W.D. Hendricks
Primary School

Focused RAPID Fire (RAFI) Review Report



Schools Evaluation Authority

Accountability • Quality • Respect

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

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Date of evaluation	26 August 2026
Chief evaluator	*Mr David J. Millar*
Lead Evaluator	*Mrs Fadia Hassiem*
Evaluators	*Mr Paul Besener and Mr Keriston Floris*

School:	**W.D. Hendricks Primary School**
Address:	Mustang Street, Kensington, 7405
Circuit:	C4
District:	Metro Central
Province:	Western Cape
Category:	Public Ordinary (No-fee)
Principal:	Ms L.C. Cooper

This evaluation report follows the Western Cape's Schools Evaluation Authority's (SEA) schedule for the RAFI evaluation of Western Cape schools (public, independent, special).

The evaluation was conducted by three (3) SEA evaluators who spent one (1) day at the school.

Information about this evaluation

The visit was the first RAFI evaluation since the school was rated a '1' ('Inadequate') in the 2025 evaluation. This evaluation is conducted under section 11D (4) of the Western Cape Provincial School Education Amendment Act of 2018.

During the RAFI evaluation, meetings were held with the principal, four (4) members of the SMT, three (3) members of the SGB and seven (7) learners to determine the progress the school has made since the last evaluation. The team undertook lesson observations, covering all teachers, checked workbooks, evaluated improvement efforts, and records of external support from both the education District office and/or Head Office (WCED), based on the SEA's initial priority recommendations for school improvement and development.

The purpose of the RAFI:

- To evaluate the progress made on the priority recommendations from the most recent evaluation conducted on 17 and 18 September 2025.

Context:

Since the previous rated evaluation,
1. There is a new School Governing Body.
2. The principal has joined the Principals' Academy Trust (PAT).

Colour key

GOOD PROGRESS/COMPLETED	SOME PROGRESS	NO PROGRESS

MAIN FINDINGS

KEY AREA 1: LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT	PROGRESS	NO PROGRESS
The principal and SMT must:		
i) Develop a programme in which all staff analyse learner support data, particularly external data, for decision-making to improve the effectiveness of academic interventions.		
The SEA report was shared with the SMT, staff and SGB, and minutes are available. The SMT and staff analysed Systemic Test results during a meeting in March 2026. Dedicated curriculum advisor support is provided in the Foundation Phase, while the INTERSEN Phase received one visit in 2026. Updated learner-at-risk schedules are available.		
ii) Implement a whole school programme to strengthen the overall depth of the performance in Language and Mathematics performance as part of the Academic Performance Plan (APIP) and School Improvement Plan (SIP).		
The school has implemented whole-school routines to support improvement in Language and Mathematics. These include two-week cycle planning, weekly and daily planning, reading corners in every class, word walls to strengthen mathematical vocabulary, Friday testing, and the use of lapbooks.		
iii) Establish and monitor inter-phase collaboration between the Foundation Phase and INTERSEN Phase to strengthen English and Mathematics results.		
Inter-phase sharing seldom takes place between the Foundation Phase and INTERSEN Phase. This collaboration should be structured, regularly monitored, and clearly linked to strategies for improving measurable (step-by-step) outcomes in English and Mathematics.		
iv) Ensure that teachers receive regular, focused professional development on: a. Effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy, including differentiated instruction, remedial support and formative assessment. b. How to inculcate subject terminology and provide vocabulary extension.		
Foundation Phase and INTERSEN teachers have attended WCED workshops, and staff have participated in e-learning training. Further support is required to ensure that differentiated instruction, remedial support, formative assessment, subject terminology and vocabulary-extension strategies are implemented consistently in classrooms.		
v) Prioritise the teaching of Mathematics by strengthening curriculum delivery and ensure consistent monitoring of learner progress. a. Train staff in the use of Mathematics support programmes to provide learners with additional practice and reinforcement of key concepts. b. Identify and nurture learners with high-achiever potential.		
Staff participated in cluster workshops on the language of mathematics e.g., word fluency and the Foundation Phase received curriculum advisor support. However, support for the INTERSEN Phase remains inconsistent. A few high-potential learners have been identified in each grade, but no formal enrichment or intervention programme is in place to extend them.		
vi) Broaden the range of extra-curricular and cultural activities: a. Actively encourage and monitor participation, ensuring equitable access for all learners. b. Increase teacher involvement, with clear roles, recognition, and support to strengthen the school's enrichment programme. c. Maintain sports fields and facilities to create a more inviting and safer environment for participation.		
Play Sports4Life (PS4L) assists with sport coaching during Life Skills periods. Learners participate in inter-school netball and soccer leagues. Two additional teachers serve on the sports committee. Cultural activities have not been expanded. All staff are not involved in co-and extra-curricular activities. The sports fields and facilities remain unsafe.		

KEY AREA 2: TEACHING AND LEARNING	PROGRESS	NO PROGRESS
To principal and SMT must ensure:		
i) Professional development in: a. 'Matrix for Quality Teaching (MQT) (Circular 0010/2018) or https://sea.westerncape.gov.za/guidelines-for-schools/ b. A more positive and respectful classroom environment: All teachers consistently use positive discipline and refrain from harsh language or shouting through ongoing monitoring and professional development. c. Effective questioning and critical thinking in the INTERSEN. d. Robust assessment practices: Baseline and formative assessments are conducted routinely, with assessment data used to inform teaching and address gaps. e. Regular and constructive marking and feedback: All learner work is marked consistently and includes constructive feedback, verified through periodic reviews of learner workbooks.		
ii) Implementation and tracking of learner support: Individual support programmes for identified learners are actively implemented and documented, with progress reviewed at regular SBST meetings		

Evidence from lesson observations, meeting minutes and action plan documents indicates that Teaching and Learning show improvement in most areas, particularly in the implementation and tracking of learner support through documented interventions and SBST-related follow-up. However, professional development is not sufficiently regular, focused or embedded in classroom practice. Given the trauma-affected environment in which the school operates, sustained support is required to strengthen calm, respectful and structured classrooms, and improve assessment and feedback practices

KEY AREA 3: BEHAVIOUR AND SAFETY	PROGRESS	NO PROGRESS
The principal, SMT, and education District office must ensure:		
i) The restoration of dignity and safety: Address the unsafe and degrading infrastructure by repairing buildings, replacing broken windows, and fully refurbishing ablution facilities.		
The school has made repeated representations to the WCED regarding the poor condition of its ablution facilities. However, the situation remains a serious concern, with only one functioning toilet available for approximately 200 female learners, creating unhygienic conditions for learners and staff. Some infrastructure improvements have been made, including repairs to downstairs windows and upgrades to the administration block. However, several upstairs windows in unused classrooms still require attention. Vandalism and theft continue to worsen the situation, with toilet bowls, cisterns and pipes being damaged or stolen. The most significant challenge is the underground sewage and extraction system, which is linked to the neighbouring community. Frequent surges cause sewage to back up into toilets and unused showers, creating serious health and sanitation risks. This requires a comprehensive infrastructure intervention rather than routine maintenance.		
ii) Comprehensive deep cleaning programme: Implement a systematic, ongoing cleaning schedule for all school areas to restore health and basic hygiene standards.		
The overall condition of the school remains a concern. Following the SEA visit in 2025, the Circuit Manager arranged a once-off deep cleaning of the ablution facilities. The school subsequently repainted sections of these areas to improve their appearance and functionality. During school holidays, general assistants conduct deep-cleaning activities, including sweeping and washing floors. However, the cleanliness of the school grounds and facilities remains below the required standard, with random dumping and several untidy areas still evident. Persistent plumbing problems continue to affect the functionality and maintenance of the ablution facilities, limiting the impact of cleaning and refurbishment efforts. While some progress has been made, further intervention is required to improve the overall school environment and address the underlying infrastructure challenges.		
iii) Robust security and access control: Install perimeter fencing, ensure gates are locked at all times, and introduce strict visitor management protocols.		
The school has implemented interim measures to improve perimeter security, including the use of mesh wire to repair sections of the wall and security fence on the eastern boundary. However, the perimeter remains vulnerable and can still be breached. Community members, including a few former learners, frequently enter the premises during the school day to interact with learners, particularly those in senior grades. This presents ongoing risks to learner safety, supervision and access control. Burglary and vandalism remain significant challenges. A recent break-in at the principal's office, highlights the seriousness of the security risks. The main entrance gate motor is also not functioning, despite reportedly being referred to Safe Schools more than a year ago.		
iv) Targeted support for hunger and poverty: Expand the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) to meet actual learner needs, as more learners require meals than planned for.		
The school continues to experience a significant shortfall in food allocations under the NSNP. Current provision is made for approximately 120 learners per day, although more than double this number of learners require meals. This shortfall has persisted for over a year and undermines the purpose of the programme. Occasional food parcel donations from a local church and mosque provide some support but do not meet the ongoing need. The matter requires urgent intervention. The school should complete the required verification documentation and submit an updated CEMIS beneficiary printout to the relevant NSNP officials. Urgent support from the Circuit Manager is required to ensure that the allocation reflects the actual number of learners dependent on the programme.		
v) Systematic attendance and punctuality monitoring: Enforce daily attendance and punctuality checks, with immediate intervention for chronic absenteeism and lateness?		
Learner attendance and punctuality remain significant challenges. The school works with Safe Schools and the South African Police Service (SAPS) to identify and support chronic absentees and habitual latecomers. Approximately 30 learners are regularly identified for intervention. Class teachers monitor attendance registers closely and submit regular absenteeism reports to the principal for analysis. These reports are forwarded to Safe Schools for coordinated intervention. However, absenteeism and late coming remain persistent, and stronger collaboration between the school, parents, Safe Schools, SAPS and other stakeholders is required.		
vi) Consistent behaviour management and learner protection: Re-train staff and enforce the Code of Conduct uniformly; ensure every case of bullying or aggression is addressed and documented.		

The school is committed to implementing and promoting its Code of Conduct for Learners (CoCL). Staff received training, and the policy's expectations are reinforced through staff meetings, morning briefings and more regular assemblies. This ongoing focus has contributed to a shared understanding among staff and has enabled the school to respond more promptly and appropriately to disciplinary incidents.		
vii) Comprehensive support for vulnerable learners: Strengthen referral pathways for counselling, social work and psychological services, with regular review of learner cases.		
The SBST is functioning more effectively. Vulnerable learners and those with higher levels of need are identified. Referral pathways have been strengthened. However, learner accommodations and concessions during assessments are not in place for learners who require additional support.		

KEY AREA 4: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	PROGRESS	NO PROGRESS
The principal and SMT must ensure that:		
i) The school's vision and mission are actively promoted and integrated into planning, communication and daily practice.		
The school's vision and mission are promoted during daily staff briefings and in assemblies.		
ii) A structured system for staff accountability is implemented, ensuring all staff fulfil their duties at the required level.		
The principal is more visible as she is no longer a class teacher. An additional teaching post was allocated to relieve her. She addresses concerns with individual staff members. However, staff accountability would be strengthened through more formal documentation, consistent monitoring and follow-up.		
iii) Formal, regular classroom observations and provided feedback are conducted to strengthen teaching quality and consistency.		
A few classroom observations were conducted during the second and third terms of 2026, and rough notes were kept. However, the process is not sufficiently formal, regular or systematically followed up to ensure consistent improvement in teaching quality.		
iv) Supervision and safety measures during breaks and transitions are increased to address learner security and behaviour on the school grounds.		
A playground duty roster is in place. However, unauthorised individuals frequently enter the school premises, which compromises learner safety and indicates that supervision and access control require urgent strengthening.		
v) Hygiene and maintenance issues are escalated and tracked, with urgent health and safety risks clearly reported and monitored for resolution.		
Maintenance and hygiene concerns are recorded in the SIP. However, the ablution facilities do not meet acceptable hygiene standards, and urgent health and safety risks still require escalation, tracking and resolution.		
(vi) Attendance and leave procedures for all staff are rigorously enforced and monitored.		
A staff leave register is in place, leave forms are submitted timeously, and absenteeism is closely monitored.		

KEY AREA 5: GOVERNANCE, PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	PROGRESS	NO PROGRESS
The principal, SGB and Circuit Manager must ensure that:		
i) SGB meetings are quorate in full at all times, maintain accurate records of attendance and decisions, with regular follow-up on implementation.		
The SGB is not fully constituted, as two parent-member positions are vacant. The 90-day co-option period has lapsed, and by-elections must be convened urgently. Despite these vacancies, the SGB remains functional and meets twice monthly. Key structures, including the Disciplinary Committee and Finance Committee, are in place.		
ii) SGB members receive training in school improvement strategising, governance, and leadership in order to actively drive school improvement		
Targeted capacity building is required to enable the SGB to fulfil its statutory responsibilities more effectively and support accountable school governance.		
iii) All policies are reviewed, dated, signed and understood by SGB members?		
The principal gives existing policies to the SGB for review. Proposed amendments are considered and, where agreed, incorporated before policies are formally ratified and adopted.		
iv) The SGB is informed of all WCED policies, minutes and circulars applicable to it.		
The principal keeps the SGB informed through regular reports at meetings and, where necessary, direct engagement with individual members. The SGB minute book is comprehensive, well maintained and up to date, providing evidence of regular governance processes.		

v) Financial literacy development provided to the SGB: a. Financial literacy aligns with SFRO and auditor's requirements. b. FinCom meetings are held regularly and the reporting is detailed and transparent. c. Financial duties are separated, bank signatories are updated, and all cash handling and deposits follow policy. d. Budget planning reflects SIP priorities, with clear documentation of any deviations and rationale in SGB minutes.		
The school's financial management generally aligns with requirements, but some matters require attention, including SARS compliance. The school also has substantial outstanding municipal debt. FinCom meetings are held regularly. However, the minutes for these meetings are incomplete. The school's budgeting and expenditure are closely aligned with SIP priorities. Deviations from the approved budget are motivated, documented and approved by the SGB, with reasons recorded in the minutes. Significant deviations included additional security expenditure following repeated break-ins and vandalism, as well as unforeseen plumbing costs during the administration block upgrade. Limited resources restrict the school's ability to fund sustained security, leaving the premises vulnerable after hours. The bursar, who is the third signatory, has not updated her signature at the bank. Cash-handling procedures are aligned to policy.		
vi) Asset registers are updated, disposal procedures are implemented, and LTSM management follows recommendations.		
The caretaker responsible for asset registers and disposal procedures recently passed away. The reallocation of these duties has not yet been finalised and should be addressed urgently.		
vii) Parent engagement is improved through flexible meeting times?		
Parental attendance at meetings remains limited, largely due to transport costs and safety concerns. The school attempted Saturday morning meetings, but attendance remained low. To improve engagement, the school introduced WhatsApp groups and a Facebook page. These platforms have strengthened communication and improved parents' access to school information and updates.		
viii) The principal's teaching load is reduced to ensure sufficient time for management responsibilities; a rotational subject-specialist timetable must be considered.		
The appointment of an additional WCED teacher in 2026 has released the principal from full-time teaching, allowing greater instructional leadership. However, a specialist or departmentalised time-table has not been implemented, and teachers remain class-based.		
ix) Community partnerships are expanded and leveraged for additional resources and support.		
Community support remains limited and ad hoc. Broader partnerships are required to secure sustainable resources, fundraising support and additional learner assistance.		

FINAL REMARKS

The school is situated within an exceptionally impoverished community characterised by chronic unemployment, widespread poverty, gang activity, substance abuse, and persistent criminality. These social conditions have a profound impact on the learning environment, creating significant barriers to teaching and learning. Learners arrive at school carrying the burden of socioeconomic hardship, with many facing food insecurity, unstable home circumstances, and exposure to violence daily.

The school itself bears visible signs of the challenges confronting the community. Repeated incidents of vandalism, theft, and damage to infrastructure have strained the school's already limited resources. Essential facilities have been compromised on numerous occasions, requiring repairs that divert scarce funds away from educational priorities. Despite the best efforts of school leadership, the physical environment remains vulnerable and **requires urgent intervention to ensure that learners and staff are provided with a safe and dignified space in which to work and learn**.

Notwithstanding these circumstances, the principal demonstrates remarkable tenacity, resilience, and commitment to the welfare of the learners and staff. Through determined leadership, the principal has managed to maintain a functioning institution despite conditions that would challenge even the most well-resourced schools. The PRINCIPALS' ACADEMY TRUST has given her hope – there is a visible change since our first evaluation last year. The principal arrives at school each day just after 5 am (in winter she does not switch on the lights for fear of being targeted).

The school's challenges far exceed its capacity to address them independently of the district office – or head office. Of particular concern is the continued lack of adequate safety and security measures. The school remains exposed to criminal activity, gang-related influence, and ongoing vandalism, creating an environment in which both learners and educators feel vulnerable. The absence of a sustained and coordinated intervention leaves the school largely isolated in its efforts to protect its community.

The Schools Evaluation Authority is especially concerned by the apparent lack of urgency and responsiveness from the education department in addressing the needs of this school. While the challenges facing the institution are well known and longstanding, there is limited evidence of meaningful, sustained support commensurate with the severity of the circumstances. This lack of intervention has contributed to the perpetuation of conditions that undermine learner achievement, learner and staff wellbeing, and safety.

Most troubling is the issue of learner nutrition. In a community where poverty is endemic and food insecurity is a daily reality, every learner who qualifies for nutritional support should have access to adequate meals. The evidence gathered during the evaluation indicates that this expectation is not being consistently met. The failure to ensure that vulnerable children receive the nutrition to which they are entitled raises serious concerns regarding the fulfilment of basic educational and constitutional obligations. Hungry children cannot reasonably be expected to engage optimally in learning. The mantra 'You cannot teach a hungry child" is a well-known one.

The evaluation team therefore concludes that the challenges experienced by the school are not solely a consequence of community conditions but are exacerbated by insufficient departmental action and support. While school leadership has displayed commendable perseverance and commitment, the burden placed upon the institution is unsustainable without decisive intervention. Immediate and ongoing departmental support is required, particularly in relation to learner nutrition, safety and security, infrastructure protection, psychosocial services, and broader poverty alleviation measures.

Failure to act with urgency risks further compromising the educational prospects, wellbeing, and fundamental rights of some of the province's most vulnerable children. The learners of this school deserve more than resilience from their principal and staff; they deserve a system that actively protects, supports, and invests in their future.

Key Recommendation

The WCED must urgently implement a comprehensive support plan for the school, prioritising learner nutrition, enhanced safety and security measures, infrastructure protection, and whole scale maintenance (place the school on the annual User-Asset Management Programme [U-AMP] as a matter of urgency – especially to attend to the sewage issues) and sustained district-level monitoring.