



Schools Evaluation Authority

Accountability • Quality • Respect



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



School: Westcott Primary School
Address: Myburgh Road, Diep River, 7800
Circuit: C9
District: Metro South
Province: Western Cape
Category: Public Ordinary (Fee-charging)
Principal: Ms CE Stafford (Acting Principal)



Areas of Evaluation:

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|--|---------------------------------|--|
| | 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 school has chosen the daily rotational timetable where learners attend school for five days in a ten-day cycle. Classrooms have been reorganised so that learners sit separately in a desk or at a table to adhere to social distancing requirements. Group work in all phases, and mat work in the Foundation Phase has been suspended to comply with Covid-19 protocols. After reopening, the school initially focused mostly on Mathematics and Languages but currently it is enjoying being able to devote the requisite amount of time to all the subjects in the curriculum. All the classrooms were very clean, neat, and attractive. It was observed that the learners' work, especially artwork, was on display in all the corridors and in the classrooms. This helped to create a very positive and attractive learning environment.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The display of learners' work in the corridors is uplifting and encouraging.

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 Annual Teaching Plans are used in combination with the planning already done by the teachers, which ensures that more than the minimum requirements are met regarding curriculum delivery. Teachers met with their colleagues from the previous and following grades to establish exactly where the learners had ended the previous year. This formed the basis of the planning undertaken by current teachers. In this way, teachers ensured that key concepts had been taught and that sufficient time was allowed for consolidation to take place. From evidence gathered during interviews and observation, it was clear that teachers had adapted to the changed classroom conditions extremely well. For example, in the Foundation Phase, individual packs of resources were made available, instead of the shared resources model. Online teaching and learning were used far more effectively as online platforms (such as WhatsApp groups) became the norm. Extra lessons in the afternoon after school hours are made available to those learners whom the teachers identify as being at risk, or those whose parents request such assistance. Learners requiring enrichment attend additional lessons before school officially commences. The school's motto "Where the Individual counts" is evident in the dedication and awareness of each learner by their teachers.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

Meeting with colleagues from the previous and the following grade is an excellent strategy for determining exactly where the learners are academically. Enrichment lessons before school and extra lessons after school indicate the teachers' commitment to their learners.

1.3 Learners are supported well (in school and at home) so that they learn effectively 4

Evaluative commentary

Learners' workbooks are marked, signed, and dated and most teachers added encouraging comments and stickers. Teachers track the progress of the learners, and the analyses of results are used to determine intervention strategies. Teachers consult with each other extensively regarding advice, strategies, teaching methodologies and support. In this way, best practices are shared. Learners' work is widely displayed. The learners visit the library where there is a full-time librarian on hand to guide them regarding appropriate reading material. A very well-equipped computer laboratory is managed by a full-time facilitator and assistant. The learners benefit from the Green Shoots programme which supports and enhances their learning experiences. In addition, the school has links through the Afritwin programme, with a primary school in the United Kingdom and the video calls between the two schools offer an exciting learning experience for the learners. The school employs a full-time counsellor who is available to any vulnerable learner or learner at risk, who needs this service. In addition, the counsellor runs programmes, for example, relating to bullying. These services ensure valuable and accessible emotional support for learners.

Good practices, innovation and imaginative solutions

The variety of the feedback and support to learners enhances the quality of teaching and greatly contribute to the effectiveness of learning.



2. Behaviour and Safety

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

Evaluative commentary

From observations during the evaluation visit, it was very apparent that all stakeholders willingly comply with and even embrace the measures necessary to keep everyone safe. The processes and measures have clearly been meticulously planned and have been very well implemented so that it is easy to follow and comply with them. Within the framework of these measures, evidence showed that the focus of the school is very much on the quality of teaching and learning and the school offers wide-ranging activities such as art, computer lessons, library services and music to enhance the effectiveness and excitement of the learning experience. The Code of Conduct for Learners, which includes an anti-bullying clause, is implemented immediately in the few cases of bullying that have been reported. The Code of Conduct is printed in the school's learner diaries and is signed by parents and learners. In addition, the school counsellor offers programmes such as "It's cool to be kind" to encourage and teach learners to find other ways of resolving conflict.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The high level of meticulous planning for managing Covid-19 to ensure the safety of all stakeholders, while keeping the focus on teaching and learning through the wide-ranging activities offered is to be commended.

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

Evaluative commentary

Evidence gathered during observation showed that the Covid-19 procedures are extremely well managed. The correct wearing of face masks by almost every learner was notable. Thorough and regular cleaning takes place daily in the classrooms, ablution blocks, staff room and administration areas. Ablution facilities are checked during the day and cleaned again, if needed. These facilities were spotlessly clean, brightly painted and well maintained. An assistant was on duty all day outside each ablution block to sanitise the hands of the learners and to monitor the frequency of use. All surfaces are regularly cleaned and sanitised, including computer keyboards. The computer room has excellent procedures in place, for example, only every second computer unit is used at a time while the alternate computer is cleaned and sanitised. Screening procedures are efficient and effective and run very smoothly. Markings to indicate social distancing are easy to see and there are clear contingency plans for rainy weather. It was apparent from the interviews conducted that every stakeholder knew the procedure to follow for a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19. There is an isolation area as well. Visitors are efficiently screened and receive a clearance sticker, printed with the school's name on it, before being permitted to proceed into the school building. It was pleasing to hear interviewees comment that they felt very safe at the school.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The clearance sticker for visitors is a creative way of monitoring who is permitted to be on school premises.

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 4

Evaluative commentary

The SMT discussed and planned all the processes outlined in the Department of Basic Education Standard Operating Procedures as well as the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Guidelines. This was cascaded to teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, and learners. Booklets outlining the protocols were compiled and made available. During the interviews, it was mentioned that the school had done everything it could to ensure that everyone was safe. One of the risks identified was the implications of the return of all learners to the classroom. The school prepared for this by reorganising the classrooms to try and keep the

groups as small as possible. The timeous completion of the curriculum is also of concern, but the teachers are working very hard to keep up a good pace of curriculum delivery by careful and thorough planning. Attendance is very high among both learners and staff and is carefully monitored by the teachers and the SMT.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The preparation and distribution of a Covid-19 booklet is an innovative and effective way of disseminating information to all stakeholders.

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

Evaluative commentary

The SMT ensures that class visits take place regularly and the acting principal assists in the classrooms where needed as well. Books are moderated by the heads of department and grade heads, as was observed during the evaluation visit. Assessment tasks undergo pre- and post-moderation and are of a high standard. Phase and grade meetings take place regularly to ensure consistency and uniformity in the planning and assessment implementation processes. All classrooms are equipped with online teaching and learning resources and teachers use a combination of traditional as well as technologically enhanced methodologies to ensure more effective teaching and learning. Teachers are encouraged to participate in many professional development opportunities such as online workshops dealing with positivity, robotics, handwriting, and the online courses offered by the Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute. Some teachers are also furthering their own studies through university or college.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The extensive use of online teaching and learning resources, as well as regular phase and grade meetings and classroom visits by the SMT ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is enhanced and maintained.

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

Evaluative commentary

The school was able to retain the full complement of its governing body staff by deploying them into other areas of the school and upskilling where necessary. For example, one person was trained as a computer laboratory assistant, while others assist teachers with the screening of visitors, monitor the ablution blocks and assist teachers where needed. Three SMT members appointed in acting posts since the commencement of the year creates a sense of instability. Cleaning and safety materials are stored safely and used responsibly. Online teaching and learning resources are used effectively at school and at home as most parents have access to the necessary devices and connectivity.

Good practice, innovation, imaginative solutions

The upskilling of and offering of other opportunities to support staff is commendable.

4. Governance, Parents and Community

4.1 The governing body fulfils its key responsibilities well 3

Evaluative commentary

The governing body has been very supportive of the principal and SMT. Some members were re-elected to the new governing body thus ensuring continuity. A member of the governing body serves on the Health and Safety Committee. Although the Covid-19 Policy is in place, the newly elected governing body has not yet revised policies.

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

Evaluative commentary

The budget has not been impacted greatly by Covid-19 at the end of the previous year and the new budget has been approved by parents. The governing body was able to pay its staff year-end bonuses. There has been a slight increase in the number of applications for exemption from school fees, but the school has remained financially stable.



Concerns, problems

The three acting SMT posts need to be established as permanent positions as soon as possible.

4.3 The school engages effectively with all stakeholders

Evaluative commentary

In interviews, learners said that they are encouraged to give feedback to their teachers and principal. Teachers and non-teaching staff feel comfortable to give feedback and suggestions to the SMT. A good rapport was visible. Parents are involved in the school and fundraising activities. They display compassion to the school community, for example, they reached out to a family who had suffered a loss. During lockdown, the school communicated with parents on social media platforms and online teaching and learning was effective. The circuit manager and subject advisers have been supportive and helpful. Regular virtual meetings were held.

Recommendations

1. Additional psycho-social support for staff is needed.
2. All vacant posts should be filled as soon as possible.
3. The governing body must revise all relevant policies in the light of Covid-19.