



Schools Evaluation Authority

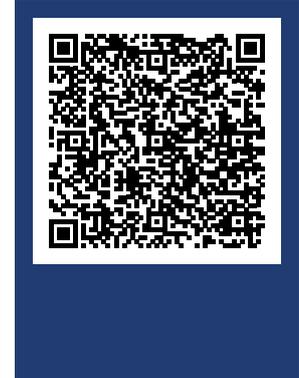
Accountability • Quality • Respect



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



School: Ridgeville Primary School
Address: 3 Ponie Court, Westridge, Mitchells Plain, 7798
Circuit: C4
District: Metro South
Province: Western Cape
Category: Public Ordinary (Fee-charging)
Principal: Mr PT Atkins



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 follows the Department of Basic Education (DBE) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Guidelines. Desks are arranged to allow for social distancing. Teachers tables are spaced to prevent direct contact with learners, and classrooms and offices are well ventilated. Before all the grades returned to school, Grade 7 learners attended school every day and all teachers were involved in teaching or invigilating them. Since all grades returned, classes are divided into two groups. Each group attends school on every alternative day. Toilet breaks and mealtimes are staggered for different grades. All teachers observed were teaching. Respect between teachers and learners was observed in the classrooms and on the premises.

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 follow the revised Annual Teaching Plans (ATP) facilitated via online meetings by the subject advisers who also provided internet links to teaching and learning resources. However, a few teachers feel that the ATP for their subject is not always user friendly and they struggle to keep up with the timeframes. Teachers try their best. Lessons are well prepared and presented, but it was observed that there was a lot of repetition with little engagement of learners. Teachers also had to repeat work done by their colleagues who were deployed to classes they did not normally teach.

Concerns, problems

Despite teachers' hard work, instructional time is lost due to learners copying work from the chalkboard. In one of the classes, learners were silently reading their prescribed books. This could have been done for homework.

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

Evaluative commentary

Learners are well supported at school, but teachers confirmed repetition of work is time-consuming and makes it difficult to meet timeframes in the ATPs. Teachers communicated with learners and their parents via WhatsApp, but due to a lack of devices and data, this was not effective. In some grades, it started with 90% participation, but it decreased to 80%. Hard copies of notes were made available to all Grade 7 learners during the second term, but it was not sustainable. Currently, notes are only available for learners not attending school. The School-Based Support Team (SBST) has not been revived since the lockdown, but individual cases of vulnerable learners are attended to by the Learning Support Teacher (LST).

Concerns, problems

Feedback to learners is limited. Workbooks revealed that some have not been marked since lockdown while others have not been marked at all.



2. Behaviour and Safety

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

Evaluative commentary

Learners, teachers and non-teaching staff comply willingly, and the school places a high premium on everyone's safety on the premises. A well-planned orientation programme contributed to this attitude. It was observed that classrooms, ablution facilities and frequently touched areas are cleaned regularly. Most learners attend school regularly and are punctual and diligent. Teachers and learners are focused on the academic programme, despite financial constraints and inaccessibility of online teaching and learning resources.

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

3

Evaluative commentary

Everyone is screened, sanitises their hands, wears face masks and always adheres to social distancing. The school ensures social distancing by having staggered breaks and different dismissal times for different grades. Learners, teachers and non-teaching staff could clearly articulate the procedures to be followed in the case of suspected or confirmed cases of Covid-19. This is attributed to the well-planned orientation programme with the emphasis on safety for all. On arrival at the school and during walkabouts, it was observed that parents are not allowed onto the premises when they drop off or fetch their children. Deliveries to the school are collected and signed for at the gate. The same applies when parents collect learning materials and deliver assignments. The staff member responsible for the National School Nutrition Programme is appropriately attired and ensures that the procedures and preparation of food comply with health and safety regulations. Staff supervise during mealtimes. Learners said they enjoy their meals. As most learners do not reside in close proximity to the school and commute daily by taxi, they are reminded to keep themselves safe by adhering to the golden rules.

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 compiled a Temporary Revised Education (TREP) which was implemented effectively. It follows the DBE's SOP and the WCED Guidelines. Staff members had opportunities to give input and are well informed. The timetable makes provision for the required instructional time. Orientation followed the WCED Guidelines. The SMT and all non-teaching staff were orientated first by the acting principal, then the SMT orientated the teachers who, in turn, orientated the learners. An orientation video was sent via WhatsApp to learners and parents during the lockdown. The SMT monitors the safety of all stakeholders and has shown it can identify and mitigate risks. Examples of these are:

- The staggered breaks and mealtimes for the different grades.
- Teachers in the Senior Phase rotate instead of learners to reduce movement.
- Teaching learners how to keep themselves safe on taxis.
- The donation of face masks is used when learners arrive at school without their face masks.

The SMT encourages learners to attend school and most learners have returned to school.

Concerns, problems

Some SMT members are not in agreement and are of the opinion that the TREP and ATPs are not well aligned. Although most learners attend school, 10 to 15% of them do not attend school regularly.

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

1

Evaluative commentary

Although the SMT has planned for teaching, learning and assessment in the TREP, its monitoring is not effective. It does not coordinate online teaching, but a few teachers use it effectively. The SBST is not functional. However, the LST supports individual vulnerable learners. The SMT advised the governing body to donate food to schools in Rocklands during the lockdown so that learners in that area could receive meals close to their homes.

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

2

Evaluative commentary

The SMT has planned the deployment of teachers and non-teaching staff well.

- When only Grade 7 learners were at school, teachers of other grades were utilised.

- Teacher assistants help with the screening at the two entrances to the school and supervision during meals.
- Teachers are on duty at the gate when learners leave in the afternoon.
- Non-teaching staff oversee at the ablution facilities and assist at the entrances in the morning and afternoon.

The two teachers with comorbidities work in isolation at school. The SMT ensures that they provide lessons to their teacher assistants, complete administrative tasks and are responsible for marking of assessments. The caretaker, in collaboration with the Covid-19 Compliance Officer, manages the cleaning and safety resources. Regular reports are given at the SMT meetings despite complaints that communication is not effective. The SMT and the teachers interviewed reported that they had to repeat all work shared on online platforms because not all learners had access and they were concerned about the limited number of teaching days. However, the SMT should encourage teachers to continue sharing the links to these resources to enhance teaching and learning for those learners who have access to online resources.



4. Governance, Parents and Community

4.1 The governing body fulfils its key responsibilities well 1

Evaluative commentary

The governing body has held four meetings since the lockdown started and it supports the principal and SMT. It distributed food during the lockdown to vulnerable learners. The chairperson and a few other members check on the school regularly and a parent, who is a nurse, sometimes assists with access to the premises. The governing body revised and signed off the following two policies a day before the evaluation:

- Code of Conduct for Learners to provide for the Covid-19 regulations.
- The Finance Policy to update the signatories and amend the maximum amounts allowed for Covid-19 related purchases.

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 has not reviewed or reprioritised the school budget. However, it terminated the contracts of three teachers who now work on a voluntarily basis. These teachers have applied to the Unemployment Insurance Fund without assistance or follow-up by the governing body or SMT. Its oversight of the school's finances is poor. The school cannot meet its financial obligations until the end of the year. Even though fundraising cannot take place as in the past, no effort has been made to hold fundraisers within the limitations of the Covid-19 regulations. The school is plagued with burglaries and cannot afford to lose the much-needed services of the two security officers but will be unable to pay them. The district office promised to assist the school with R80 000 for the printing of learning materials for learners, but no effort has been made to fast track a positive response.

Concerns, problems

The Finance Committee last met in February 2020 and is only planning now to revisit the budget.

4.3 The school engages effectively with all stakeholders 1

Evaluative commentary

Learners, teachers and non-teaching staff have platforms to make suggestions and give feedback on the management of Covid-19. The stakeholders could not give any examples. During an interview, teachers reported that since all grades have returned, the SMT's decisions are accepted and they concentrate on teaching. The school communicates with parents through WhatsApp groups. Printed copies of the orientation programme were also made available to parents. As most parents struggled to assist their children with schoolwork, many children were behind when they returned to school. Currently, most learners attending school regularly are up to date with their schoolwork. Teachers are in contact with the subject advisers via WhatsApp groups. Other than the circuit manager's involvement in financial support for the printing of learning materials, support from the district office is limited. A Non-Governmental Organisation, called Hannah's Place of Safety, assisted the school with screening during the first two weeks when Grade 7 learners returned to school.

Concerns, problems

The lack of support from district officials is a cause for concern.

Recommendations

1. The acting principal must attend to the conflict among SMT members.
2. The SMT must improve its monitoring of learners' work and feedback.
3. The SMT has good plans to address Covid-19 challenges but must improve the monitoring of the implementation of these plans.
4. The SMT must encourage teachers to continue sharing the links to online teaching and learning resources to enhance teaching and learning for those learners who can access it.
5. The SMT must revive the SBST to improve the quality of teaching and learning for vulnerable learners.
6. The governing body must pay urgent attention to the dire financial position. The fast tracking of the payment of R80 000 from the district office will be a good starting point.
7. The district office must address the tension in the SMT and meet the undertaking to pay for printing of learning materials.