



Schools Evaluation Authority

Accountability • Quality • Respect



Schools' Responses to Covid-19 Report: The Pinelands Primary School



School: **The Pinelands Primary School**

Address: 10 Central Square, Pinelands, 7405

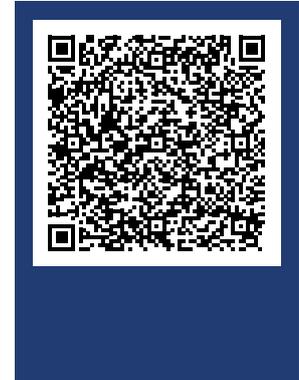
Circuit: C3

District: Metro Central

Province: Western Cape

Category: Public Ordinary (Fee-charging)

Principal: Mr MH Abrahams



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

The seating arrangements in all classrooms are organised so that social distancing protocols are observed. Although desks and tables had to be rearranged, classrooms are still conducive to effective learning. The school hall and art room were converted into Grade 7 classrooms so that all learners in that grade can attend school every day. Grades 1- 6 attend school five days out of a ten-day cycle. Grade 7 learners attend school every day. During the assessment weeks, grades rotate so that all learners in a grade can write assessments on the same days. All teachers were present but not actively teaching as assessments were being written. However, all teachers were invigilating these assessments in the classrooms and hall. The environment for teaching and learning is safe and positive. Learners' work adorns the school corridors and is displayed in the classrooms. It was clear that there is a warm, inclusive, and respectful relationship between staff and learners. The school is kept meticulously clean and, even though the swimming pool requires constant maintenance, it, too, is in excellent condition.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The school ensures that teaching and learning takes place in a positive environment.

1.2 The adaptation of classroom teaching practice in the light of Covid-19 ensures that teaching and learning are of high quality 4

Evaluative commentary

The revised Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) are implemented by all teachers and appropriately reflect the elements of the Temporary Revised Education Plan relating to the curriculum and teaching. The teachers interviewed said that they focused on teaching concepts thoroughly instead of simply completing the ATPs quickly. Although the teachers were not teaching during the assessment week, from the workbooks examined, it was evident that teachers are well-prepared and know their subjects. The work completed by the learners is broad and appropriate and the amount and quality of the work covered is commendable. In the Foundation Phase all the mats were removed and there is no group work in any of the phases. This is to comply with Covid-19 protocols. The biggest challenge was the progression of learners from Grade 3 to Grade 4 and the introduction of cursive writing in the latter grade. The school offers music and itinerant teachers teach piano, violin, saxophone, recorder, flute, and guitar to learners who pay directly for these lessons. The school continues with physical education and the teaching of ball skills after school.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The quantity and quality of the work covered reflects conscientious input from both learners and teachers to ensure that there are no backlogs due to the pandemic. The continued offer of physical education and ball skills makes school enjoyable for the learners whilst maintaining a safe environment.

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

Evaluative commentary

In all grades, it is evident that teachers mark the learners' work meticulously, write encouraging comments and use motivating stickers extensively. A high standard of teaching and learning exists as evident from the quality of the workbooks examined, as well as from the evidence gathered during interviews. Vulnerable learners are supported by an active School-based Support Team and learners are referred to the district psychologist if necessary. All vulnerable learners returned to write the final examinations in 2020.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

Very thorough marking of the learners' work contributes to the quality and standard of teaching and learning at the school.



2. Behaviour and Safety

2.1 The school's environment is disciplined and purposeful and its ethos is positive **4**

Evaluative commentary

Learners, teachers, and non-teaching staff willingly comply with and embrace the measures to keep everyone safe while remaining focused on high-quality teaching and learning. From the outset, video clips were sent to parents outlining the changed conditions that would exist when their children returned to school. The principal holds virtual assemblies where he reminds the learners of the importance of complying with the health and safety protocols. Staff briefings take place twice a week. Parents, teachers, and learners confirmed that there are no cases of bullying at the school. However, in the event of any bullying being reported, the Code of Conduct for Learners has an anti-bullying clause which would be implemented. Prior to lockdown, anti-bullying protocols were a major topic addressed at assemblies.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The holding of virtual assemblies by the principal is an effective means of conveying information to the learners about Covid-19 safety.

2.2 The school is safe, and protects and cares for its learners and staff well **4**

Evaluative commentary

After the hard lockdown, when learners returned to school according to the dates stipulated, the school hired a marquee tent and erected it on the parking area so that learners could be screened safely and efficiently, especially in wet weather. Currently, teachers who are not classroom-based as well as teacher assistants screen the learners at four different sanitising stations when they arrive in the morning. Grades enter from different entrances and line up for screening before moving directly to their classrooms where their class teachers are on duty to receive them. All staff arrive at school before 07h00 to assist with these duties and to receive their learners. The non-teaching staff clean the school thoroughly. Classrooms are cleaned and sprayed with sanitiser when the learners leave at the end of the day and the ablution facilities are checked throughout the day. These are clean, graffiti-free and in good working condition. The school has clear and appropriate procedures for responding to suspected and confirmed cases of Covid-19 and there are three isolation facilities. The school gates are locked at the commencement of the school day and authorised visitors are screened before entering the school premises. Security personnel patrol the inside parking area during the day. The school has Closed Circuit Television cameras strategically placed around the school. At night, a security company patrols the area.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

Providing adequate cover for learners and staff against the weather in winter by erecting a marquee tent was an excellent idea.

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 has a clear and appropriate plan for complying with the Department of Basic Education Standard Operating Procedures and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Guidelines. The principal ensured that all staff had a copy of the WCED Guidelines, and these were workshopped before the learners returned to school. Throughout the lockdown period, teachers were in contact with their learners via online teaching and learning platforms, such as Google Classroom and Classroom Dojo. Video clips were sent to parents to show them the changes that the learners should expect on their return to school. Attendance by both staff and learners is above 95%. If learners are absent without an explanation, their parents are contacted within three days.

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

Evaluative commentary

The principal undertakes regular classroom visits. The school uses online teaching and learning platforms very effectively. It organised a virtual prize-giving at the end of the 2020 academic year and a virtual welcome to new parents and learners in 2021. Members of the SMT conduct pre- and post-moderation of workbooks, assessments and marking once a term. They moderate work in accordance with a template. The SMT have different portfolios and meet every fortnight. They hold meetings in turn with teachers in the different phases. Professional development is encouraged, and teachers reported on the numerous courses that they had completed. The Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute also conducts numerous virtual workshops which teachers attend.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The high level of monitoring by the SMT contributes to the quality and standard of teaching.

3.3 The SMT ensures that good use is made of all school resources (human, financial and physical)..... 4

Evaluative commentary

Teaching and non-teaching staff are on a roster to cover the screening and break duties. In 2020, the school applied for and received permission not to teach Economics and Management Sciences and Technology for the year. These subject teachers were deployed to teach other subjects and grades, where needed. In addition, aftercare staff were deployed to assist in various other areas of the school during the time that the aftercare was closed. The cleaning and safety materials are organised and securely stored. The sanitiser bottles are replenished when necessary and the school is thoroughly and regularly cleaned. Online teaching and learning resources were used effectively during lockdown and almost all learners had connectivity. The school has a computer laboratory with 32 computers and all grades receive computer lessons. Learners also have access to computers in the library. Most classrooms are equipped with online teaching and learning resources.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

Utilisation of other non-teaching staff to provide assistance with the additional tasks essential to observe the health and safety protocols is a good idea.



4. Governance, Parents and Community

4.1 The governing body fulfils its key responsibilities well 3

Evaluative commentary

The previous and current governing body support the school. There is a good relationship between the chairperson and the principal. The governing body has revised all policies, which remain in draft form until they are adopted at the next governing body meeting.

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

Evaluative commentary

Although there was a loss of income and an increase in the number of parents applying for school fee exemptions, the effect on the budget has been minimal. The biggest loss of income was from the aftercare programme as fewer children are attending. For a short time, the governing body deployed its aftercare staff in other areas and was able to continue to pay them. At the budget meeting held in November 2020, a 3% increase in school fees was agreed upon as many parents are struggling financially. The finance sub-committee functions well. Larger projects have been placed on hold.

4.3 The school engages effectively with all stakeholders 3

Evaluative commentary

The principal has an open-door policy and learners, teachers and non-teaching staff are comfortable giving ideas and feedback to him, and the SMT. Teamwork is visible amongst the staff. The school communicates using social media and online platforms with parents, and most parents are responsible and responsive.

However, there are some parents with whom it is difficult to interact. The school's links with the circuit manager and subject advisers are fruitful. The district psychologist and social worker are available if called upon to assist.

Recommendations

1. The school must continue to maintain the high quality of teaching and learning and avoid any backlogs that learners need to cover.
2. All policies must be signed off and if necessary, addenda added.
3. The governing body must form a Health and Safety Committee and one of its members must serve on this committee.