's twelve values is a monthly focus. Although members of the current SMT are in acting posts, they clearly identify the strengths and weaknesses in the school. The school improvement plan (SIP) focuses on the improvement in Mathematics, reading with comprehension, writing, sport and parent involvement.

The SMT acts effectively to improve quality teaching and learning throughout the school. Lesson observations by the SMT are a recent focus area. Its mentorship programme is effective in assisting novice teachers and weekly meetings are held. Grade and subject meetings, regular discussions and using expert teachers in certain areas improve the quality of teaching. Teachers attend professional development workshops offered by the district office.

In most classes, good use is made of school resources. The SMT discusses and meets with staff regularly to ensure that they understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities in and outside the classroom. Teachers undertake playground and extra-mural duties as specified by the SMT. It is evident that all staff feel appreciated. Attendance and commitment of staff are excellent. They are very punctual and most arrive early and leave well after the closing time. All teachers are held accountable for the quality of their teaching and how their learners perform. This is done through open and frank discussions on a one-on-one basis and in group meetings. Learners have access to two computer laboratories for Languages and Mathematics, a science laboratory, a library and an art room.



5. Governance, Parents and Community



The governing body knows and fulfils its role and responsibilities and assists the school with its professional knowledge and experience. The governing body approved the purchase of laptops for each teacher. The additional computer laboratory is a welcome resource to assist learners in Languages and Mathematics.

Although the governing body is engaged in the recruitment and selection of staff, a departmental head post became vacant at the end of the second term in 2019, and the process of advertising and filling of it has not yet commenced. The governing body reviews policies annually.

The school has sound financial management practices and well-kept records. The 2020 annual budget was prepared and accepted at the annual general meeting.

Engagement and communication with stakeholders are effective. Learners understand the channels of communication. Parents acknowledge the good academic results, the bridges built between the school and parents, and the follow-up with parents on difficult home situations. Professional relationships are sound, and the environment is conducive to quality teaching and learning.

Recommendations

1. The currently underutilised library should become a more functional library and media centre so that learners can have greater access.
2. Greater participation in extra- and co-curricular activities and engagement in more sporting competitions and leagues should be encouraged. More recognition should be given for learners' achievements in these activities.
3. Effective and varied use of the available resources should be encouraged.
4. Dangerous equipment or machinery in areas where learners gather must not be left open or unattended.
5. Gloves must be worn by all staff serving food.
6. It is essential that frequent lesson observations take place for the SMT to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
7. The vacant departmental head post must be advertised and filled as soon as possible.