



Schools Evaluation Authority

Accountability • Quality • Respect



Schools' Responses to Covid-19 Report:
Thembelihle High School



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Date of evaluation
4 November 2020

Lead Evaluator
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School: **Thembelihle High School**
Address: Govern Mbeki Road, Town 2, Khayelitsha, 7784
Circuit: C8
District: Metro East
Province: Western Cape
Category: Public Ordinary (No-fee)
Principal: Mr BN Mfikili



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 1

Evaluative commentary

The school utilises all available facilities to prevent overcrowding. There are markers throughout the school premises to help with social distancing. All classes are divided into two smaller groups, which attend school every alternative week. Grade 12 and only one other grade attend school every day, which is much lower than the 50% of learners who can attend according to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). On the day of the evaluation, only Grade 9 learners were attending school and in four of the eight classes visited no active teaching was taking place. However, it must be noted that this was just before the lunch break and some teachers might have been collecting food for the learners from the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). In the other four classes, learners were doing assessments and copying work from the board. No disrespectful language or behaviour among learners and teachers was observed.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

Despite the challenging workload, Grade 12 teachers were actively teaching at the “Spring School” organised and funded by the school.

Concerns, problems

There is insufficient teaching time. Although Grade 12 learners are not attending school anymore, the timetable was not amended to allocate more teaching time to other grades despite the complaints from Grades 8 and 9 teachers that they do not have enough instructional time.

1.2 The adaptation of classroom teaching practice in the light of Covid-19 ensures that teaching and learning are of high quality 1

Evaluative commentary

Teachers reported that subject advisers conducted Microsoft (MS) Teams meetings to discuss the revised Annual Teaching Plans (ATP). However, they felt that the documents received from the DBE were confusing and subject advisers were not always sure how to interpret them. The changed conditions affect teaching and learning negatively. Teachers said that learners do not work at home and that they must repeat work when learners attend school every alternative week. The day of the evaluation was the last formal teaching day for Grade 9 and the next day was the last day for Grade 8. When these learners attend school again, they will be writing their final assessment. The learners interviewed are worried about their chances of being promoted to the next grade.

Concerns, problems

According to the School Management Team (SMT), the school uses the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Guidelines, but it could not produce a copy of its Temporary Revised Education Plan (TREP).

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

Evaluative commentary

It was established during interviews that there was no common approach regarding feedback and support to learners. Where a subject was taught by more than one teacher, only some classes received regular feedback on work completed. Teachers said that they struggled to get online learning materials to learners due to various challenges during the time they were at home. Learners only received hard copies of notes on their first day back at school. The school did serve NSNP meals during the lockdown, but teachers said that they did not consider issuing notes at the same time. The School-based Support Team (SBST) was active during the first term, but after the lockdown, it only focused on serious cases. However, more teachers are involved in identifying and supporting vulnerable learners.

Concerns, problems

For the past few weeks, some Grade 9 classes did not have a technology teacher.



2. Behaviour and Safety

2.1 The school's environment is disciplined and purposeful and its ethos is 1

Evaluative commentary

It was noticed that teachers comply voluntarily with Covid-19 protocol and safety measures. However, in the four classes where there was no teacher present, some learners did not wear face masks or adhere to social distancing. This is a major challenge for the school. During the lockdown learners did not have work to do at home. Despite limited teaching time teachers said that learners were not fully committed, and that was also noticeable in some of the classes visited. In one class, a learner was sleeping despite the presence of a teacher.

Concerns, problems

Grades 8 and 9 learners did not attend school for five months and only received notes on their first day back at school.

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

Evaluative commentary

The school's procedures for managing Covid-19 are not very effective. It was mentioned during interviews that classrooms are cleaned every second day and the toilets every day. However, the boys' toilets are filled with graffiti, are dirty and the odour is unpleasant. All stakeholders know where the two isolation rooms are and can explain the procedures to be followed if there are suspected and confirmed cases of Covid-19. Parents are well informed about what to do when their children show Covid-19 symptoms. The school's management of authorised visitors is effective. Evaluators were given access to the school by the security at the main entrance. The screening procedures were carried out in the foyer and the compulsory documentation completed. Once inside his office, the principal asked for identification which was supplied to him while the deputy principal kept minutes of discussions about the purpose of the visit and arrangements for the day. No unauthorised visitors are allowed onto the school premises. Meals for the NSNP are prepared in two mobile kitchens. Preparation of food was not observed, but it was seen that learners' food is taken in neat and sealed containers to classrooms, where it is served. Evaluators, together with the principal, observed the cleaning of the kitchens and utensils and saw that some of the staff did not wear face masks. According to the principal, the Learner Transport Scheme (LTS) is checked according to the LTS requirements before Covid-19. The school has agreed with the service provider to ensure that social distancing and sanitising are adhered to on the bus, but the school does not check.

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

According to the principal, they are using the DBE SOP and the WCED Guidelines as their Covid-19 management plan. We asked for a copy of the TREP, but it was not available. All stakeholders were orientated on their first day back at school. The DBE SOP and WCED guidelines were used as reference documents. All stakeholders displayed a good understanding of the school's procedures to keep everybody safe. The deputy principal is the Covid-19 Compliance Officer, and she reports to the SMT during the weekly meetings. The SMT keeps extra face masks available to mitigate the risk of learners arriving at school not wearing them. We received conflicting statistics for learner attendance. Teachers reported that the average daily attendance for Grades 8 and 9 is between 60 and 70% and 80% for Grades 10 to 12. According to the SMT, the daily attendance for all grades is more than 90%. However, on the day only 62% of Grade 9 learners attended school. Staff attendance was 96%.

Concerns, problems

The management of Covid-19 is delegated to the deputy principal. She is responsible for the safety plans as well as the academic programme of the school. The principal's role is minimal.

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

Evaluative commentary

According to the departmental heads, they used to meet with their teams every term before Covid-19. Currently, the teams do not meet regularly, but meetings with individual teachers take place regularly to check progress and to report to subject advisers. Learners' workbooks were checked quarterly but due to the pandemic, books are not checked anymore. The SMT moderates question papers. The school received 12 laptops, 12 data projectors and 20 desktops from the WCED, but the 20 desktops were stolen during a recent burglary. According to the SMT, all teachers can use Microsoft Teams, but it is not clear how it makes online resources accessible to enhance teaching and learning to all teachers. However, individual teachers are using the online resources effectively.

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

Evaluative commentary

When only Grade 12 learners were attending school, the SMT deployed suitably qualified teachers to teach them. Roles and responsibilities to ensure the safety of all, are fairly divided amongst staff members. Four officials of the Department of Culture and Sport (DCAS) help at the learners' toilets and the Walking Bus volunteers assist with discipline. However, the work of the general assistants is not effectively monitored by the SMT and is the reason for the poor condition of the learners' toilets. The foreman manages the safety and cleaning resources and reports to the Covid-19 Compliance Officer. The quality of the cleaning resources received from the WCED is satisfactory, and the school has enough for the rest of the year. However, the thermometers received were of a very poor quality and the school used its funds to replace them. According to the teachers, the use of online resources for teaching and learning at school is limited due to teachers rotating classrooms instead of learners. Learners not attending school depend on hard copies of notes because the lack of data and devices makes online resources inaccessible.



4. Governance, Parents and Community

4.1 The governing body fulfils its key responsibilities well 2

Evaluative commentary

The principal said that the governing body is well informed and supportive. He regularly liaises with the chairperson. The governing body made funds available to buy extra face masks, sanitisers and thermometers. The governing body did not amend any school policies but supports the Covid-19 protocol, which the school uses in conjunction with the school's safety policy.

4.2 The governing body fulfils well its functions with regard to the school's finances within its legal mandate 1

Evaluative commentary

The governing body did not review or reprioritise the budget, but approved Covid-19 related expenses. It also supported the principal's request to pay the stipend for the librarian when a non-governmental organisation (NGO) responsible for the payment could no longer do so. The school has no fundraising functions planned for the year and received no donations. Savings during this time could not be clearly ascertained.

Concerns, problems

Although it was said during one of the interviews that the governing body has a hands-on approach to finances, we are not convinced that it is the case. No mention was made of any finance committee meetings.

4.3 The school engages effectively with all stakeholders 2

Evaluative commentary

Teachers' feedback about the management of Covid-19 is tabled via the departmental heads at the SMT meetings. The administrative staff communicates directly with the principal or deputy principal, whilst the general assistants give feedback via the foreman. The Representative Council of Learners is currently not functional, but learners share their opinions with teachers. The school communicates with parents via bulk SMS and, according to the principal, also via the local radio station and newspaper. However, it is not clear how the parents give feedback and make suggestions. Learners did not work at home during the lockdown

and currently, most of their work is not checked. The departmental heads are satisfied with the continuous support that the teachers receive from most of the subject advisers. The subject advisers did not visit the school since the first term, but teachers get regular emails from them. It is not clear what support the school received from the circuit manager, but according to the principal, the circuit manager did an audit of the school's documents. The school gets very good support from Khayelitsha Day Hospital especially when they refer learners with Covid-19 symptoms. It also gets support from various community-based organisations, NGOs and sister departments. Learners with substance abuse problems are referred to the South African National Council on Alcoholism (SANCA). The DCAS deployed two officials each for the Mass participation; Opportunity and access; Development and growth (MOD) Programme and the "Scouting-in-Schools" programme to the school.

Concerns, problems

The school psychologist did not assess Grade 12 learners to enable those who qualify to apply for concessions for the National Senior Certificate examination. The principal has reported it to the circuit manager, but the learners commenced the examination without being assessed.

Recommendations

1. The SMT must fast-track the application for concessions for those Grade 12 learners who qualify for it.
2. The principal must be more involved in the management of Covid-19.
3. The SMT must ensure that limited teaching time is optimally used. As Grade 12 learners have commenced their final examinations, additional teaching time must be allocated to Grades 8 and 9.
4. The learners' toilets, especially the boys' toilets, need urgent attention.
5. The SMT must revise its Information Technology plans to ensure that eLearning resources are used more often and are accessible to all teachers.