



Schools Evaluation Authority

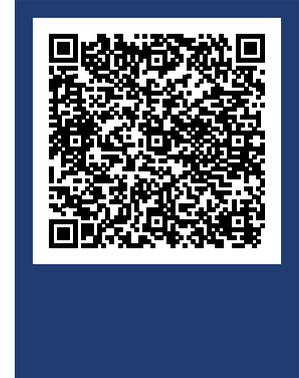
Accountability • Quality • Respect



Schools' Responses to Covid-19 Report:
Sonop Primêre Skool



School: Sonop Primêre Skool
Address: 3 Keerweder Road, Klein Drakenstein, 7628
Circuit: C8
District: Cape Winelands
Province: Western Cape
Category: Public Ordinary (No-fee)
Principal: Mr SJ Crouch (Acting Principals: Mr A Cyster & Ms L Williams)



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 4

Evaluative commentary

The school has planned effectively following the Department of Basic Education (DBE) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Guidelines in terms of timetabling and social distancing. Grade 7 learners attend school daily and the classroom used is big enough for the 41 learners to adhere to social distancing. Grades 1 to 6 classes are divided into two smaller groups to allow for social distancing. Each group will attend school every alternative day – five days each in a ten-day cycle. Only Grade 7 learners were attending school on the day of the evaluation. Teachers were present, actively teaching, and there is mutual respect between teachers and learners.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

Grade 7 learners are accommodated in a double classroom to ensure that they attend school daily, even after the other grades have returned to school. They have planned staggered break times for the different phases and have a special area for Grade R learners to enjoy their breaks. There are markers in the playground where learners place their chairs 1.5 metres apart in a circle. Occasionally, the teachers allow learners to play non-contact games under supervision during breaks. One of the teachers also shows motivational video clips to his class to keep them focused.

1.2 The adaptation of classroom teaching practice in the light of Covid-19 ensures that teaching and learning are of high quality 2

Evaluative commentary

Teachers are familiar with the revised Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) received from the subject advisers and teach accordingly. They follow the weekly lesson plans in the ATPs and lessons are well planned and presented. Learners appreciate smaller classes and personal attention. Some learners participated actively in the lesson, asking and answering questions.

Concerns, problems

The principal, who is responsible for Mathematics, is working from home due to comorbidities. On the day of the evaluation, there was no clear direction concerning the teaching of this subject. One of the teachers mentioned that he will probably be made responsible for Grade 7 Mathematics as well.

1.3 Learners are supported well (in school and at home) so that they learn effectively 1

Evaluative commentary

The learners attending school are supported and individual support is given. However, very little marking and assessment of learners' work is done. The tasks completed at home by a few learners in Grade 3 are not marked. It is disappointing that the opportunity to assist and encourage these few learners was not used. Fewer than 50% of Grade 7 learners were present on the day of the evaluation. The teachers reported that the daily average attendance is about one third and it is not the same learners attending school. On some days, only four to eight learners attend school. Hard copies of notes are made available to learners not attending school, but only 19 of 36 Grade 6 learners fetched the notes. There is very little work done by learners at home and teachers have to repeat the work regularly. Letters were sent to parents and the principal posts messages on Facebook to encourage learners to attend school, but the response is still very poor. Teachers do not use eLearning materials, because parents complained that some of them do not have electronic devices or money to buy data. Although there is no programme for vulnerable learners, teachers allow learners who are not registered for the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) to have meals as well.

Concerns, problems

It seems that the school has given up trying to get more learners to attend school and collect notes.



2. Behaviour and Safety

2.1 The school's environment is disciplined and purposeful and its ethos is positive **2**

Evaluative commentary

The learners (43,9%) and staff (50%) present complied with the safety measures. However, a few learners did not always wear face masks and disregarded the measures for social distancing during breaks, especially when they were not supervised. This was observed with girls in a classroom. All 18 learners were interviewed and stated that they feel safe and learn better at school. They are confident that they will be promoted to Grade 8 and are looking forward to going to high school next year.

Concerns, problems

There are serious concerns about the academic progress and focus of the other 23 Grade 7 learners who are absent and not getting the required teaching and learning materials.

2.2 The school is safe, and protects and cares for its learners and staff well **2**

Evaluative commentary

The governing body has appointed a security officer to sanitise hands and check face masks of everybody entering the school grounds. Visitors must complete the visitors' register at the gate and the secretary receives them at the entrance to the administration block. Staff, learners and visitors are screened, answer the Covid-19 related questions and sanitise their hands again before they enter the administration block. The school uses appropriate cleaning materials to clean classrooms, offices and ablution facilities. The ablution facilities for both staff and learners are spotless and the use of it is effectively regulated to ensure social distancing. All the groups interviewed know and understand the procedures for responding to suspected and confirmed cases of Covid-19 very well. Only two boys currently make use of the Learner Transport Scheme. There is ample space for them on the minibus to maintain social distancing and they sanitise their hands before they get onto the vehicle. The driver and learners wear face masks.

Concerns, problems

The security guard at the entrance gate was late on the day of the evaluation and the visitors had free access until he arrived. Parents fetching food at the NSNP kitchen wore face masks, but their hands were not sanitised, nor were they screened. The food handlers did not wear hairnets or caps, plastic aprons or gloves. Social distancing was not adhered to when parents entered to fetch food and when learners returned plates after meals. One learner was allowed into the kitchen without wearing a face mask. During the visit to the NSNP kitchen, there was a strong smell of tobacco smoke in the air. The food handlers denied smoking in the kitchen, but after we verified the facts with the caretaker, a food handler admitted that she was guilty.

2.3 (Where applicable) The school's boarding facilities (hostels), cater well for the safety, care and welfare of learners - Not Applicable



3. Leadership and Management

3.1 The School Management Team (SMT) gives clear direction to the school **1**

Evaluative commentary

The Temporary Revised Education Plan complies with the DBE SOP and the WCED Guidelines, and all staff members and learners were orientated on the first day they returned to school. The implementation of the safety plans is ineffective due to a lack of effective leadership. The principal is working from home due to comorbidities and the most senior teacher, who was identified to act as principal, accepted the responsibility after serious convincing from the principal and the circuit manager. Unfortunately, he tested positive for Covid-19 on the first day of acting, and was absent from 09 June until 11 August 2020. The acting Foundation Phase departmental head was instructed, on very short notice, to act as principal. When she was absent for a day or two, one of the other teachers had to act as principal. The secretary also tested positive for Covid-19 and was admitted to hospital. She was absent for 36 days and that has made it even more difficult for the acting principal. The permanent principal stays in touch with staff via WhatsApp and with parents via Facebook.

Concerns, problems

The first acting principal resumed the position of acting principal, but he was totally out of touch with the school when we met him on 13 August 2020. The principal could have done more to ensure the smooth running of the school. The acting Foundation Phase departmental head was not well supported and guided by her principal or officials while she was acting principal. However, she sent her daily reports to the district office timeously.

3.2 The SMT acts effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school..... 1

Evaluative commentary

Online teaching and learning are non-existent. The Grade 7 teachers are following the revised ATP, but there is no form of monitoring by the SMT. The acting Foundation Phase departmental head attends school every day and has plans in place to coordinate learning activities in the phase when the learners and teachers return to school. There is a lack of coordination in the Intermediate and Senior Phases.

Concerns, problems

The prospects for the school do not look good when one considers that most grades and all teachers will return to school soon; plans are poorly implemented and there is a lack of clear direction from the SMT.

3.3 The SMT ensures that good use is made of all school resources (human, financial and physical)..... 1

Evaluative commentary

Only the three teachers responsible for Grade 7 learners and the acting Foundation Phase departmental head attend school every day. All non-teaching staff members continue with their usual activities. Only the principal works from home due to comorbidities. We are not convinced that he is optimally productive. When he received notice of the school evaluation, he informed the acting principal, who was back at school for two days after being absent for more than two months, without giving clear instruction and guidance. The caretaker is solely in charge of all cleaning resources and ensures that it is available where and when needed. The school received a donation of cleaning materials from a neighbouring school. Online teaching and learning resources were not used by the teachers present.

Concerns, problems

Most school resources are poorly managed, especially human resources. There is so much potential in developing the beautiful trees, lawn and stream on the school grounds into scenic areas where staff and learners can relax during breaks. One can expect many more challenges when the rest of the learners return to school if there are already so many shortcomings with only Grade 7 learners present.



4. Governance, Parents and Community

4.1 The governing body fulfils its key responsibilities well 2

Evaluative commentary

Although the governing body is not actively involved, it gives moral support to the school and has agreed with the SMT to use some of the cash donations to make the school safer for staff and learners. A few amendments to the Code of Conduct for Learners have been made to provide for the transgression of the Covid-19 regulations.

4.2 The governing body fulfils well its functions with regard to the school's finances within its legal mandate 2

Evaluative commentary

Except for the Norms and Standards allocation, the school has no other form of income and there are no plans to generate funds. The governing body has not reviewed and reprioritised the school's budget, but, fortunately, has received a donation of R250 000 from a local business. It agreed with the SMT to use some of the money to appoint an assistant for the secretary, buy a cubicle and appoint a security officer for monitoring access at the entrance gate, renovate the girls' ablution facility, fund Covid -19 related expenses and settle their water account which is placed under pressure through illegal usage by the community. The donation enables the governing body to meet all its expenses. The district has also contributed R23 000 towards the printing of learning materials for learners.

Concerns, problems

Without the donation, the school would have experienced serious financial problems.

4.3 The school engages effectively with all stakeholders.....

Evaluative commentary

The staff reported that they could speak to the principal if they wanted to give feedback and make suggestions, like when the original plan of dividing the Foundation Phase classes into three smaller groups was changed. The learners also indicated that they could speak to the principal and teachers, but there is no evidence that it has happened recently. The principal communicates via Facebook with parents, but it seems to be ineffective because fewer than 50% of learners attend school and very little work is done at home. Even the hard copies of the notes are not collected from the school. Teachers keep in contact with subject advisers and teachers from other schools via social media. They reported that this link is extremely helpful as it helps them to plan well. The school psychologist met with staff when the morale of staff was low after two staff members were in hospital due to Covid-19. This session created an opportunity for staff to share their fears and it lifted their morale. Unfortunately, this was a once-off event and there are no plans from the SMT or governing body to do something similar to prepare staff for the return of the rest of learners. The circuit manager visited the school to monitor its Covid-19 file, but no support was requested or offered when the second, inexperienced acting principal took over. The school has no links with any community organisation or sister departments.

Concerns, problems

The governing body has not done much to assist with motivating parents to send their children to school.

Recommendations

1. The assessment of learners' work requires urgent attention.
2. The SMT must compile a plan to monitor teachers' work without delay.
3. The SMT must urgently manage the performance of staff members working at the entrance gate and in the NSNP kitchen.
4. The SMT and governing body must work together closely to encourage parents to send their children to school.
5. More must be done to address the fears and low morale of staff as this will directly influence the attitude and commitment of learners.