



Schools Evaluation Authority

Accountability • Quality • Respect



West Bank High School Report



School: West Bank High School
Address: Beaver Street,
Wesbank, 7580
Circuit: C9
District: Metro East
Province: Western Cape
Category: Public Ordinary (No-Fee)
Principal: Mr PN Valentyn (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

The school's pass percentage in Language in the 2019 Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Systemic Tests has decreased from 38,7% in 2018 to 28,7% in 2019, and its average mark has decreased from 45,1% in 2018 to 41,9% in 2019. These results are both lower than the provincial results. The Mathematics results were extremely low over the last four years. It has fluctuated from 3,2% in 2016 to 0,7% in 2017 to 2,7% in 2018 and to 0% in 2019.

There is a downward trend in the pass percentage in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination over the last four years. It has decreased from 94% in 2016 to 65,3% in 2017 to 56,4% in 2018 and to 55,8% in 2019. The pass percentage in three subjects were all below 50% and four subjects had a pass percentage of 0%. The percentage of Bachelors' passes is inadequate. It was 4% in 2017, 15,4% in 2018 and 17,4% in 2019.

The learners speak with reasonable confidence, but their writing and listening skills require improvement. Many of the learners are not entirely confident when handling numbers. The opportunity to use electronic devices is limited to a few calculators. All learners in the Further Education and Training (FET) Band have chosen Mathematical Literacy, and their shortcomings in Language, especially vocabulary, hamper their understanding and progress in the said subject.

The school's rugby team has performed very well in the Vuka competition over the last three years. The athletics team was the runner-up in the 2020 interschools' competition. The school offers a limited number of extra- and co-curricular and cultural activities. Only 15 to 20% of the learners participate in these activities. The learners' opinions and interests are not always considered when activities are identified.

2. Teaching and Learning

Most teachers were present and actively teaching and treated learners with respect. Some classrooms were dirty, with papers strewn on the floor. In many classrooms, the desks are not arranged in a manner that is conducive to teaching and learning. Wall display boards are vandalised, and learners' work is displayed in only one classroom.

Most teachers have good subject knowledge, but the quality of classroom teaching practice requires improvement. In most of the classes, the learners do not get the opportunity to participate in the teaching and learning processes. Many are disinterested, and only some of them asked and answered questions during lessons. The questioning of learners is not frequent and thought-provoking. There is little evidence of differentiation in teaching. Teaching activities and tasks are on the same level for all learners. In only a few classes, the pace of teaching was adjusted to match the learners' understanding. Limited resources are used during lessons; the media centre is also not used by learners. Instead, it is used by the members of the "Walking Bus" project.

Most learners' workbooks and tasks reflect exercises and completed work at the appropriate level, but the books are not marked regularly. In some classes, the workbooks were signed by the teachers, but without corrections or comments. Some learners complete only a scant amount of work in their books and do not hand in tasks and assignments on time.

Teaching and learning are negatively affected by the loss of teaching time. Between 10 and 15 minutes per period are lost due to learners and a few teachers coming late for class and wasting time by taking long to settle down. Five minutes per lesson equate to a few hours of lost teaching time per week.



3. Behaviour and Safety 1

It is evident that, despite some teachers' attempts, the school is unable to create an acceptable and positive ethos. One teacher mentioned that she felt threatened by learners when trying to implement school rules. Many learners do not adhere to the school rules and these transgressions continue without any repercussions. Although learners were not observed to be rude to teachers, they were disrespectful by not following instructions to remove items of clothing or accessories that are not allowed. Noise levels are very high in some classes, even in the presence of teachers.

There are no effective platforms for learners to voice their opinions and suggestions. Many learners feel unsafe despite the presence of two law enforcement officials and members of the "Walking Bus" project. Unauthorised persons previously entered the premises by jumping over the fence, but this has improved and hardly takes place despite parts of the fence being damaged.

Learner attendance is good, but late coming is a huge problem. On the first day of evaluation, approximately 374 learners (56%) arrived after the commencement of the first lesson. On the second day, approximately 418 learners (62%) were late. The school does not have effective procedures in place to curb the late coming of learners.

It was reported that different forms of bullying were taking place, although there has been an improvement. Sanctions for transgressions are not frequent or aligned to the Code of Conduct. Learners also fight occasionally and smoking (including cannabis) on the premises is common. There was a cannabis smoking-related incident at the school during the first day of the evaluation.

There is an insufficient number of toilets at the school. There are two functional toilets and one urinal for approximately 249 boys and two functional toilets for 420 girls. These toilets are cleaned daily but are in bad shape concerning hygiene and appearance. The walls are filled with graffiti and the areas have an unpleasant smell. There are broken ceilings, damaged doors and unsafe structures in parts of the school.

Despite the large number of vulnerable learners, the school does not have sufficient afterschool programmes to support the learners. However, Hope House supports about 15 learners with its programme, offering counselling services



4. Leadership and Management 1

All School Management Team (SMT) members, except one, are new in the current positions. They were not involved in the management of the school under the previous leadership and are not aware of the decisions taken in the past as these were made by the principal alone. This situation is very challenging for the SMT. During interviews with some staff members, they felt that the SMT is better at involving them in plans and decision making than before. This is a critical milestone for both the SMT and staff. The new SMT needs assistance to move beyond the past to focus on improving the current situation.

In interviews with learners and the SMT, no one could confidently relate to the effective implementation of the vision and mission. The closest they could come was mentioning some values that were referred to in assemblies. SMT members do not engage in detailed analyses of the NSC and WCED Systemic Tests results to pinpoint specific weaknesses. As a result, they are unable to implement effective plans to assist in improving teaching and learning. Only two members of the SMT were involved in developing the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and it is neither implemented nor monitored.

The SMT does not undertake classroom visits except during the annual Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) process. It is, therefore, difficult for SMT members to identify shortcomings in teaching practices. They rely on teachers' files and learners' workbooks to provide guidance and mentoring. Other than some mentorship for novice teachers, support for teachers is limited. The school encourages teachers to attend professional development courses but is not able to show how the attendance of these courses have improved learner performance.

The SMT conducts walkabouts regularly. This, however, does not have an impact on the poor condition of the ablution facilities, general cleanliness of the school, excessive noise levels in classrooms, late coming or disruptive behaviour of learners. There are ineffective measures to hold staff accountable for poor performance or non-compliance. SMT members who are in an acting capacity do not know how to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.



5. Governance, Parents and Community



Although the governing body expresses eagerness to support the school overall, it is hamstrung by a lack of knowledge about its roles and responsibilities. It does not review policies regularly. The last revision was done in 2017 and members do not know the contents of the policies well enough to ensure proper implementation.

The principal's post has been vacant since March 2019. There is insufficient evidence that the governing body is fully involved in the selection and recruitment of staff. Currently, there is contention about how the most recent post level one and acting SMT appointments were made without input from the governing body. This has had a negative impact on the relationship between the SMT and the governing body.

The audited financial statement of 2019 was completed as required and sent to the district office, and the WCED 043 forms are submitted quarterly. The Finance Policy is outdated, and some procurement procedures are not followed correctly. The budget was prepared by the finance officer (not appointed in writing by the governing body) but was not presented to the governing body before parents approved it.

The governing body does not hold regular meetings with parents. Most meetings are on a one-on-one basis in cases where learners transgress. Parents feel that teachers respect them and that they can approach the school when there is a need for it.

The school communicates with the parents only by means of letters issued to the learners. The school does not have active forums for learners to express their opinions. The Representative Council of Learners (RCL) does not function effectively. Interviews with governing body members revealed that learners serving on the governing body do not attend regularly (only one currently serving) and do not always contribute to discussions.

The school has minimal engagement with external agencies, despite its contextual factors. Currently, the school is supported by the two law enforcement officers and members of the "Walking Bus" project.

Recommendations

1. The SMT must conduct an in-depth analysis of the results to establish the reasons for the downward trend in the NSC and the WCED Systemic Tests. Special attention must be given to the seven subjects with a pass rate below 50%.
2. The SMT must take the lead in developing an action plan to improve the results. The district office must monitor the implementation of the SIP and interventions regularly.
3. The SMT urgently needs support and mentoring in understanding its roles and responsibilities. Well-defined job descriptions will assist in the management of the school.
4. Teaching time must be protected. The academic performance of the school is negatively affected by teaching time lost due to the late coming of learners and teachers at the start of the school day and between classes.
5. The toilets for the learners need urgent attention. Broken water taps and other minor repairs must be dealt with immediately.
6. The governing body is willing to play a more prominent role but needs training in all aspects of governance.
7. The RCL must be supported to become functional. Learners must also be involved in compiling the programme for extra- and co-curricular and cultural activities.