



Schools Evaluation Authority

Accountability • Quality • Respect



Schools' Responses to Covid-19 Report:
Plantation Primary School



School: Plantation Primary School
Address: 2 Grace Street, Grassy Park, 7941
Circuit: C9
District: Metro South
Province: Western Cape
Category: Public Ordinary (Fee-charging)
Principal: Mr C Meyer



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:

4 Outstanding

3 Good

2 Requires improvement

1 Inadequate

Main Findings



1. Teaching and Learning

1.1 The teachers maintain a safe and positive learning environment 3

Evaluative commentary

All classrooms are organised so that social distancing is observed. Classrooms have enough space for learners to sit at least 1,5 metres apart. The school uses additional venues to assist in maintaining social distancing. Examples include the school hall used as a staff room, the dance studio used for basic physical education and the music room as an isolation facility. A daily rotational timetable is followed, and the screening time has been adjusted so that the first lesson can start at 08h00. The school closes later to allow for more instructional time. No class is left unattended. On the day of the evaluation, two teachers were absent, but the learners were doing work under the supervision of classroom assistants.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

Despite it being very hot on the day of the evaluation, teachers were actively teaching, and learners were energetic and involved in lessons during the last period.

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

Teachers find the revised Annual Teaching Plans (ATP) useful because it gives clear guidance in terms of work and assessments. Some teachers mentioned that it would be good if they could print the resources in colour, but that was not practical. One of the teachers also mentioned that they found the standard of the Afrikaans First Additional Language too high for the learners. The subject advisers assisted the school with the interpretation of the ATPs and still support teachers with regular updates, if necessary. However, it was reported that although teachers will complete the revised ATPs, it may not be at the required quality because of insufficient instructional time. Teachers appreciate the smaller classes and most use the opportunity to engage effectively with learners. One of the teachers said that it was good to see how some learners improved. Learners said they are working harder than before but did not find a major change in the approach of teachers, for example, by using additional stimulating resources.

1.3 Learners are supported well (in school and at home) so that they learn effectively 3

Evaluative commentary

Most learners correct their own work after answers are provided by teachers. They then do corrections and receive individual attention if required. Homework and assessments are pitched at the correct level, but there is little evidence that gaps created during the pandemic have been made up. Most learners have returned to school. Teachers use social media and online platforms to support learners at home. In cases where learners do not have access to online facilities, hard copies are provided. On the days different groups are home, they complete their work packs, which provide work for five to ten days. A Learner Support Teacher (LST) visits the school every alternate week and assists vulnerable learners. The school has also made use of the district office's psychologist and social worker who offer psycho-social support.



2. Behaviour and Safety

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

Evaluative commentary

A large majority of learners and staff willingly comply with measures taken by the school to manage the pandemic. They generally arrive early for screening and maintain safety protocols throughout the day, with very few learners having to be reminded to adhere to social distancing during breaks. Learner attendance is above 85% on any given day and learners display pride in their school. Despite anxieties in the beginning learners feel safe at school and are now committed to their schoolwork.

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

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Evaluative commentary

The school generally implements effective procedures to manage Covid-19. Learners access the school through different entrances and are effectively screened and sanitised. Teachers are screened in the hall. The learners line up outside their classrooms and only enter under the supervision of teachers or a supervising adult. In an interview with learners, they mentioned that the ablution facilities are only clean in the mornings, but during the day are messy and unhygienic. All learners and staff understand the procedures for responding to suspected and confirmed cases of Covid-19. The school has an isolation room available where learners wait for their parents to fetch them if they show any symptoms of Covid-19. Only authorised visitors and deliveries are granted access to the school. The security guard screens and sanitises visitors at the gate and the process is repeated at the entrance to the school building. The Covid-19 Compliance Officer mentioned an example where the security refused entry to a teacher whose temperature was too high.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

When learners enter the premises, their bags are also sanitised as the school identified bags as a potential threat in trying to manage the pandemic.

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.....

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Evaluative commentary

Two members on the SMT worked on the plans to comply with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Guidelines, including adapting the Temporary Revised Education Plan (TREP) to the needs of the school. The other three SMT members had comorbidities and did not return to school until 28 September 2020. The principal made hard copies of the DBE SOP and WCED Guidelines for each staff member and these were thoroughly discussed and effectively implemented. The principal networked with other schools in the area to share and discuss best practice. Every Friday, after school, the Covid-19 Compliance Officer, who is an SMT member, chairs a short meeting for staff to reflect on the week and suggest any improvements. Two SMT members led the orientation sessions for staff and class teachers assisted with the orientation of learners on their phased return. Colourful Covid-19 posters are displayed on the school premises and inside the classrooms to remind the learners to observe safety protocols. The SMT monitors the safety of learners and staff. The only risks identified are if a family member contracts the virus and the fact that learners do not comply with safety protocols when they leave the school premises. However, there have been no positive Covid-19 cases at school to date. Attendance from both staff and learners is good. The average attendance of learners is above 90%.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The networking of school principals in the area to discuss and share best practice.

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

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Evaluative commentary

The SMT meets with teachers in their phase and grades to give guidance and monitor their teaching plans and assessments. The deputy principal monitors the work of the departmental heads, who in turn check the work of the teachers in their phases. The principal checks all assessments and marking schedules and although he has not conducted classroom visits during the pandemic, he walks around the school ensuring that all teachers are in their classrooms and teaching. He also meets each teacher on a one-to-one basis to discuss their work. There is no online learning at the school because there is no relevant equipment and only one area has Wi-Fi connectivity. The SMT mentors novice teachers in the different grades. The SMT ensures that vulnerable learners receive work on WhatsApp groups and work packs.

3.3 The SMT ensures that good use is made of all school resources (human, financial and physical) 2

Evaluative commentary

Staff are deployed to assist with screening, cleaning their classrooms and doing break duties. The physical education teacher continues with theoretical lessons and assists with substitution duties. The school is part of the Peninsula Feeding Scheme and two ladies are employed to prepare and serve meals. Seven staff members, including three members of the SMT, with comorbidities continued to provide work for their learners and the teacher assistants facilitated this. Some SMT members with comorbidities said that they were not given the opportunity to contribute to the planning process while they were at home. The principal manages the cleaning packs and the caretaker ensures that cleaning and safety materials are replenished. No online resources are used to support learners at school or at home because of the lack of resources and connectivity.

Concerns, problems

The SMT is not working well together as there is tension between the principal and deputy principal, which has created division amongst the staff.

4. Governance, Parents and Community

4.1 The governing body fulfils its key responsibilities well 2

Evaluative commentary

The chairperson of the governing body resigned because of differences with the principal, but the current chairperson is very supportive of the principal and school. He serves on the Covid-19 Health and Safety Committee. A member of the governing body formed a transport committee to liaise with taxi owners who provide transport for learners and ensures that they adhere to safety measures. The governing body interviewed teachers for the vacant Grade 5 post and this process is completed. No policies have been revised to date. The only addition was the Covid-19 Health and Safety Policy.

4.2 The governing body fulfils well its functions with regard to the school's finances within its legal mandate 3

Evaluative commentary

The budget has been reviewed and reprioritised in the light of changes in income and expenditure. Unfortunately, there have been no fundraisers this year and the predicted loss of income is approximately R450 000. The school received R69 000 from the district for its printing costs.

4.3 The school engages effectively with all stakeholders 3

Evaluative commentary

The teaching staff discuss the issues on the management of Covid-19 and decisions are collectively made at staff meetings and implemented. Although all staff give feedback, learners felt that they had no avenue to do so. The governing body chairperson set up a chat group for parents to contact him if they have any concerns relating to the school. The school's newsletter, The Plantation Primary Pipelines, is a major form of communication with parents. Teachers used WhatsApp groups to send work to learners when they were at home. The circuit manager is in regular contact and holds online meetings with principals in the cluster group. Subject advisers communicate with the phase heads and provide resources. There is psycho-social support available from the district.

Recommendations

1. The school must ensure that complacency about the management of the pandemic does not set in, especially during the breaks.
2. The ablution facilities must be kept clean and hygienic throughout the day.
3. The use of social media and online platforms must be prioritised.
4. The SMT must ensure that it works as a team.
5. The governing body must revise all policies.