



Schools Evaluation Authority

Accountability • Quality • Respect



Voortrekker High School **Report**



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School: Voortrekker High School
Address: 18 Salisbury Road, Kenilworth, 7708
Circuit: C6
District: Metro Central
Province: Western Cape
Category: Public Ordinary (Fee-charging)
Principal: Ms N Paul

Areas of Evaluation:

	Learner Achievement	To evaluate the knowledge and skills that learners have acquired, progress made by learners over a period of time and recognition of learners.
	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. Learner Achievement:

This area of evaluation has been suspended due to the pandemic.



2. Teaching and Learning 3

Teachers were present in all classrooms where lessons were observed, and the large majority of teachers were actively teaching. In the three classrooms where teachers were not actively teaching, they were facilitating projects and practical assessment tasks. It was observed in these lessons that teachers were circulating and providing support to individual learners. Teachers were respectful and inclusive in their lessons, but there were instances where learners were strongly reprimanded for arriving late, in the presence of other learners. A subject register was taken at the start of each lesson which encouraged learners to be more punctual. Most classrooms were clean and fairly tidy. Seating arrangements were traditional, although the two-seater desks in some classes facilitated collaboration. Physical distancing protocols may also have informed teachers to maintain traditional seating spaces. Print-rich classrooms and subject-related innovative designs on floors and walls were observed, but learners' work was not displayed in any of the classrooms visited.

A large majority of learners participated in lessons and were focused appropriately on the material being taught. It was observed that some learners were restless and disengaged at times, but that teachers could easily re-engage them. Questioning of learners was generally good and achieved its objective, but more higher order questions were lacking in some lessons observed. The adjustment of pace, style and content to support learning was evident in most lessons. Most teachers often paused to check learners' understanding of a concept or to assess their general understanding of the content, before proceeding with the rest of the lesson. Well-planned lessons were generally observed which included lessons set aside for learners to work independently. Most teachers provided supportive verbal feedback. Written feedback in workbooks was not frequently observed. The majority of teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge which enabled them to make their lessons more accessible and interesting to their learners. The use of technology was not observed in most classes. In the few classes where technology was used, it was used with varying success.

Learners' workbooks revealed a range of appropriate exercises, but there was very little written constructive feedback provided by teachers, with a few exceptions. Teachers used various teaching strategies in most classes in order to facilitate learning. There was evidence of teachers using assessment to plan intervention strategies accordingly. Learners at risk are strongly supported by the School-based Support Team (SBST) which is facilitated by a teacher specialist at the school.



3. Behaviour and Safety 2

There is generally a positive ethos throughout the school. Most learners appeared to be respectful to teachers although a few instances of poor behaviour were observed around the school. Many learners interviewed said that they felt safe and secure at the school. The learners reported that the School Management Team (SMT) was always willing to listen to their concerns. It was also reported that there were a few learners who disrupted lessons in some classes due to poor classroom management by some teachers. It was observed that some learners arrived late for lessons and subsequently disturbed a lesson already in progress. Teachers took a subject class register at the start of each lesson and chronic lateness to class would be followed up by a member of the SMT. Learner attendance is above 80% and absenteeism is followed up appropriately by class teachers and escalated to the deputy principal when deemed necessary. Although many learners interviewed communicated that they felt safe from bullying and aggression, some learners reported that they had experienced bullying, particularly after all learners had returned to school after the suspension of rotational timetables. Most learners interviewed said that they thought that the Code of Conduct for Learners (CoCL) was implemented fairly and this was also observed in lessons and around the school. There was evidence that serious transgressions were met with escalatory disciplinary procedures, in accordance with the CoCL.

The school has a strong pastoral focus on vulnerable learners. Learners who are identified as being vulnerable by the various school structures are supported by the school through the SBST and receive additional care. The school funds its own nutrition programme with the support of effective partnerships with community organisations such as the local church. Grocery hampers are provided to vulnerable learners during school

holidays. Discussions with parents and learners revealed that learners understood the need to keep themselves safe by reporting issues of concern to the staff, the school counsellor and their parents. The school grounds were deemed to be safe but there were concerns expressed about the inadequate height of the fence surrounding the school as it posed a security risk. Unauthorised visitors are able to access the school grounds and learners are able to leave the school grounds without permission. It was reported that a security guard was always on duty and that the neighbourhood watch also assisted with security monitoring during the evenings, but that these measures only minimised the security risk. It was also reported that the school had been waiting for months to receive assistance from the district office to dispose of expired chemicals in one of the science laboratories. School records did not indicate that the school has a problem with learners bringing dangerous objects, narcotics, alcohol and illegal drugs to school although isolated cases of serious transgressions were being managed by the SMT and the governing body. It was observed that safe spaces for study and homework were made available for learners in the afternoons. After-school activities such as touch-rugby and soccer have resumed at the school.



4. Leadership and Management..... 3

The school's vision and mission statements as well as school branding are under review. The Representative Council of Learners (RCL) may initiate and facilitate classroom discussions with regards to values such as respect. The principal and members of the SMT identified the key strengths of the school as the quality of their academic programme driven by a strong and dependable staff, and the pastoral care provided to all learners. The weaknesses of the school were deemed to be largely out of its control as the majority of the school's learners used public transport. The insecurity of public transport led to learners being habitually late, poor attendance and heightened concerns about the safety of commuting learners. A daily operational brief, term and annual planners assisted with the smooth running of the school, thus supporting more effective teaching and learning. Attendance and absenteeism are tracked and monitored effectively by teachers and members of the SMT.

Interviews with the principal and members of the SMT, and scrutiny of relevant documents revealed that the identification of trends, strengths and weaknesses could be identified fairly accurately by the SMT. However, not all members of the SMT regularly observe lessons and this may lead to a less detailed understanding of the academic programme in some areas. Internal moderation of assessment is done to ensure that assessment and marking are of an acceptable standard. The principal meets regularly with individual subject heads in order to monitor curriculum delivery and to provide support. Novice teachers are also provided with mentoring opportunities by the SMT and subject heads. The professional development of teachers, both externally and district-based, is strongly supported by the school.

The SMT ensures that all staff members fulfil the duties allocated to them. Staff attendance is above 90%. Poor performance is addressed by the principal and the SMT. Teaching and learning resources such as textbooks were used appropriately in the lessons observed. The integration of technology was not observed in most lessons. Secure connectivity continues to be a challenge at the school. There is a limited number of data projectors and devices. Many teachers are using their own devices in classrooms.



5. Governance, Parents and Community..... 3

The governing body has a good understanding of the school's priorities for improvement. The safety of the grounds and the shortage of computers at the school were concerns raised by the parents interviewed. The governing body supports the school and has been involved in the process of recruitment and selection for vacant posts at the school. All appropriate policies have been reviewed and adopted.

The school has a Finance Policy that is in line with legal and policy requirements and implements it effectively. All financial records are filed and are available. An audit of the school's finances was being finalised at the time of the evaluation. The annual budget was presented to the parents towards the end of 2021 and was accepted at this meeting.

All learners interviewed were confident that they would be able to speak to a staff member or have direct access to the principal should they have to raise a matter of concern. They also had confidence that the RCL members would discuss learner concerns at SMT and governing body levels. Parents interviewed said that they were adequately informed by the school with regards to their children's progress, but that communication could be more streamlined by using an online platform more effectively. Parents also felt that their children were supported and safe while at school. The school engages positively with support structures at the district

office and other external organisations such as the local neighbourhood safety watch and this, in turn, has a positive impact on the achievement, behaviour and safety of learners.

Recommendations

1. More critical thinking skills must be developed in the classroom.
2. The SMT must conduct regular lesson observation.
3. Constructive written feedback must be given in learners' workbooks.
4. Learner assessment data must be used more effectively for improvement in teaching and learning.
5. Punctuality of learners on all levels must be managed more effectively.
6. The perimeter fence must be raised to increase the level of security and safety at the school.
7. Harmful chemicals must be disposed of without delay.
8. Technology must be integrated more effectively, and connectivity must be stabilised.