

Vista High School Report



Schools Evaluation Authority

Accountability • Quality • Respect

“When accountability knocks, who will answer?”
(Abelmann & Elmore, 1999)





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Accountability • Quality • Respect

Date of evaluation 23 – 24 July 2024

Chief evaluator Mr David J. Millar

Lead evaluator Mrs Yolanda Miller

Evaluators Ms Deneen Grobler and Ms Lyrice Trussell

School: Vista High School
Address: 1 Military Road, Bo-Kaap, 8000
Circuit: C4
District: Metro Central
Province: Western Cape
Category: Public Ordinary (Fee-charging)
Principal: Mrs C Little



Scan for
directions
to school.

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:



Information about this evaluation

The evaluators conducted this evaluation under section 11 D (4) of the Western Cape Provincial School Education Amendment Act of 2018. This is the first evaluation that the school has received.

Evaluators met with the principal, the School Management Team (SMT), subject leaders, other members of staff (teaching and non-teaching), parents and learners (from all grades). Evaluators also met with representatives of the School's Governing Body (SGB). These discussions were both formal and informal.

Evaluators also observed learners' behaviour at social times (before school, during breaks and after school), during formal tuition (teaching and learning) and observed learners moving around the school between periods.

Evaluators observed lessons for 980 minutes (16 hours and 20 minutes) and scrutinised samples of learners' work. As part of this evaluation, sixteen (16) teachers and twenty-one (21) lessons were observed in the following subjects: Grade 8: Social Sciences, Mathematics, IsiXhosa, Economic and Management Sciences, Afrikaans First Additional Language (FAL), English Hone Language (HL) and Creative Arts. Grade 9: Life Orientation, Mathematics, English HL and Natural Sciences. Grade 10: English HL, Tourism, Mathematical Literacy and Physical Sciences. Grade 11: Mathematical Literacy, English HL and Life Sciences. Grade 12: English HL, Afrikaans FAL, Life Sciences, Life Orientation, Business Studies, History and Mathematics.

Evaluators evaluated safeguarding procedures. Evaluators met with those responsible for governance, and they spoke with leaders, staff and learners to evaluate the culture of safeguarding at the school.

Evaluators considered the views of the principal, SMT, SGB, Staff and parents who responded to the online surveys of the SEA. The following total online responses were received: Learners = 10; Parents = 44; Staff = 19; SMT = 2; SGB = 7; Principal = 1. A total of 83 questionnaires were completed.

Evaluators considered a variety of policies and procedures as well as information pertaining to their practical implementation.

The purpose of the evaluation is to:

- Help the school to improve its quality of teaching and learning.
- Help the school to improve learner outcomes.
- Help the school to address key areas relating to leadership, management, governance, safety, behaviour, parental and community involvement.
- Provide rigorous and reliable evaluation reports which will assist the school to recognize and celebrate its strengths, and to identify and remedy, areas for improvement.
- Inform parents and the wider Western Cape public of the quality of Western Cape schools by placing reports in the public domain.

Proportions used in the report are as follows:

90% - 100%	Almost all
80% - 89%	Most
70% - 79%	Large majority
50% - 69%	Majority
30% - 49%	Minority
20% - 29%	Small minority
Up to 19%	Few

Overall performance rating

The SEA Evaluation concludes with an overall rating of school performance. Using the SEA Evaluation Instrument, evaluation teams consider five (5) Key Areas, thirteen (13) Standards and seventy-five (75) performance indicators to determine the closest match to agree the 'Overall Performance Rating' for the school.

Main Findings



KEY AREA 1: LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT



The Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) Systemic Testing Programme 2023 asks schools "How are we doing"? when it provides schools with its Grade 9 systemic test results. It indicates to schools that, for the school to have an 'adequate achievement' score it must achieve an average pass rate of 50%.

Learner Achievement at Vista High School is inadequate.

1.1 Achievement in the Senior Phase (Grade 9)

1.1.1 Language

The pass percentage of Grade 9 Systemic Test language results declined from 47.4% in 2021 to 39% in 2022, followed by a substantial increase to 49% in 2023. A comparison of the school's pass percentage with similar schools at Quintile 5 (NQ5) level and the province, which stood at 75.2% and 51.6% respectively indicates a significant performance gap, with the school performing considerably lower.

The average language percentage results declined from 48.6% in 2021 to 47.3% in 2022, followed by a slight increase to 49.7% in 2023. A comparison of the school's average percentage with that of NQ5 schools notably higher at 61.5%, illustrates a significant disparity. Their language average is only slightly below the provincial average of 50.2%. It is noteworthy that there was a significant and consistent increase in the performance category of 70% - 79% since 2021. However, only 2% achieved in the category 80% and higher. Additionally, despite an increase in learners who scored 50% and above, the majority of learners scored below 50% in language, indicating substantial challenges in language acquisition.

Over the past three years, the results for the language components (Reading and Viewing, Writing, Language Structure and Use) have fluctuated. However, the results for Writing and Language Structure and Use persistently reveal a pattern of consistent underachievement. Writing emerges as a significant area of weakness, highlighting challenges in articulating coherent thoughts in written form.

Despite the inadequate results, there is no evidence of a school-wide language improvement strategy to address the concepts learners find difficult. The data suggests an improvement in the language pass rate and average percentage from 2022 to 2023 in all the language components. Comprehensive data analysis is essential to provide targeted support and intervention to drive further improvement.

1.1.2 Mathematics

The Grade 9 Systemic Test results for Mathematics are inadequate. The average pass percentage remains below 5% and far below similar schools at NQ5 level.

The average percentage results indicate a gradual increase from 18% in 2021, 22% in 2022 to 24% in 2023. However, this is still below similar NQ5 schools.

Over three years, more than 95% of learners have consistently achieved 40% or less, indicating consistent inadequate achievement in Mathematics.

Despite low achievement in all content areas, Measurement is the concept which learners find the most difficult. The data indicates that there has been a significant drop in pass percentage and average percentage in this area since 2021, while Numbers, Operations and Relationships, Patterns, Functions and Algebra show consistent improvement in results, but remains extremely low.

The Systemic Test results highlight a very poor alignment between expected curriculum levels and the learners they are intended for. Most learners do not reach expected curriculum levels which begs the question whether the standard being taught is at an acceptable level?

1.2 Achievement in the Further Education and Training Phase (FET) (Grade 12)

The school's Gr 12 National Senior Certificate results for 2023 are inadequate.

The 2023 46.8% pass rate indicates a substantial decline from 72.3% in 2022. An entire Grade 12 cohort of 102 learners over three years have been unsuccessful in achieving the National Senior Certificate with fifty (50) unsuccessful learners in 2023. The quality of NSC results, in terms of Bachelor passes, is the lowest in 3 years: from 15.6% in 2021 to 14.5% in 2022 and 11.7% in 2023. The low Bachelor pass rate indicates the poor quality of results.

All subject averages require improvement. No learners achieved subject distinctions (80% and above), except for Life Orientation where eleven (11) learners achieved 80% and above. None of the eleven (11) NSC subjects, excluding Life Orientation, achieved an average result above the provincial average. However, it is noteworthy that IsiXhosa and Life Orientation boasts a pass percentage of 100%.

Discrepancies between School-based Assessment results (SBA) and the final NSC results indicate inconsistencies in internal moderation and standardisation processes. The school's SBA marks are unreliable and do not afford the learners an accurate indication of their academic performance.

When the learners' SBA marks differ significantly from the examination mark, disappointment is inevitable with learners believing they are achieving the required level to pass Grade 12. This makes the school guilty of raising false hope amongst both learners and parents. A difference of 16.9% above the examination mark was recorded in Business Studies, while six (6) subjects presented SBA marks that differed by 11% or more from the final NSC results.

The moderation process should ensure that SBA assessments contain questions at appropriate cognitive levels in the required proportions. Data-driven decision-making and instilling an ethos of high standards are essential to drive improvement and address learning gaps effectively.

The school must ensure that all Grade 12 learners in their care achieve a quality NSC result. This enables learners to access tertiary education and gainful employment (economy). This is especially important for the learners of the school community who reportedly come from communities plagued by unemployment and social ills.

1.3 Learners' ability to read, speak, listen and write in the language of learning and teaching (LoLT).

Most learners show confidence in reading in English Home Language (HL), while the majority struggle in Afrikaans First Additional Language (FAL). Learners enjoy reading aloud in English HL and receiving continuous support from teachers to improve pronunciation. Afrikaans FAL learners, although not confident readers, did not shy away from reading despite struggling. This is commendable and suggests that the classroom environment is a supportive one.

Most learners listen attentively. However, some found it difficult to stay focused when they were required to sit passively and listen to the teacher for most of the lesson. Learner attention spans waned quickly when they were not adequately stimulated or when lessons failed to capture their interest.

Learners speak confidently and eloquently, but not all learners are actively engaged in classroom discussions. Some teachers engage in code-switching when teaching, especially during Afrikaans FAL lessons, which compromises language development and acquisition. Limited opportunities for the development of writing skills were observed. When notes are dictated to learners it hinders their ability to acquire effective note-taking skills. This skill is crucial for organising information, engaging with the material, and fostering a deeper understanding of the content. Writing was identified as a serious weakness in the systemic test results.

1.4 How learners handle numbers, calculate (mentally and with electronic devices) and apply their mathematical skills effectively to solve problems.

A few learners demonstrate confidence in handling numbers and applying their mathematical skills effectively to solve problems, both mentally and with the aid of electronic devices. Almost all learners rely on procedures without a deeper comprehension impacting their ability to solve and apply their mathematical knowledge to solve more complex problems.

The lack of consistent practice was not evident in learner workbooks and some learners do not attempt to complete exercises. By practicing math, learners will grow in confidence, develop the ability to think analytically, make connections between different ideas and draw conclusions based on evidence.

Differentiated efforts for improvement in Mathematics were not evident. Differentiation enables teachers to identify gaps and cater to learners with different learning styles and learning needs. This is not done at the school. It is no surprise that the mathematics participation rates, and results, are poor.

Learners across grades must be exposed to more examination-type higher order questions and activities to boost the number of learners choosing Mathematics in the FET phase and achieving at Code 7 level (80% and above).

1.5 Learners' participation and achievement in extra- and co-curricular, as well as cultural activities as part of the school's enrichment programme.

Very few opportunities are provided for learners to engage in extra or co-curricular and cultural activities. Soccer and netball are the only activities on offer at the school. Learner apathy, lack of adequate sporting facilities and most learners commuting large distances have been offered as reasons for the limited offering. Teacher apathy also contributes as teachers show little interest in developing learners' talents and skills.

Mass participation opportunities and internal competitions are not offered at the school. This denies learners the opportunities to develop leadership and social skills, celebrate individual and team successes, and foster a sense of belonging at school. Extended opportunities for learners are vital to contribute to a holistic education and prepare learners for success in various aspects of life.

No evidence was presented that learners are acknowledged for their successes in academics, culture, and sport. Recognising and celebrating their achievements offers them a sense of accomplishment and fosters pride.

The school has developed partnerships with outside community organisations such as Correctional Service and the South African Police Service (SAPS), to present learner workshops on bullying and safety. It is noteworthy that the History Department encourages and facilitates regular outings for its learners.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KEY AREA 1

- (i) Vista High School must be given immediate **targeted** support. As an 'under-performing school', it must be classified as a **Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI)** school (a term used at the SEA). Although it is a Section 58B school, this is a classification that may not ensure a targeted support approach to school improvement.
- (ii) Professional development:
 - a. The Principal and the SMT: 'Instructional Leadership'
 - b. Teachers: The pedagogy of Mathematics and Science.
 - c. Teachers: Pedagogical skills and differentiation strategies.
- (iii) Internal moderation processes (policy) must be reviewed, revised and implemented to ensure consistency and quality in assessment practices.
- (iv) The Mathematics and English Departments must address gaps in foundational knowledge by assigning targeted revision exercises to help learners practice and refine their mathematical and English skills, providing additional time and support as needed.
- (v) All subject teachers must be encouraged to provide more opportunities for learners to listen, write and speak frequently across the curriculum.
- (vi) Establish and develop a variety of sports clubs and societies, and cultural and service activities.
- (vii) Establish and develop an academic, sports and culture learner recognition programme.



KEY AREA 2: TEACHING AND LEARNING



Teaching and learning at Vista High School requires improvement.

2.1 How teachers foster a positive learning environment.

Teachers were observed interacting respectfully with learners and maintain a supportive environment, despite large numbers of learners arriving late for lessons. Late coming is one of the school's greatest problems.

A small number of teachers are intentional in their desire to foster a positive learning environment. These teachers engage with the learners throughout lessons. They move around the classroom, interact with learners, and are inclusive. This, unfortunately, was not observed in most lessons.

A positive and purposeful physical learning environment can boost learner enjoyment and engagement. It can aid

in enriching teaching and learning and improve academic performance. Although most classrooms are neat, they lack personality and require a fresh coat of paint. There was a noticeable absence of learner work on display. This is important to validate and celebrate learners and their achievements. A few classrooms are print-rich with learning walls containing key vocabulary and concepts, creating a welcoming learning environment for learners. A shortage of storage space in most classrooms impedes teachers' ability to maintain a well-organised class, store learner books and teaching resources and display learner work.

Seating arrangements allow most teachers easy access to all learners and accommodate seating for large numbers of learners. However, most learners are seated in traditional rows which does not promote learner interaction and engagement. Not all seating plans can easily be adapted for diverse activities and teaching styles. Some learners are seated with their backs facing the board and the teacher, impacting their ability to focus and participate. This is poor classroom management.

2.2 The quality of classroom teaching.

The learning environment, despite a few outstanding lessons, requires improvement. Most teachers persist in attempting to engage learners, despite early morning chronic learner late coming (up to 2 hours), and constant noise outside classrooms caused by truant learners.

Learner engagement in most classes was minimal. Learners are required to mostly sit passively, write notes and listen to the teacher for most of the lesson. Exploring additional strategies and effective use of Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) will result in more interesting lessons and encourage learner participation. Subsequently, this will create an exciting and vibrant learning environment where learners are empowered to take ownership of their learning. This is especially crucial when you serve a vulnerable school community where learner apathy is the presiding culture.

Teachers do not formulate questions that spark rigorous discussions among learners. Most questions posed are closed-ended and require simple information consisting of mostly one-word answers. No effort is made to formulate questions encouraging active learning and critical thinking. Using more open-ended questions will facilitate teachers to gather information, foster communication and gain deeper insights into learning gaps or misunderstandings. It allows learners to explore ideas, share perspectives and engage in meaningful discussions.

It is noteworthy, that a novice teacher, using her personal resources strives to make Mathematics lessons fun and exciting. She promotes inclusivity, supporting and actively engaging every learner, ensuring they are part of the learning process. Despite teaching large classes, her commanding and dynamic presence results in attentive and well-disciplined learners. Learners reported looking forward to her classes and now enjoy learning Mathematics.

It is evident that most teachers are not adept at adapting pace, teaching styles and content to accommodate different learning styles or learning needs. A few learners are easily distracted because teachers cannot simplify learning activities and organise the learning process for learners. Teachers should be encouraged to prepare instruction to match the level of the learners and not adopt a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. This will show respect for their individual differences and needs and foster a positive learning environment. This will enhance learner motivation, engagement and retention of the material. The teacher will benefit by developing their own skills and creativity.

Teacher files contain most of the key elements required to teach and subject planning is aligned with the Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs). There was evidence of weekly and daily planning. However, this planning only highlights the teacher's role and work to be covered. It does not include what and how learners will learn and how they will be assessed. Instructional flow and scaffolding of knowledge are compromised without effective lesson planning.

Feedback to learners, which serves to inform their learning and reinforce knowledge, was often absent or very vague and ineffectual in communicating learner strengths and weaknesses.

A few teachers display a high level of subject knowledge and expertise in their respective subject areas. These teachers can teach, demonstrate, question and provide worked examples, while maintaining high levels of learner engagement. The learners' needs are at the forefront of their planning. Unfortunately, most lessons were mediocre and did not serve the learning needs of the learners.

The available resources for most teachers are limited to whiteboards, chalkboards, textbooks and worksheets. These resources are not used optimally as evidenced by the lack of adequate exercises and written work in learners' books across most subjects. In the few classrooms where technology is available, the technology

belongs to the teacher. The lack of technology in classrooms compromises the ability of teachers to access the free online resources provided by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). Twenty-first-century teaching and learning require using technology to provide optimal educational opportunities for learners.

2.3 Teachers' support for learners, and for learning.

There was a notable lack of learner work and writing tasks across different subjects in learner workbooks. This is compounded by daily chronic learner late coming and daily teacher absenteeism. Consequently, curriculum delivery and learner achievement are compromised as evidenced in the Grade 9 systemic test results and the Grade 12 NSC examination results.

The quality and quantity of work completed, is poor. Many workbooks show incomplete work indicating a lack of diligence and apathy by some learners, with little control by teachers. The lack of control over workbooks and the consequences for incomplete work by teachers is alarming. Teachers adopt a laissez-faire approach to this and is a significant weakness in the teaching and learning process. It results in work remaining incomplete, resulting in further learning gaps and poor results.

Constructive written feedback by teachers was not seen. Written feedback enables teachers to ascertain to what extent they have been successful in their teaching and what they need to do to make their teaching - and learning - more effective. It also provides feedback to the learners on their progress and where they need to improve and refer to it often when required.

No strategies that support differentiation or personalised learning are evident. Subject planning does not highlight strategies to ensure that all learners, especially learners with learning barriers can access the full curriculum to achieve all or most learning objectives.

Some analysis of historical subject assessment data was seen in a few subjects to identify the diverse needs of learners. To create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, assessment data must inform planning to adequately cater for the unique learning needs of all learners. This will lead to improved learner performance.

As part of the Back-on-Track (BOT) programme, afternoon and Saturday intervention classes are available for Grade 12 learners. A ninth (9th) period for grade 12s is also part of their school day. Despite the school's commitment to ensuring that it advances all possible ways to assist its learners after school and over weekends, only sixty percent of the learners attend weekend classes.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KEY AREA 2

- (i) Use of the Matrix for Quality Teaching (MQT) (Circular 0010/2018) or <https://sea.westerncape.gov.za/guidelines-for-schools/>
- (ii) Develop an annual Peer-to-peer classroom observation model and Peer Observation Model.
- (iii) Adopt, and implement, an in-class support method to stretch-and-challenge all learners.
- (iv) Enhance the nature and quality of written and oral feedback provided to learners.
- (v) Ensure adequate IT resources are available for all teachers.
- (vi) Professional development on how to use data analysis to do effective planning and to identify teaching and learning needs.
- (vii) Promotion and implementation of a continuous staff development programme.
- (viii) Enhance classroom environments to make them a more welcoming environment for both learners and teachers.
- (ix) Ensure that teachers mark and monitoring learner workbooks regularly to ensure that all learners are supported.



KEY AREA 3: BEHAVIOUR AND SAFETY

1

Behaviour and Safety at Vista High School are inadequate.

3.1 The school's environment: Is it disciplined, purposeful and is its ethos positive?

A negative ethos prevails at the school. This lack of sense of community and culture is manifested in the learners' attitudes and lack of aspirations. Although the learners are mostly respectful and present, despite chronic late coming, this does not reflect positively on their academic performance. Learners do not work in the classroom. Learners arrive late to class, without the necessary books and not having done homework. Outside the classroom, learners loiter in the corridors and ablution facilities. A culture of internal truancy is rife. Some teachers contribute to the ill-disciplined, lack-of-purpose culture by being habitually late, or often absent, themselves. This further compromises the safety of learners, as they are not being monitored or taught. This creates an even wider scope for internal truancy and apathy to take hold.

It is evident that there is a pervasive culture of disregarding elements of the Code of Conduct for Learners (CoCL). This is seen in the widespread disruptive behaviour of some learners, their refusal to go into classes to learn and being unprepared with the proper equipment and books for lessons. These remain ignored and go unpunished by teachers, the principal and SMT. A culture of late coming is disruptive and leads to unsettled behavior inside and outside of the classroom.

The consistent implementation of a respected, collaboratively developed Code of Conduct for learners is foundational to the core business of the school – its academic performance. Establishing clear expectations and consequences for misbehaviour at school is a community of teachers' responsibility.

Division and mistrust are evident among staff and the SMT with ingrained negative, antagonistic, and bullying behaviour a part of staff culture and relationships. The teachers appear stressed, communication is limited, blame culture is rife, and people are rewarded (tacitly and explicitly) for unethical, harmful, or nasty attitudes and actions. This toxic environment plays a negative role among SMT, teachers and learners. A toxic environment leads to a breakdown in trust and leaves learners feeling unsafe and insecure.

Disrespect and poor behaviour towards teachers, and teachers towards management are concerns expressed by learners. Urgent efforts are required to create an environment where both teachers and learners feel respected and are held accountable for unacceptable and antisocial behaviour.

Most learners state that bullying is dealt with timeously and is an exception rather than the rule.

Learners indicate that their voice is not heard. They have no safe or secure way of expressing their opinions. Some learners reported that matters brought to the attention of the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) were not always satisfactorily tabled or discussed.

There are well-established partnerships with the South African Police Service (SAPS) who provide counsellors who engage the learners around their safety and how to take care of themselves. Safe Schools assisted the school to repair and upgrade its fencing. Correctional Services and Social Development provide access to social workers to support learners and parents. Crime Prevention provides spiritual counselors who provide support to learners dealing with emotional and physical trauma.

3.2 School safety and safeguarding of learners.

Managing access control to the school is a challenge. The front gate is left open and unattended in the morning to accommodate late coming. Some learners cut the fence to gain access and exit the school at their leisure. This creates a safety challenge as anyone can gain access to the school. However, the support staff are diligent in continually repairing the fence.

There is no security plan. No protocols exist to monitor illegal substances or dangerous weapons entering the school grounds. Break duty is assigned to teachers but is not effectively monitored. No 'Evacuation Plan' or 'Fire Drill' procedures have been conducted recently.

Despite the widespread opinion that it is a caring school, evidence of meetings of the School-Based Support Team (SBST) were infrequent. No recent information was provided. It was asserted that referrals were made to district officials. Evidence of concessions for learners who require support was not seen. Very few vulnerable learners are identified, especially learners displaying poor academic performance.

Broken and unused furniture and equipment are not disposed of appropriately and are stored between and under the school building. Bags of cement and rubble are stored where they are accessible to the learners. Due to the storms, dry branches and tree stumps are scattered across the campus. This is both a safety and a fire hazard. The ceiling in the staffroom is badly damaged and poses a safety hazard.

The ablution facilities for both boys and girls are clean and hygienic, but some maintenance is required. No toilet tissue or hand wash was available except in the staff toilets. This is a serious infringement on learners' basic human rights.

Illegal occupants are housed in two classrooms on the school grounds, and they have access to the school grounds

throughout the day. A group of illegal occupants have moved onto an open property bordering the school. Due to a runaway fire in this settlement, trees on the school grounds caught alight. This settlement and the illegal occupants pose a safety and fire hazard for the school.

No feeding scheme exists at the school. Learners indicated that many learners have no food and are hungry. Some staff assist with this challenge in their private capacity.

The school does not offer a variety of extra and co-curricular activities. The only activities available are netball and soccer.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KEY AREA 3

- (i) Collaboratively develop a CoCL.
- (ii) Consistent implementation of the CoCL, especially with late coming and truancy.
- (iii) Disposal of broken, unusable furniture and equipment within a clearly defined time frame.
- (iv) Develop a School Safety Policy.
- (v) Review the SBST practices / policies.
- (vi) Conflict Management workshop for teachers and SMT.
- (vii) Principal and SMT to consistently monitor movement between classes and break duty.
- (viii) Removal of Illegal occupants from the school property within a clearly defined timeframe.
- (ix) Liaise with the district office and other government departments to intervene concerning the informal settlement bordering the school.
- (x) Implement a school nutrition plan.
- (xi) Manage access control.



KEY AREA 4: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT



Leadership and Management at Vista High School are inadequate.

4.1 The direction the School Management Team (SMT) gives to the school.

The assertions in the school's vision and mission statement are seldom seen in the values demonstrated by teachers and learners. Despite adopting values such as respect, integrity, stewardship, trustworthiness, loyalty and caring, no evidence was produced that these values are actively promoted by the School Management Team (SMT).

The SMT can identify the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the School Improvement Plan (SIP) was developed by the principal in consultation with the SMT and the staff. No evidence was observed showing any monitoring of the SIP. The SIP must be aligned with the School's Self-Evaluation (SSE) and Academic Performance Improvement Plan (APIP) to outline actionable steps crucial to drive improvement initiatives.

While the current SIP identifies various aspects such as leadership, basic functionality, infrastructure, safety and teaching quality, it lacks sufficient focus on critical areas like classroom management and strategies for improving learner outcomes. Furthermore, the SMT's lack of familiarity with the SIP's content and awareness of their roles in driving identified areas for improvement is concerning. The collaborative process involved in drawing up the SIP must be strengthened to enhance transparency and understanding among all stakeholders regarding the content and objectives of the SIP. To encourage staff commitment, it is imperative that staff contribute to the SIP and understand and take ownership of their roles in driving improvement. An inclusive process will create a more cohesive environment where learners' needs are prioritised.

There is little to no evidence to suggest that the SMT communicates the purpose of the school to stakeholders, informs strategy development or develops measurable goals to ensure academic success and a holistic education for all its learners.

4.2 The SMTs actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

There is no evidence of regular classroom observation nor a plan to ensure regular monitoring by members of the SMT. This practice is critical in identifying the professional development needs of staff, especially novice teachers, and in gauging the teaching and learning quality at the school. The SMT states that classroom visits happen informally and infrequently, which impacts the ability to provide constructive feedback on teacher performance in

class and hold them accountable. When there is no accurate evidence of SMT members' perception of the quality of teaching and learning and strategies used, their ability to identify strengths and weaknesses does not exist.

Lack of comprehensive data analysis of learner results further compromises the SMT's ability to gain essential insights into areas requiring intervention and improvement.

No formal teacher mentoring programme exists. Novice teachers are offered little to no support and guidance to improve their instructional practices. The expertise of experienced and outstanding teachers should be leveraged as an improvement strategy to provide targeted support. Teachers are reluctant to attend professional development workshops and do not grasp the importance of the concept of life-long learning. The absence of continuous teacher upskilling and development has affected the quality of teaching and learning, evidenced by poor results across all grades. The promotion and establishment of a culture of continuous professional development amongst teachers will assist them in keeping abreast with new developments and deliver high-quality teaching that will impact positively on learner outcomes. Most teachers are not interested in their own development, and some do not attend District meetings, such is the inertia.

4.3 The SMTs actions to ensure that effective use is made of human, financial and physical resources.

The SMT operates in a low-trust culture where toxic relationships among staff have infiltrated every aspect of the school. This toxic working atmosphere creates a stressful and undesirable working environment for everyone. Teachers exhibit low levels of creativity, passion and energy evident in consistent late coming, chronic absenteeism and increasing number of progressive disciplinary meetings.

The principal is not respected by many staff, and, despite addressing staff ill-discipline (and contravention of the contract of employment) through progressive discipline, some staff members simply refuse to be held accountable.

Despite the SMT's efforts to implement several measures to facilitate smooth, daily operational functionality, a lack of staff cooperation and support continually thwarts these plans. SMT members are left to take on additional responsibilities that compromise their ability to perform their duties effectively, including teaching.

Critical staff responsibilities must be emphasised, and the monitoring of their responsibilities must be strengthened to drive overall improvement and accountability. Teachers must be held accountable for their performance as outlined in the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document. However, the SMT must show commitment to providing continuous support and guidance to staff in executing their duties. The principal and SMT must take control of a situation that is out of control i.e., teacher apathy and lack of accountability to the profession and to the learners.

The SMT indicated that almost all learners were allocated textbooks, however, these textbooks were rarely observed being used in the classroom. A few teachers were seen using textbooks and technology to drive curriculum implementation. In some classrooms, there was not a textbook to be seen. Ensuring the optimal use of LTSM will enhance the learning experience of learners.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KEY AREA 4

- (i) Review and refine processes of SIP, SSE and the Academic Improvement Plan (APIP) with input from all stakeholders.
- (ii) Ensure that SIP priorities are implemented, and progress consistently monitored and evaluated.
- (iii) In collaboration with the Staff, RCL and SGB, the SMT must conduct a SWOT analysis to complement improvement strategies.
- (iv) Develop and implement a Peer Observation Model for classroom observations.
- (v) Develop and implement a targeted Professional Development Programme (SACE aligned with CPD points) for staff.
- (vi) Workshop 'Progressive Discipline' and 'Roles and Responsibilities for Teachers' with all staff (the latter in line with the collective agreement of the Quality Management System QMS).



KEY AREA 5: GOVERNANCE, PARENTS AND COMMUNITY



Governance, Parents and Community at Vista High School are inadequate.

5.1 The SGBs fulfillment of its key responsibilities.

The SGB can be described as dysfunctional, and despite numerous attempts, only one meeting has been held to elect office bearers and to establish committees. The newly elected SGB chairperson has not met all the SGB members

yet. The SGB is not a fully functioning entity and cannot fulfil its key responsibilities which seriously impacts the effective functioning of the school.

The SGB had no input in the development and monitoring of the SIP, however, the chairperson expressed her support for the identified areas for improvement. The toxic school culture, poor learner performance and lack of parental involvement were highlighted by the SGB as areas of concern.

The chairperson of the previous SGB was re-elected to the current SGB as a non-executive member. She pointed out that the previous SGB was actively involved in the recruitment, selection and employment of all staff. The current SGB has not been exposed to this process yet. The principal noted that the WCED is currently presenting a series of workshops geared towards the SGB e.g., financial management training, but only the principal and deputy principal attended. The new SGB is scheduled to attend recruitment and selection processes training.

No policies, except the Finance policy, have been updated or ratified by the SGB.

5.2 The SGB's fulfilment of its financial roles and responsibilities.

The Finance Policy was accessible, updated and ratified.

The Finance Committee is the only partially functioning committee and has met only once. It is not functioning optimally because signatories at the bank have not been finalised, due to a dispute lodged by a previous SGB member. The school is currently unable to transact with the bank. This seriously impedes the school's ability to transact and cater to the needs of staff and learners. The only letter of appointment as a signatory to the school's bank account is that of the bursar. No appointment letters for the rest of the Finance committee were available for scrutiny.

All income and expenditure records are securely stored and made available.

5.3 The SGB's engagement with all stakeholders.

The SGB indicated that the absence of parental support and involvement at the school is evidenced in the small minority of parents who attend school meetings and events. Fundraising events are not successful due to the lack of interest by the school community. This places unnecessary pressure on staff who are then solely responsible for these events.

The principal indicated that it was suggested that she convene meetings in communities where parents and learners reside to mitigate the issue of parents' non-attendance of meetings. According to the Principal, this is an impossible and dangerous task, as the areas from which their learners come are vast.

No evidence exists that the school listens to its learners. The RCL is ineffectual in communicating learner needs to SMT and the SGB. This is evident in the limited activities available for learners and the lack of learner recognition.

Parents are satisfied with the information provided to them about their children's education and progress. The school communicates with parents via newsletters, WhatsApp groups, Short Message Service (SMS), and social media platforms.

No working relationship exists between the SGB and the Principal, because the current SGB is dysfunctional and has not met.

The district provides resources, professional development opportunities and guidance to the school leadership. This relationship must be strengthened to boost learner performance and staff accountability.

The SGB has formed relationships with organisations such as Safer Schools, the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the South African Correctional Service which assist the school with crime prevention and present workshops. The school further collaborates with the South African Children's Home and Social Services, as some of the orphans from the home attend the school.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KEY AREA 5

- (i) SGB and SGB committee meeting times and venues that allow parents and learners to attend without safety and transport concerns.
- (ii) Relevant policies reviewed and updated.
- (iii) Ensure that the required signatories to the banking account are finalised.
- (iv) Training of the newly elected SGB for their roles and responsibilities.
- (v) SGB to be involved in the development and monitoring of the School Improvement Plan.
- (vi) Policies that indicate processes in detail so that implementation can be monitored.
- (vii) Strengthen relationships with the district to boost learner performance and staff accountability.

FINAL REMARKS

Vista High School serves a community of learners who do not reside in the Bo-Kaap, the suburb in which the school is located. Learners come from various communities on the Cape Flats plagued by unemployment and various social ills. Parents send their children to this school in the hope that they will be cared for and receive a quality education.

Unfortunately, quality is elusive as the school fails in its mandate to provide a quality education for those in its care. As a result, it is uncaring. There is little hope for social mobility as being at Vista High School is no guarantee of anything near the hope you need to access the economy one day.

The tolerance for failure at Vista High School is remarkable. A lack of unity of vision and purpose has resulted in poor learner achievement, an apathetic and disappointed learner population, toxic relationships among the staff, little trust and controlling behaviours. The staff is tearing the school apart. As a result, they have lost focus of why they teach. Education seems the last thing on many teachers' minds at Vista High School, despite the efforts of the principal to prevent the school from being utterly dysfunctional. Benevolent pathology is rife as evidenced in the low-expectations culture which is pervasive.

Raising attainment levels and establishing an ethos and environment where learners' needs are promoted and prioritised above all else must be the goal. A change-mindset programme must be initiated for all staff and, if education is not to be left to chance at the school any longer, experts in conflict resolution must be deployed to assist the school with its turn around strategies. Leadership is the very cornerstone of school culture and, unless leadership is respected, and reciprocally respects, little action towards school improvement will occur. If the aspects which define the 'hidden curriculum' are addressed, then the real work to activate the quality overt curriculum can begin.

Post-evaluation support (based on the priority recommendations) must provide direction and clarity to prevent further paralysis of functionality. Trusting relationships within a culture of accountability must be established to create an environment where staff and learners thrive.