



Schools Evaluation Authority

Accountability • Quality • Respect



Schools' Responses to Covid-19 Report:
Hoër Jongenskool Paarl



School: Hoër Jongenskool Paarl
Address: Auret Street, Paarl,
7622
Circuit: C8
District: Cape Winelands
Province: Western Cape
Category: Public Ordinary (Fee-charging)
Principal: Mr DA Swart (Acting Mr N de Vries)



Areas of Evaluation:

	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:



Teaching & Learning:



Behaviour & Safety:



Leadership & Management:



Governance, Parents & Community:



Overall performance



KEY:



Outstanding



Good



Requires improvement



Inadequate

Main Findings



1. Teaching and Learning

1.1 The teachers maintain a safe and positive learning environment..... 3

Evaluative commentary

The school can accommodate all the grades and was granted permission to phase in Grades 8 to 11 learners much earlier. Grades 8 and 9 classes are divided into four groups. Each group attends school every alternative day. Those staying in the hostel are grouped to coordinate activities at the hostel and the group not attending school, work on their own under supervision in the sports hall. All staff members and learners wear face masks and face shields and sanitise their hands regularly. However, social distancing is not always adhered to. There is enough space horizontally between the rows of benches, but not vertically. The health inspector has told the school that it is safe for the learners to wear face masks as well as face shields. After discussion with the circuit manager, a shield was bought for every staff member and learner. All teachers except two were present on the day of evaluation. All of them were actively teaching and included all learners in teaching and learning activities. All learners are treated with respect and they displayed utmost respect for their teachers and visitors.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

Although all teachers and learners are focused on the academic programme, the school has made provision for some physical activities for the learners.

1.2 The adaptation of classroom teaching practice in the light of Covid-19 ensures that teaching and learning are of high quality..... 4

Evaluative commentary

The revised Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) were very well received by the teachers. All subject groups have discussed it and teach and assess within the ATPs' parameters. They have covered more work than what is required because the revised ATPs were received after some of the learners had already returned to school and teachers continued teaching where they had left off before lockdown. All teachers and learners have effectively adapted to the changed conditions. Lessons and homework are planned and presented at the appropriate levels. Learners receive individual attention, focus on their tasks and ask and answer questions.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

Teachers have included all work that forms the basis for the next grade, but the assessment is done as prescribed in the revised ATPs. This is also done to assist Grade 9 learners with subject choices in Grade 10 and to prepare the Grade 11 learners for Grade 12.

1.3 Learners are supported well (in school and at home) so that they learn effectively..... 4

Evaluative commentary

Learners get individual attention, and their work is regularly assessed. The parents of learners who are still at home pay invigilators to supervise when their children must write tests. They have covered enough work to let all grades write a full examination in September to prepare them for the final examination. Only a few learners did not have access to online teaching and learning materials during the first weeks of the lockdown, but they have been issued with second-hand devices, SIM cards and data. The school has also extended the range of their Wi-Fi network to make it possible for learners to download learning materials at any convenient time from the surrounding area. The School-based Support Team comprises mainly of School Management Team (SMT) members. A counsellor has been appointed to aid vulnerable learners.



2. Behaviour and Safety

2.1 The school's environment is disciplined and purposeful and its ethos is positive..... 3

Evaluative commentary

Shortly after the learners returned to school, some of them disregarded the safety regulations at home. A group of them attended a party, shared food and eating utensils and 16 learners tested positive for Covid-19. The other 32 learners involved tested negative. The irresponsible behaviour of these learners and their parents cannot be blamed on the school. Since then the school has not had similar experiences and everybody willingly abides by the regulations.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The school dealt very effectively with these cases. The positive cases were supervised by their parents and the 32 negative cases had to complete a 14-day self-isolation period before they could return to school. The school was sanitised and was ready for normal activities without losing a single school day. The SMT applauded the circuit manager for his supporting role.

2.2 The school is safe, and protects and cares for its learners and staff well.....

Evaluative commentary

The school follows all Covid-19 safety measures, except social distancing. All learners wear face masks and face shields in the classrooms as suggested by the health inspector. However, during breaks most learners wear only one of the two, play touch rugby and sit next to one another. The classrooms are cleaned and sanitised every afternoon. The toilets are sanitised three times per day and the offices are sanitised regularly throughout the day. There is an isolation room separate from the classrooms for learners with suspected Covid-19 symptoms. All groups interviewed know and understand the procedures to deal with suspected Covid-19 cases. The school has demonstrated its ability to deal with Covid-19 positive cases when it dealt with the 16 positive cases in July. At least two staff members are deployed at each entrance gate. Only authorised visitors are allowed, and they are escorted to the administration block where they are screened, sanitised and answer the Covid-19 questions. Only vehicles of staff members are parked on the school premises. Food is prepared under strict supervision in the hostel kitchen.

Concerns, problems

Social distancing is not adhered to during breaks.

2.3 (Where applicable) The school's boarding facilities (hostels), cater well for the safety, care and welfare of learners.....

Evaluative commentary

The school has four hostels and accommodates the different grades with ease. The Grade 12 learners have single rooms whilst learners in the other grades share rooms in which the beds are at least two metres apart. Where four learners share big rooms, room dividers are used to adhere to social distancing. They have staggered mealtimes and bath times. Separate rooms in each block are used as isolation venues. Learners sanitise their hands before they enter the dining room and take their face masks off only when they eat.



3. Leadership and Management

3.1 The School Management Team (SMT) gives clear direction to the school.....

Evaluative commentary

On the day of the evaluation 109 of 111 staff members were present. The principal had permission to attend a conference in Johannesburg and one of the two teachers with comorbidities works from home. The Temporary Revised Education Plan (TREP) is aligned to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Guidelines. The academic programme goes beyond the requirements of these documents as learners continued to learn during the lockdown and all grades are ahead of schedule. Staff and all learners were orientated on their first day back at school. The SMT is aware of every vulnerable learner and supports them and, in some cases, the whole family. The SMT meets early every morning to plan the day and to address any challenges before they meet with the staff, who reported that they were very well looked after and had the freedom to express their input. The physical education programme and planned the matric ball had been debated. Learner and staff attendance are excellent and the SMT is aware of those who are absent. The school runs like a well-oiled machine. The SMT gives clear direction and all staff members are well informed, know and fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

3.2 The SMT acts effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school..... 4

Evaluative commentary

The SMT is acutely aware of the requirements of the revised ATPs of all subjects. Learners are ready to write a full-scale September examination. Teachers were trained in the use of online teaching and learning resources and they use the newly gained knowledge effectively. Subject groups meet regularly, and the departmental heads meet with the teachers in their departments weekly. A departmental head mentioned that they meet more than before Covid-19. After initial challenges with online teaching and learning resources, the departmental head said he can use it effectively now and is more inspired than ever. Vulnerable learners are provided with food parcels and counselling. They have also received everything necessary to access eLearning materials. The SMT sets high expectations for teachers and learners and holds them accountable.

3.3 The SMT ensures that good use is made of all school resources (human, financial and physical)..... 3

Evaluative commentary

The SMT manages the staff effectively. Everybody receives clear instructions on what to do and responsibilities are rotated. More cleaning staff have been deployed to clean facilities regularly. Only one teacher with comorbidities is working from home. We visited the class that was facilitated on his behalf and the assistant and learners were very productive. The estate manager and the foreman are in control of all cleaning materials. The Grade 12 learners received a welcome back parcel on their first day back. All received two face masks, a face shield, hand sanitiser, stationery and a bar of chocolate. The face masks were especially designed with the name and logo of the school printed on it. All learners have devices and data to access online learning materials. All teachers reported that most learners work hard at home. Teachers repeat work in class when assessment reveals that learners do not fully understand the work. The SMT and governing body manage the resources very well, especially human resources. Staff care about one another and their learners.



4. Governance, Parents and Community

4.1 The governing body fulfils its key responsibilities well 3

Evaluative commentary

The governing body has only missed one of its monthly meetings after the lockdown. It is familiar with the DBE SOP and the WCED Guidelines, well informed and supports the school's safety plans. It heeded the SMT's request to spend R119 000 on safety and cleaning materials. It is standard practice for a new governing body to follow a formal and intensive process to revise all school policies. The current governing body is in its final year of office and has not revised policies, but has approved the new set of Covid-19 rules compiled and implemented by the SMT.

4.2 The governing body fulfils well its functions with regard to the school's finances within its legal mandate 4

Evaluative commentary

The governing body has reviewed and reprioritised the budget. It has calculated the savings and losses due to lost sponsorships and cancelled fundraising events. Currently, the savings break even with the losses. Parents have started paying school fees again and those who have fallen behind have arranged to pay it off over a longer period. The sports coaches' contracts were cancelled, but all governing body employees have been assured of their salaries until the end of 2020 and the school will meet all its monthly financial obligations. It has applied to the Unemployment Insurance Fund for financial help for its employees, but it has not yet received any payments.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The bursar knows every detail of the school's finances, has cost-savings measures in place and reports regularly to the governing body. Based on his feedback, staff bonuses for 2020 have been cancelled.

4.3 The school engages effectively with all stakeholders

Evaluative commentary

All stakeholders were very well informed about all Covid-19 regulations via social media and they also have access to e-copies of all relevant documents. Parents and learners received a video clip during the lockdown to demonstrate the screening process and the safety regulations. To combat fake news, the parents agreed to accept and act only on the news communicated by the principal via video clips which are posted immediately when new developments are announced. The learners voice their opinions via the Representative Council of Learners. Due to their input, the school will still have the prize-giving function and matric ball for groups of 50 people at a time. The SMT meets every morning at 6h00 and the rest of the staff at 6h45. During these meetings, the daily programme is confirmed, experiences are shared, and recommendations are tabled. The staff commended the principal for keeping their morale high with his motivational talks and clips on the staff WhatsApp group. Parents are well informed via various online platforms. The governing body and the principal receive regular feedback from parents. The chairperson told us the wide range of requests from parents. They responded to the request of parents not only to focus on the academic programme but to include physical activities in the daily programme. Parents support their children very well at home. Not one learner has fallen behind with the academic programme. The school has very strong links with the district office. Subject advisers communicate with the teachers via social media. The school psychologist and social work, based at the district office, are available when the school needs assistance. The circuit manager is always available and has a good relationship with the principal and the SMT. The school has strong relationships with faith-based organisations, local business and its sponsors and expressed its appreciation for the letters received from the Head of Education.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The school communicates very efficiently with its stakeholders. The support group, "Back a Boishaaier", is actively involved in supporting the school and vulnerable learners. The staff and the group have collected a vast sum of money to support families. They also rallied support for parents with struggling businesses.

Recommendations

1. The SMT must pay more attention to social distancing, especially during breaks.
2. The governing body must include the Covid-19 safety plans into the Safety Policy and Code of Conduct for Learners.