



Schools Evaluation Authority

Accountability • Quality • Respect



**Schools' Responses to Covid-19 Report:
Thomas Wildschutt Senior Primary School**



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Accountability • Quality • Respect

Date of evaluation
24 & 25 June 2021

Lead evaluator
Ms BD Houghton

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School: Thomas Wildschutt Senior Primary School
Address: Fifth Avenue, Retreat, 7945
Circuit: C5
District: Metro South
Province: Western Cape
Category: Public Ordinary (Fee-charging)
Principal: Ms VS Naidoo



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

Learners are divided into two groups and attend school on alternate days. All in all, they attend five days in a ten-day cycle. Social distancing protocols are adhered to, and learners sit at separate desks and tables. Classrooms are clean and most are tidy. Teachers were present and either teaching or invigilating assessments. From observation, it was clear that teachers are consistently respectful and inclusive of learners and relationships are built on mutual trust. Appropriate teaching and learning materials are displayed. However, learners' work is displayed in only some of the classrooms.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

Despite the small classrooms, desks and tables are arranged in a zigzag formation to meet social distancing requirements.

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

The Temporary Revised Education Plan (TREP) is well set out and the Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) are broadly aligned to it. However, although the teachers are following the trimmed ATPs, those interviewed said that it was impossible to complete them in the limited time available and that there were backlogs in all grades, especially the progression from Grade 3 to Grade 4. Extra homework is given to learners as one way to address these gaps and extensive use is made of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) workbooks. Teachers felt that they should focus on teaching and consolidating key concepts and specific areas of the curriculum, instead of touching on the surface of all elements of the ATPs.

Concerns, problems

Even though teachers are trying to adapt the teaching plans to the needs of the learners, the amount of work covered is not sufficient to complete the curriculum.

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

Evaluative commentary

Although most teachers marked, signed, and dated the workbooks of the learners, and some added encouraging comments or stickers, this was not consistent across the grades. The layout of the work in the learners' workbooks was not consistent across the grades and many workbooks were scribbled in, had sections of incomplete work and were in a poor condition. This makes it difficult for teachers to mark and monitor the learners' work. During lockdown, learners were given work packs to complete, which are still used by the learners on the days that they are at home. The school benefits from the services of social work students from the University of Cape Town who offer psycho-social support to approximately 12 learners once a week. The school has the services of a Learning Support Teacher whom they share with another school. She spends every second week at the school, and she offers very good support to learners who are at academic risk. Hope House Counselling Centre is also available to support vulnerable learners who need it. Volunteers from a non-governmental organisation assist with homework classes after school and two volunteers help with reading programmes and setting up a school library.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The wide range of support offered to the learners is of great benefit and is well managed by the principal.



2. Behaviour and Safety

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

Evaluative commentary

The environment is disciplined and purposeful and its ethos is positive. One of the ways that this can be seen is that learners, teachers, and non-teaching staff demonstrate willing compliance with all measures necessary to keep everyone safe. Teachers ensure that they are at school by 07h00 so that they are available in their classrooms when the learners arrive at school. However, the quality and quantity of work needs to improve as, even though there are backlogs, much more work should have been covered in the first two terms. Bullying is not a serious problem at the school as the one or two recent incidents have been quickly and effectively dealt with under the Code of Conduct for Learners and have not re-occurred.

Concerns, problems

The pace and quantity of the work covered is insufficient.

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

Evaluative commentary

The school's measures for managing Covid-9 are effective. The learners are screened before entering the school's premises and their temperatures are taken. They walk directly to their classrooms where their class teachers re-take their temperatures and record them. The classrooms have water outside each room and bottles of hand sanitiser inside. The learners are accompanied to the ablution facilities by an assistant and only three learners go into the facility at the same time. Their hands are sanitised before and after usage. Teachers are vigilant in reminding learners to wear their face masks correctly and to adhere to social distancing protocols. The Covid-19 Compliance Officer oversees the cleaning and sanitising processes and monitors that health and safety regulations are followed. Classrooms and ablution blocks are cleaned and sanitised every day and ablution facilities are checked during the day as well and cleaned again if necessary. The school knows how to respond to suspected or confirmed cases of Covid-19 and there is an isolation room available. No unauthorised visitors are allowed onto the school premises and authorised visitors are screened upon arrival. The kitchen where the Peninsula School Feeding Association prepares the porridge and lunch for the learners is clean, as are the utensils used. The food is served to the learners in their classrooms.

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 SMT complies with the DBE Standard Operating Procedures and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Guidelines, including the TREP. The SMT monitors and ensures that the school follows the plans. The administrative files, minutes of meetings, teachers' portfolios, and all information relevant to guide the staff are in perfect order and meticulously filed and labelled. The SMT returned to school before the teachers and learners and ensured that all the procedures were in place when the rest of the staff returned. In turn, teachers orientated their learners. The SMT is present to ensure that the safety protocols are in place and the safety of the learners and staff is monitored. The major risk is that learners do not follow safety protocols when they are outside school. The school mitigates this by regularly talking to the learners about good health and safety practices and encouraging them to follow the same procedures at home as they do at school. Staff attendance is excellent, and learners' attendance is approximately 95%, which is very good. The school follows up when learners are regularly absent. Attendance registers have been adapted to make the tracking of learners' absence very easy.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The inclusion of a tracking page in the front of the attendance register on which teachers can record learners' absence with space to record reasons, follow-up and action taken makes it easy and effective to monitor attendance.

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

Evaluative commentary

The SMT moderates work and there is pre- and post- moderation of assessments. After moderation, the work and assessments are sent to the principal for final sign off. The principal also moderates the answer papers of learners and all marks. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored by the SMT. They conduct subject meetings, analyse question papers and memoranda, and track the progress of the learners. They also reported that they usually visit classes in the third term and check profiles. More experienced teachers in the grade mentor the novice teachers. Systems, such as book control, interventions, moderation, and classroom visits, are also currently being improved. Professional development for teachers is ongoing in the form of virtual workshops, meetings, and courses. Most of these come from the district office. In addition, to support and care for the staff, the SMT arranged a yoga-and-snack session, a motivational talk by a retired principal and set up a “guardian angel” initiative where each member of staff must encourage another member of staff as often as possible.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The attention to the wellbeing of the staff is appreciated by them and serves as an encouragement.

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

Evaluative commentary

Teachers and non-teaching staff do duties as per a roster for screening and are on duty during breaks. Cleaning and safety resources are stored in a storeroom and are carefully locked away so that only authorised staff have access to these. There is limited availability of online resources and learners do not have connectivity or data at home. Teachers, however, make use of online platforms to communicate with parents of their learners. However, Grade 6 learners benefit from and enjoy the Green Shoots Mathematics programme in the computer laboratory.

4. Governance, Parents and Community

4.1 The governing body fulfils its key responsibilities well (3)

Evaluative commentary

The newly elected governing body is supportive of the school and its staff. It is willing to help at a moment's notice if called upon by the principal. All school policies have been revised, adopted, and signed.

4.2 The governing body fulfils well its functions with regard to the school's finances within its legal mandate (2)

Evaluative commentary

The school budget was approved in November 2020. Unfortunately, parents do not take the time to apply for school fee exemptions although the school appeals to them to do so. There was no fee increase in 2021

4.3 The school engages effectively with all stakeholders (2)

Evaluative commentary

Teachers and non-teaching staff give feedback to the principal and SMT. The principal has an open-door policy which the staff appreciate. However, the learners interviewed were unsure if they could give feedback. All class teachers have formed WhatsApp groups on online platforms with parents to discuss the learning of the children in their class. Parents are invited to meet their class teachers. Many parents do not assist their children with learning, either because of language difficulties or they do not have the time to do so. Support from the circuit manager and subject advisers is very good and appreciated. However, the teachers interviewed said that there were far too many online virtual workshops. In the past, these were all on a calendar so one knew in advance, but during lockdown they often have many more to attend.

Recommendations

1. The school should standardise the layout of the learners' workbooks and state clearly what is expected in their workbooks.
2. More learners' work should be on display in the classrooms as a form of positive encouragement.
3. Grade 7 learners should have the offer of leadership positions during this period, even though they do receive other forms of recognition.
4. Parents must be encouraged to apply for school fee exemptions if they cannot afford to pay fees.