



Schools Evaluation Authority

Accountability • Quality • Respect



Schools' Responses to Covid-19 Report: Marvin Park Primary School



School: Marvin Park Primary School
Address: 1 Base Street, Macassar, Firgrove, 7134
Circuit: C1
District: Metro East
Province: Western Cape
Category: Public Ordinary (No-fee)
Principal: Mr J Jacobs



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

Although the school has a shortage of classrooms, all available facilities to ensure social distancing are used effectively. Since all the grades have returned to school, the isolation room is also used as a classroom. It uses an isolated outdoor area for learners with Covid-19 symptoms to wait for their parents to fetch them. This arrangement is sensible, and it poses no threat to the safety of staff and learners. There are markers throughout the school premises to help with social distancing. All grades follow the daily rotational timetable, but all classes are divided into smaller groups, which attend school every second day. Teaching time is optimised, and the time allocated per grade is in line with the requirements. Most classes were visited, and, in all classes, teachers were actively teaching and there is mutual respect between teachers and learners.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

A well-ventilated and spacious storeroom is also used as a classroom. This enables the school to allow more learners, in line with Covid-19 protocols, to attend school.

1.2 The adaptation of classroom teaching practice in the light of Covid-19 ensures that teaching and learning are of high quality 3

Evaluative commentary

The Foundation Phase subject adviser and some of the InterSen subject advisers conducted Microsoft Teams meetings with teachers to explain the revised Annual Teaching Plans (ATP). The departmental heads met with their teams and ensured that all teachers have a copy of the ATPs. Teachers plan together and they have a good understanding of what is required in terms of the revised ATPs. Teachers and learners have adapted well to the new conditions. Most teachers make good use of the increased opportunities to engage learners and give suitable individual support. Most learners participate actively in lessons and are focused on their tasks.

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

Evaluative commentary

Learners are very well supported at school and receive feedback. Workbooks are marked regularly up to November 2020 and corrections are completed. Class teachers phone parents or send WhatsApp messages to keep them informed about their children's progress and behaviour. During lockdown, hard copies of notes were made available to learners every Monday and work completed at home was delivered to school every Friday. Currently, almost all the learners attend school and notes are freely available. They receive work to do at home on the days that they do not attend school and teachers reported that most learners complete it. The school has a database of vulnerable learners and they are included in the National School Nutritional Programme (NSNP). Some teachers also support individual learners financially.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The school receives a weekly donation of food parcels for 105 needy families from the Imibala Trust. This donation is secured for the rest of the year.



2. Behaviour and Safety

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

Evaluative commentary

Staff and learners show a comprehensive understanding of all measures necessary to keep everyone safe; they can articulate their roles and responsibilities and it was seen that they willingly comply throughout the day. Teachers and learners are committed to effective teaching and learning and to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic. Most learners attend school daily and are punctual, diligent and enthusiastic.

2.2 The school is safe, and protects and cares for its learners and staff well (3)

Evaluative commentary

The school uses four entrance gates which are manned by at least one staff member who ensures that everybody entering the school premises wears a face mask, is screened and sanitised. The gates are closed as soon as the school day starts. Classrooms, toilets and offices are cleaned and sanitised after school. The toilets are also sanitised after breaks. All teachers keep a bottle of sanitiser in their classrooms for learners to sanitise their hands regularly. The school's procedures in response to suspected and confirmed Covid-19 cases are effective. When learners show Covid-19 symptoms they are screened again and answer another set of questions before their parents are called to fetch them. When parents arrive, they are informed of the symptoms and receive instructions of what to do. Staff with symptoms report to the principal, who will decide what steps to follow. All stakeholders are fully informed about these procedures. There are no Covid-19 confirmed cases amongst learners. Three teachers previously tested positive for the virus, but they were not infected at the school. Only authorised visitors are allowed onto the school grounds and they follow the same safety procedures as staff. After being screened, sanitised and completing the visitors' register they are referred to the principal's office. Food handlers follow all safety measures. They are appropriately attired, the kitchen and eating area are kept clean and sanitised and social distancing is adhered to. They have staggered breaks to avoid overcrowding. The NSNP numbers have increased with more than 50 additional learners.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The school also served food during the lockdown to vulnerable learners from neighbouring schools.

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 (3)

Evaluative commentary

The school's Temporary Revised Education Plan (TREP) is based on the Department of Basic Education (DBE) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Guidelines. The SMT ensures that the TREP is updated with new developments and that staff is informed accordingly. The SMT planned and implemented the orientation for stakeholders very well. Everybody interviewed confirmed that they were effectively orientated on their first day back at school. A departmental head is the Covid-19 Compliance Officer and reports regularly to the principal and staff. The deputy principals were seen doing walkabouts, ensuring that staff members are at the respective screening points and that social distancing is always adhered to. The SMT is very effective in promoting attendance of staff and learners. During interviews it was said that the daily attendance of staff and learners is above 90% and that corresponded with the attendance on the day of the evaluation.

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

Evaluative commentary

The SMT, in collaboration with the rest of the teachers, took the bold decision to introduce class teaching in the Foundation Phase. Teachers said that initially they had their doubts about teaching subjects that they are not trained for, but they feel very comfortable now. The SMT ensures that teachers plan together and that subject specialists supply lesson plans, activities and assessment to all teachers in the grade. Class teachers reported that they can monitor the progress of their learners in all the subjects much better now and that the communication with parents has also improved. The departmental heads have daily meetings with their teams to reflect on the day's work and their wellbeing. Their monthly meetings focus on planning and learner progress. Detailed minutes record these meetings.

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

Evaluative commentary

Duties are divided and rotated amongst staff members fairly. During the lockdown, teachers took turns to help with the preparation and delivery of NSNP meals. Non-teaching staff are deployed to the learners' toilets to keep them clean, sanitise learners' hands before and after they have used the facility, and control access. Two officials from the Department of Culture and Sport (DCAS) help at the NSNP kitchen and invigilate classes when teachers are absent. The two teachers who qualify to work from home due to comorbidities were replaced with two suitably qualified teaching assistants, but the teachers still attended school every day and worked in isolation. They ensured that the assistants have daily lessons and activities and kept the administrative tasks of their classes up to date. The Covid-19 Compliance Officer is satisfied with the amount and quality of safety and cleaning materials received from the WCED. The Rotary Club also donated sanitiser bottles and stands. These resources are safely stored and well managed by the Covid-19 Compliance Officer and the foreman. The school has a computer laboratory which was used by all classes every week. Due to the pandemic, it is currently not optimally used. It has also received 24 tablets from the WCED which is very effectively used by one of the teachers. The rest of the teachers use their personal equipment to access online resources. They share links to online teaching and learning resources and WhatsApp video and audio clips with learners. Not all learners can access this due to the lack of data and devices, but those that do have access use it effectively to enhance their learning.



4. Governance, Parents and Community

4.1 The governing body fulfils its key responsibilities well 3

Evaluative commentary

The governing body gives good support to the principal and the SMT. Teachers found it very comforting when they were addressed by the SMT and the governing body on their first day back at school. Some of the governing body members were physically involved in getting the school's safety procedures in place. It approved funds to buy extra cleaning materials, sanitiser bottles and stands. It appointed someone to paint markers to help with social distancing throughout the school grounds and extra staff to help at the learners' toilets until learners understood and followed the safety steps. The school has created a WhatsApp group for the SMT and the governing body, and they communicate regularly. The governing body did not amend school policies, but the TREP is used in conjunction with the safety policy, Code of Conduct for Learners and other policies.

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

Evaluative commentary

The finance committee meets monthly and has proposed an amended budget which was approved by the governing body. The loss of income due to the pandemic was considered and savings on sports activities were reprioritised for maintenance. A newly built classroom is in its final stage of completion. Money received from the district office was used for the printing of notes for learners and Covid-19 related expenses. The salaries of the governing body employees are secured, and the school can meet all its financial obligations for the rest of the year.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The governing body deals with the school's finances in a very transparent manner. There is a poster of all financial projects in the staffroom, which serves as a reminder to all stakeholders. Most of these projects have been completed.

4.3 The school engages effectively with all stakeholders 3

Evaluative commentary

The school communicates effectively with its stakeholders. Teachers get an opportunity to give feedback during their daily reflection meetings with the departmental heads. The general assistants communicate via the foreman and the administrative staff gives feedback via the deputy principal assigned to them. Learners give feedback to their class teachers. Teachers have a WhatsApp group for the parents of their learners, and they keep the parents in the loop with all school activities. The parents' communication with the school is seamless since they communicate with only the class teacher of their child. The SMT is disappointed in the support that it gets from the officials based at the district office.

Only some subject advisers give continuous support to teachers, but none of them visit the school. The SMT feels that if teachers had to return to school then officials must also resume their responsibilities. The school is especially disappointed that they did not get any response from the officials after it reported the death of one of its learners to them. However, the school is well supported by DCAS, the Department of Social Development, Denel, Imibala Trust and community-based organisations.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

Teachers do home visits when they are concerned about the attendance and progress of learners.

Recommendations

1. The governing body must fast-track the delivery of classrooms by the WCED.
2. The governing body must budget for more Information Technology (IT) equipment and the SMT must manage the limited IT equipment better to make it accessible for all teachers.
3. The teachers are eager to use online resources, and they use their personal equipment to access it. The SMT must use this to motivate and prove to the district office that they are worthy to be considered for the districts' rollout of IT equipment to schools.