



# Schools Evaluation Authority

Accountability • Quality • Respect



# Woodlands Secondary School Report



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**School:** Woodlands Secondary School  
**Address:** Mitchell Avenue, Woodlands, Mitchell's Plain, 7798  
**Circuit:** C1  
**District:** Metro South  
**Province:** Western Cape  
**Category:** Public Ordinary (No-fee)  
**Principal:** Ms MJ Abrahams

## 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:



## Overall performance



### KEY:



## Main Findings



### 1. Learner Achievement..... 1

The Grade 9 systemic test results in Languages and Mathematics in 2022 were 33% and 1.5% respectively. The Languages results have increased by 9.6% from 24.4% in 2021 to 33% in 2022 but are below the circuit, the district and the province. Mathematics results have increased by 0.3% from 1.2% in 2021 to 1.5% in 2022 but are below the circuit, the district and the province.

The Grade 12 pass rate improved significantly from 56% to 73% from 2021 to 2022 respectively. Additionally, 27% of learners received a Bachelor's pass, while 24.1% obtained a Diploma pass. The pass rates of several subjects were outstanding in some and good in others. However, there are a few subjects where the pass percentage falls below the desired level.

Most teachers read on behalf of the learners in all grades. Opportunities to increase critical engagement were often lost as planning focused mainly on transferring content. Most learners listened passively, and teachers often had to repeat questions or instructions before they responded. In a minority of classes, it was observed that learners did not connect or experience rapport with their teachers. The majority of learner workbooks were not well-organised. There was insufficient written work in most subjects and limited evidence of consolidation exercises.

The majority of learners in the General Education and Training (GET) phase have difficulties in performing the four basic mathematical operations. Although learners receive a fair number of exercises in most lessons, there is often a lack of questions followed by corresponding answers in their workbooks. Learners use calculators to solve problems. As the complexity of the content increases, the learners' understanding is hindered by a lack of clear explanations in certain lessons. Furthermore, learners struggle to recall information as the work is not broken down into manageable parts in a few lessons. Learners encounter significant challenges when confronted with complex problem-solving tasks.

The school places a strong emphasis on cultural activities which include dance, art, and choir. Additionally, the school performed well in the Mitchell's Plain's top schools' championship for the under-15 boys' soccer team.



### 2. Teaching and Learning..... 2

Teachers were present and most were actively engaging in teaching. Most teachers created a safe environment where learners felt comfortable enough to express their opinions, thus encouraging equal participation opportunities for all learners during lessons. In a few classrooms, the cleanliness of the floors, walls and surfaces added a fresh and inviting learning space. The chosen seating arrangements have a positive influence on the behaviour and engagement of most learners, but only a few teachers promoted peer interaction and communication. The display of learners' recent work to affirm their achievements and efforts was not observed.

A majority of teachers actively engage in vocabulary building, worksheet completion, participation in activities and review of previous question papers. However, these aspects were not given equal emphasis. There was a commendable use of frequent questioning in a few classes where learners also took the initiative to ask questions for clarification. In a few lessons, the inclusion of open-ended questions led to increased discussion among learners. The slow pace of instruction generally suited the needs of some learners while for others it was too slow. The pace was not adjusted to accommodate the high achievers. Although some teachers actively involved learners, others relied more on teacher-directed methods. The content was logically sequenced and built upon previous knowledge and skills in some subjects, while in others, teachers supported learners' understanding and interpretation of content through activities such as poetry analysis. However, there was inconsistency in addressing diverse learning styles. Most teachers followed the Revised Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs), but some did not keep pace with the prescribed curriculum. Weekly lesson planning was observed, but the majority lacked detailed information. However, a few teachers demonstrated good lesson preparation by planning to actively engage learners, deliver content in a clear and concise manner, and provide readily available additional examples. A few teachers applied their subject knowledge to make the lessons more interesting. The primary sources of learning and teaching support materials (LTSM) were chalkboards, textbooks, and worksheets. Technology was used, but not all teachers successfully integrated it into the lesson.

A few teachers provided learners with multiple opportunities to practice concepts in their workbooks. However, in the majority of classes, assessing learners' progress and understanding through the scrutiny of workbooks presented challenges due to incomplete exercises or unavailability of workbooks. Excessive photocopying in

some subjects resulted in limited learner interaction with the content. The marking of workbooks lacked consistency, with insufficient emphasis on the accuracy of knowledge acquisition, skill development and identification of misunderstandings. Differentiated tasks, which allowed learners to make choices, work at their own pace and be challenged at their individual ability levels, were only provided in very few subjects. Assessment data was analysed, but the results were not used to gain an overall understanding of learners' needs and to adapt teaching methodologies. Targeted in-class support to address specific individual needs was rarely observed. However, there are after-school intervention programmes to support learners at risk.



### 3. Behaviour and Safety..... 2

Learners demonstrate school pride and respect by wearing their uniforms and handing in their caps and cell phones at the start of the day. Mutual respect exists between the large majority of teachers and learners. A few teachers strive to create an encouraging and supportive environment. Despite most teachers modelling good behaviour, the values are not regularly communicated and do not have the desired impact on the overall ethos. Some learners feel listened to, safe and secure because their opinions are valued. In a few classes, it is evident that learners value their education by working diligently and remaining focused on the lesson. Punctuality is a great concern and a few learners were seen outside their classes during lesson time. Daily learner attendance is not good and significantly impacts on the pace of curriculum delivery and overall teaching and learning. The aggressive behaviour and bullying of some learners negatively affect the learning environment and the school's image. The Code of Conduct for Learners (CoCL) supports and enhances good discipline and order, but it is not consistently implemented, and as a result, the school struggles to enforce it effectively. Minor transgressions are not consistently addressed and documented. Disciplinary hearings are held when required.

The School-based Support Team (SBST) functions well and the majority of identified learners are given appropriate care and support to meet their specific needs. A few learners do not receive the necessary attention as they prefer not to communicate their needs. Good relationships are formed with the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the Hope organisation to support the well-being of learners and to keep the school community safe. A litter-free environment culture has not been fully established. The ablution facilities are not consistently cleaned and maintained. Learners have the necessary knowledge to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Good security measures which include an inner and a secure perimeter fence are in place to ensure that the learners and staff are protected while on the premises. However, the security procedures are not strict enough to prevent the bringing and possession of dangerous objects and illegal substances onto the premises. The National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) kitchen is clean and well-managed. Learners have access to healthy and nutritious meals that support their physical and cognitive development. The number of learners who need meals has increased and the school has applied for additional food provision. The learners appreciate the wholesome food and for some learners, it serves as the only meal of the day. The tuckshop serves some healthy options. A variety of quality after-school programmes are offered such as cross country, tennis, netball, soccer and dominoes which promote learners' social and physical development and keep them active in the afternoons.



### 4. Leadership and Management..... 2

The School Management Team (SMT) stated that the vision and mission statements are up for review to suit the evolving needs of the school context. There is not a strong sense of direction based on the vision and mission statements throughout the school. The growth mindset is implemented for selected learners. Values are not displayed and discussions were not observed or reported to ensure that the school establishes a positive ethos. Only a few SMT members could identify some strengths and weaknesses and explain their roles in driving improvement as some have recently been appointed in acting positions. The school improvement plan (SIP) is a detailed document, but it was not developed through discussions with all stakeholders. It addresses some key areas for development, but it is unclear who will drive implementation. Most SMT members monitor workbooks and moderate assessment in order to manage compliance with curriculum delivery. The actions of the SMT have not led to significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

In most subjects, basic analyses of learner results were conducted to identify the different levels of learner performance, but the data did not effectively inform the SMT and staff about trends and how to address them across the school. A few SMT members identified reading with comprehension as an area for development, but there is limited understanding or coherent actions to improve this area across the school. For example, there is a lack of consistent implementation of a structured programme to improve learners' reading with understanding or to develop mathematical knowledge and skills. Members of the SMT observe classroom

teaching irregularly and inconsistently and could only state a few opinions about the quality of teaching and learning in the classrooms. Identification of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning about individual subjects or marking habits was not clear. There was a brief reference to the challenges associated with discipline, time and classroom management challenges. SMT members provided minimal evidence of how their work improved the quality of teaching through insightful feedback, guidance and mentoring. Teachers attend a variety of professional development sessions, but implementation and the impact of external support were not monitored. A positive impact on the SIP or overall staff development to improve the quality of teaching and learning was not observed. There is some evidence of moderation, but the SMT cannot demonstrate any substantial and sustainable improvements in classroom practices as a result of their actions or initiatives.

The SMT ensures that the large majority of teachers adhere to the timetable; however, not all teachers are monitored closely. Aspects such as diligent supervision duties to make sure that learners rotate from one class to another to prevent the loss of teaching time did not receive the necessary attention. The non-teaching staff is not managed effectively so that all tasks are fulfilled. It was observed that respect for the learning environment is not established as littering, smoking and graffiti were evident. The staff attendance rate is good and punctuality is not a concern. The SMT does not consistently hold teachers to account for the quality of their teaching or the achievement of their learners. A few SMT members respond appropriately to underperformance by the teaching and non-teaching staff. LTSM is made available for most learners and teachers. However, not all learners have textbooks and not all teachers use the available LTSM including technology. The computer laboratory and the library are under-utilised. Old and broken furniture and equipment are stored throughout the school and there is insufficient evidence that regular disposal of these items is managed appropriately. Teaching and non-teaching assistants are not effectively guided and supported to ensure optimal and effective use of their skills and competencies.



## 5. Governance, Parents and Community .....

The governing body understands the school's history, the community and knows some priorities that need improvement for overall school effectiveness. It identified poor learner behaviour, lack of parental involvement, and poor academic results as priorities for improvement. The governing body appreciates the positive way in which teachers interact with learners. Its support for the school is demonstrated by funding the tarring of the surfaces around the netball courts and in front of the school, acquiring mobile units for learner accommodation and strengthening safety measures. They are readily available when the school needs assistance. The interview committee was trained and fully involved in the recruitment and selection processes for the filling of several permanent, promotion, and support staff vacancies. Some vacancies still need to be advertised while others were concluded and the school is awaiting confirmation of their recommendations. Some policies such as the procurement, language, religion, and maintenance policies were reviewed, but only a few were adopted. An annual plan to review and adopt policies on an ongoing basis was not observed.

Although the processes and content of the Finance Policy are in line with the latest policy regulations, it has not been adopted. However, the Finance Policy is implemented to monitor income and expenditure and financial records are safely kept. Financial statements were submitted on time, but certain recommendations still have to be followed. However, auditors' reports were available and a certificate of Sound Financial Management was issued. The annual budget was planned according to the needs of the school and approved at the parent budget meeting in November 2022. The finance committee follows its scheduled monthly meetings to manage the budgetary processes.

The Representative Council of Learners (RCL) was properly elected and has allocated roles and responsibilities. However, they are not easily discernible from other learners or acknowledged and respected by all. Learners who are not on the RCL reported that they were not listened to or involved in decisions that affect them. Platforms for developing learner leadership skills are limited. Saturday meetings are scheduled to accommodate parents who have weekday work commitments or live far from the school. Parents receive regular newsletters and online communication from teachers. They are invited to contribute and participate in school initiatives. Parents of learners with academic or behavioural challenges are offered support and meetings are held regularly. Most teachers spoke positively about professional relationships; a few could give examples of how the professional environment supported them by providing training for processes such as the Quality Management System (QMS) and other training sessions. The school contacts the district based on their needs; however, consistent support to improve the quality of teaching and learning across all subjects was not evident. Although some support regarding learner safety had a positive impact on the school environment, liaisons with external organisations are limited and have no significant impact on the achievement or behaviour of learners.

## Recommendations

1. Teachers must employ a range of teaching methods to support learners' diverse abilities and styles.
2. Teachers must effectively utilise assessment data in their planning to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.
3. The CoCL must be implemented to ensure that learners' behaviour is positively influenced.
4. The SMT must implement strict security measures to prevent learners from bringing dangerous objects and illegal substances onto the school premises.
5. The increased demand for nutritious meals must be addressed to ensure that learners' academic progress and overall well-being are better secured.
6. The SMT must collectively ensure that all stakeholders know their roles and responsibilities in driving and monitoring improvement priorities in the SIP.
7. The SMT must conduct regular and frequent lesson observations and use all data to identify and address trends and areas for improvement.
8. The governing body must ensure that vacancies are filled permanently.
9. The governing body must follow an annual policy review plan and adopt the Finance Policy.