



Schools Evaluation Authority

Accountability • Quality • Respect



Schools' Responses to Covid-19 Report: Cape Town High School



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Date of evaluation
4 November 2020

Lead evaluator
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School: Cape Town High School
Address: Government Avenue, Gardens, Cape Town, 8000
Circuit: C2
District: Metro Central
Province: Western Cape
Category: Public Ordinary (Fee-charging)
Principal: Mr EM Cloete



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 has modified its timetable as circumstances have changed. The timetable is divided into a General Education and Training (GET) week and a Further Education Training week and grades are grouped according to their First Additional Language groups, namely Xhosa and Afrikaans. This is to ensure that Mathematics and Languages are taught daily. Teachers rotate to reduce movement among classrooms, except when learners move for their elective subjects. Learners appreciate their teachers and they said that they are never left unattended.

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) very structured and useful. They were assisted by the subject advisers and further discussions were held in the different subject groups. The two subjects discontinued in the GET Band are Creative Arts and Technology. Teachers will complete the work as planned but are worried about the Grade 8 learners who have not had enough contact time. Lessons are well prepared and presented. All learners receive work packs to complete on the days that they do not attend school. Teachers and learners utilise the advantages of reduced classes effectively. Learners are more focused, and many teachers have modified their teaching styles.

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

Evaluative commentary

Before commencing a new lesson, teachers highlight concerns from the completed work and assessments and learners are satisfied with the feedback. Learners also receive assistance online on the days that they do not attend school. All learners at home were assisted online or their parents fetched work packs from school. One of the grade heads offered counselling services to learners, but her teaching load has since increased. Two University of Cape Town students, reading for their Masters' degrees in Psychology, visit the school three days per week to offer psycho-social support.



2. Behaviour and Safety

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

Evaluative commentary

All learners and staff understand the importance of the Covid-19 regulations and most cooperate willingly. Some learners do not wear their face masks correctly or adhere to social distancing protocols. Teachers remained focused on delivering quality teaching during lockdown and most learners responded well, except some who did not have access to online facilities.

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

Evaluative commentary

The school has effective procedures for managing Covid-19, but some are not always implemented. On the day of the evaluation, some teachers who were supposed to be on screening duty were late and this impacted on the process negatively. The classrooms, ablution facilities, offices and frequently used surfaces are cleaned and sanitised often. Learners and staff know the procedures if there is a suspected or confirmed Covid-19 positive case. The school has a sick bay available to isolate learners and in the event of an overflow, a bigger venue is available. Parents are also informed of the procedures if their children show any symptoms. Access to the school is well controlled. All gates are locked as soon as learners and staff have entered. Visitors are only granted access with prior permission from the principal and are screened on entry.

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 (2)

Evaluative commentary

The SMT has a clear and appropriate plan for complying with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Guidelines but has had to make many changes to its Temporary Revised Education Plan (TREP) during the phased return of learners. At the outset, the principal held orientation sessions with the non-teaching staff and SMT. All staff received copies of the DBE SOP and the WCED Guidelines, and these were discussed and implemented. The grade heads were responsible for the orientation of learners. However, complacency has set in and there is a need to remind learners and staff of the safety protocols. Although the SMT monitors the safety protocols inside the premises, a few learners had to be reminded to wear their face masks and adhere to social distancing. A major risk is the failure of most learners to follow the safety measures outside the premises. On the day of the evaluation, Grades 10 and 11 learners were writing assessments and attendance was above 90%. The attendance of teachers and non-teaching staff is good.

3.2 The SMT acts effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school (3)

Evaluative commentary

The SMT facilitates the input provided by subject advisers and provides links on subject-related matters to the subject heads, who in turn provide guidance and support to teachers. The SMT relies on the professionalism of teachers to implement the TREP effectively. The subject heads monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects and report to the deputy head, who in turn informs the principal of progress to date. The principal is very visible and visits classes during the school day. Vulnerable learners continue to receive work online.

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

Evaluative commentary

The SMT drew up a duty roster and assigned all teachers to screening and break duties. Minor adjustments were made to the deployment of teachers when the school accepted the option of excluding Creative Arts and Technology from the GET Phase. Safety and cleaning materials are well-organised, stored and regularly replenished. Teachers send work online to provide work for learners to complete at home. Owing to the focus on online learning, learners may use cell phones in class, if required.

4. Governance, Parents and Community



4.1 The governing body fulfils its key responsibilities well (2)

Evaluative commentary

Although the chairperson is very supportive of the principal, the governing body has not held a meeting since March 2020. However, members are in telephonic communication and are sent all necessary and applicable correspondence. The chairperson serves on the Covid-19 Health and Safety Committee. The Covid-19 Health and Safety Policy was ratified by the governing body. It was informed of changes to the Cell Phone Policy for learners, but that had not been adopted yet.

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

Evaluative commentary

Despite the non-payment of 60% of the school fees, the governing body has not met to reprioritise or review the budget. It was reported that the school might not be able to pay its teachers in governing body posts.

The school's income from hiring its facilities has also dwindled and some of its accounts remain unpaid.

Concerns, problems

The possibility that teachers employed by the governing body might not be paid full salaries has been discussed with the staff.

4.3 The school engages effectively with all stakeholders

Evaluative commentary

The teaching and non-teaching staff can give feedback to the SMT on the management of Covid-19. Learners interviewed said that they did not feel that they could give feedback, but the Representative Council of Learners is functional and reports to the principal. Learners said that they are very proud of and feel reassured by their principal's visible presence in the school. The school communicates frequently with parents online and sends letters and newsletters. Prior to the commencement of the final term, parents had been sent both the final programme and assessment dates. The school's links with the district is good. The circuit manager contacts the principal regularly and the subject advisers have worked very hard providing resources to the teachers.

Recommendations

1. The SMT must continue to encourage learners and staff to adhere to the safety protocols to avoid complacency from setting in.
2. Teachers must arrive on time for their duties.
3. Teachers' professional development must focus on eLearning platforms.
4. The governing body must review other relevant policies and reprioritise the budget.