



BISHOPS
DIOCESAN COLLEGE

OESISA
Quality Assurance Report
Pre-Prep School

Summary of Recommendations



OISESA

Office of Independent
Schools Evaluations
Southern Africa

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Introduction

ISASA requires all member schools to undergo a quality assurance process every six years. This is undertaken by an independent organisation. Beginning in 2022, this organisation is The Office of Independent Schools Evaluations, Southern Africa (OISESA).

Three OISESA mentors conducted the onsite quality assurance visit at Bishops from Monday 24 April to Wednesday 26 April 2023. Prior to the onsite visit, surveys were completed by a range of stakeholder groups across the school community.

This document is a summary of the final OISESA quality assurance report. Each section will list the quality assurance standard followed by the commendations and recommendations of the OISESA evaluators.

1. Mission and Values

The school has a clear and accessible mission which guides the school's admissions, educational programme, planning, and decision making.

Commendations

- The recent updating of its Vision and Mission statements, including the values emphasised for students to embrace is laudable. Parents and staff were engaged in this significant process where every word has meaning for the community.
- The school's Admissions Policy is transparent and followed.
- The practical implementation of the school's diversity and transformation agenda in its Admissions Policy ensures that students from formerly disadvantaged and marginalised communities have access to the excellent educational offering at Bishops.
- The school strives to value, respect and nurture each student.
- The Anglican faith and values form part of the daily life of a Bishops boy.

Recommendations

- New staff should be educated regarding Bishops' Mission Statement during their onboarding process. Staff felt there was a naivety around new staff and their needs – mentorship on the academic front is not enough. New staff also need to understand the workings of the school, and not just how to teach.
- Address sustainability and regeneration of the natural environment more in the school's curriculum.
- Determine which teaching pedagogies are best suited to meeting the aims of Bishops' Mission Statement.
- Draft a clearly defined document explaining the expectations of a teacher at Bishops. This should include the dress policy, expectations in the classroom and on the sports field as well as what is expected after hours.
- In addition, in staff meetings and staff development sessions, teaching and learning pedagogies need to be reviewed to align with the school's mission.
- Continually campaign to find scholarships and bursaries to support the current and future generations to gain access to excellent education and opportunities. The resources of the alumni through The Old Diocesan Union must be vigorously pursued.

2. Governance & Leadership - The Board

The school has an effective leadership structure and an appropriate form of governance that ensures the school remains true to its mission and that it has the necessary resources to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Commendations

- The Governance of the College is sound, with emphasis on its strategic, fiduciary, and generative functions.
- Any inroads into educational and operational functions from the Council is eliminated immediately.
- The Council Mandate clearly specifies the roles and responsibilities of Council members and the subcommittees.
- Diversity is on the agenda when Executive positions become vacant.

Recommendations

- The Council should communicate better with staff.
- Implement performance management for all levels of staff.
- Clarify the role of the Parent Association in the school structure.
- Improve the mentorship/induction programme for new Council members.
- In addition, there should be greater visibility of Council members as it is important that parents and staff know who the members of Council are.
- An annual report-back session to stakeholders will offer the opportunity for Council members to be known to their constituents and to indicate their roles, responsibilities, and accomplishments.

3. Leadership (The Head and the Senior Leadership Team)

Commendations

- The Leadership within the Pre-Preparatory is strong, collaborative, and approachable, and staff in the Pre-Preparatory Focus Group acknowledged this. There are also line managers who can be approached.
- The Leadership consistently meets expectations.
- An informal mentoring system is available too, although staff are loathe to use some of these lines of communication.
- Conferences, professional development, and online training are fully encouraged, and all are taken very seriously and embraced by many staff members.
- Providing mid-management positions at the Pre-Prep has given staff an extra career boost.

Recommendations

- Because of the size of the school there can be a disconnect between the Leadership Team and the school at large. Continued focus is needed to improve on this by holding whole school staff development and meetings.
- Mental health: there was the notion of a possible role for an additional School

Psychologist to support both staff and students with the growing need.

- Dispel the feeling that problems are being “swept under the carpet”. Address the members of staff who are creating problems and do not cover them in general statements about problem areas.
- More whole school or at least Prep + Pre-Prep open discussion is needed. Time is always an issue.
- Explain policies and discuss what they mean.
- In addition, I recommend the need for the Head of the Preparatory to be seen more regularly in the Pre-Preparatory School by the Pre-Preparatory staff for them to feel acknowledged and encouraged and not overlooked. This was communicated in the Staff Focus Group. This contact and visibility time needs to be prioritised by the Head of Pre-Preparatory and Preparatory.
- There is a need for collaborative discussions and time for building camaraderie amongst the Pre-Preparatory and Preparatory Teams and this is something that needs to be prioritised going forward.

4. Sustainability

Commendations

- The financial management, risk assessment and adequate insurance are excellent and ensure sustainability of the school in the future.
- The school is conscious of ensuring that its staff are well-remunerated, and all staff are provided with a daily lunch.
- The bursary and scholarship programmes are utilised effectively in the higher Grades, and it is hoped that these funds will grow.

Recommendations

- There is a need for more recycling bins and a continued focus on educating the young students.
- The impact of loadshedding on operations remains a concern. Comprehensive mitigation of loadshedding should be the aim of the school. More solar panels and utility-saving behaviours should be introduced.
- In addition, I recommend that continued vigilance in this area is essential.
- The alumni should be encouraged to ‘give back’ to their school by offering bursaries and scholarships to many boys who were previously disadvantaged in our country.
- Environmental sustainability education and focus needs to be intentional and continuous in the Pre-Preparatory and for the whole school community and is something that can be easily implemented.

5. Culture & Climate

The school fosters a culture of diversity and inclusion of students, families, and staff, and recognises their fundamental human rights and dignity, which is consistent with the Bill of Rights, and aligns with the school’s mission.

Commendations

- There is a very noticeable and warm culture of inclusion and diversity within the PrePreparatory both in the student body and amongst the staff.
- The school recognises fundamental human rights and dignity, which is consistent with the Bill of Rights, and aligns with the school's Mission.
- There are regular celebrations of special festivals and events. There is an awareness of other cultures and intentional diversity practices such as introducing IsiXhosa and Afrikaans at Pre-Preparatory level.
- It was delightful to attend a chapel service and see the warmth and the inclusive focus with regards to songs and the meaningful message to the students of diverse cultures.

Recommendations

- In general, greater transparency is needed in the hiring process.
- Some staff members feel Internships should be inclusive of all races. Presently, preference is given to black students to develop good teachers who would return to their communities. This includes applicants who are not in a financial position to continue their studies. This should be open to any race that fulfils the requirements and not purely a post for people of colour.
- Some staff members feel job posts should be more openly communicated if they carry an exclusivity.
- Make better use of days such as Human Rights Day, and Freedom Day; they should be incorporated into curriculum more intentionally with a bigger emphasis and impact.
- There should be greater exposure to communities close to the school who are not as fortunate.
- In addition, I recommend that the Head of the Pre-Preparatory and the Leadership Team should intentionally focus on team building within the Pre-Preparatory and with the Preparatory staff.

6. The Education Programme - Curriculum Delivery

Commendations

- The curriculum is relevant, dynamic, and innovative.
- Teachers have a substantial budget to add to their teaching resources and this is noticeable in the classrooms. The equipment used for hands-on learning in Mathematics and Reading is excellent.
- The Pre-Preparatory have their own in-house Reading Teacher who works at extension and assisting children in small groups. Every child in Grade 1 and 2 is given individual attention by this Reading Teacher who supports the class teachers in their work.
- Professional Development courses are made available to all staff.
- Pre-Preparatory staff embrace the natural creative energy and curiosity of boys in their curriculum and select activities accordingly.
- Bishops offers an excellent all-round education with equal emphasis placed on culture and sport.
- Bishops has an amazing, broad co- curricular programme (Sport, Music, BSU, STEM, Art, Drama) • Co-curricular lessons are relevant and innovative.

Recommendations

- Improve interactions with Prep – more collaboration and discussion are needed.
- There is room for improvement regarding instructional material for gifted learners,

learners with special needs and consistent language provision.

- More leadership to ensure that teaching and learning outcomes are being met consistently within each class and Grade (Head of Academics or Subject Heads would be a good start) This would assist with consistency of reviewing lessons as well as moderation between Grades and subjects.
- Should be formally allocated, e.g., macro planning as well as planning in various learning areas.
- More collaboration with other teachers would be helpful to enable teachers to know how they are delivering the curriculum in relation to other schools.
- The school day is short and pressured – perhaps the day should be longer, but this has other implications, such as access to facilities. The School is considering an inclusive day as an option to include sport and other activities and then have a later finish time.
- In addition, I recommend that Pre-Preparatory staff have more contact time with teachers from other ISASA schools and attend cluster groups to gauge how they are doing in relation to other ISASA schools, and which will also provide an opportunity to share their expertise and ideas.
- It would be useful for teachers to observe and review each other to assist each other and allow more opportunities for sharing ideas about curriculum and curriculum delivery

7. Teaching & Learning

Commendations

- There is an excellent bank of teaching resources in each classroom. Teachers have a yearly budget to purchase up-to-date resources which is exciting and a privilege.
- There is meaningful feedback to parents on a regular basis through interviews and emails.
- There is excellent support from the onsite Educational Psychologist and the Bishops Support Unit for the young students who need interventions (Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy).
- The teachers also receive support in their work by these specialists, which is an advantage.
- There is a careful monitoring and management of children with diverse needs, and this was noticeable in the lesson observations.
- The Pastoral care and Divinity lessons are also a wonderful part of an all-round moral and holistic education for the young students.
- Teachers are given opportunities to further their own professional development which will result in improved performance in the classroom.

Recommendations

- More support should be available for teachers whose students present with a variety of academic and emotional needs within each classroom. Some kind of permanent classroom support should be on offer.
- Lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of the children, but more accountability is needed from teachers to ensure that this is happening.
- There should be time for meaningful planning, discussion, and collaboration in order for there to be a better flow from Grade to Grade and for ideas to be shared and grown.
- Teachers are very good at delivering quality, but they need to start looking more widely and incorporating more into the school to maintain the uniqueness. More time should be allocated for staff to meet in grades and phases, for discussion of topics

such as assessment, moderation, and planning.

- Although many courses are offered, teachers need a monitoring tool that reflects what courses have been done and expectation of monitoring needs to be clearer.
- Practise more inquiry-based learning, cross-curricular connections, and team teaching.
- Integrate technology more appropriately in teaching and learning.
- 21st century concepts need to be documented in planning to ensure delivery.
- There should be more individual reviews of teaching - observation of teaching across different departments (peer review) and HODs review. Time for constructive planning.
- Note: Bishops Pre-Preparatory has a high standard of teaching and learning and they have been rigorous and critical in their Self-Study Report.
- In addition, I recommend better recording and reporting of differentiated lessons and sharing these with staff in regular bi-weekly meetings and discussions.
- There is a need for better documentation in planning for 21st Century concept delivery and lesson planning. Although this is happening, improved recording, reporting, and sharing is vital.

8. Student Well-Being

The school supports the well-being of all students, including their academic needs and pastoral care, to ensure a positive school experience.

Commendations

- Bishops Pre-Preparatory certainly has a wonderful team of support therapists and support professionals in place and the monitoring and tracking of the students' facing challenges is thorough.
- The Bishops Support Unit provides therapists to support the children who are in need (Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy).
- An onsite Educational Psychologist is available as well as a Reading Support Teacher.
- There is Early Care in place for the students before 7am and there is also Aftercare.
- Pastoral support is readily available for the students and the families.
- MITRE (Manners, Integrity, Togetherness, Respect and Empathy) is central to the daily life of the Bishops boys.
- Bishops caters for boys with emotional, social, and learning difficulties - BSU (psychologist, remedial teachers, and facilitators).

Recommendations

- More therapy rooms are needed to accommodate the growing need to support children with barriers to learning or who need some other type of support (OT, Physio, Remedial, Enrichment, Group support)
- More support in the form of workshops to empower parents needs to be offered.
- The school's code of conduct should be easily accessible to parents and communicated to all.
- There seems to be some uncertainty in the procedures regarding behaviour management and support. This needs to be reviewed and clearly communicated regularly to both parents and boys.
- Parents feel that there needs to be more support in the school for the practical management of various needs. Employment of more staff to support learning needs is desired.
- With the growing number of boys that need support in the classroom, The leadership of the Pre-Preparatory needs to schedule more training on how to manage these children in a mainstream classroom.

- In addition, Bishops Pre-Preparatory are excelling in their focus on Student Well-Being and they are in a fortunate position as their resources are plentiful. It is important to continue in the vein of mindfulness regarding the growing needs of the students and the parents.

9. Safeguarding

The school is committed to maintaining a safe environment to protect students from harm.

Commendations

- Having a doctor on call and a full-time nurse is certainly of tremendous value and helps the peace of mind of staff and parents.
- All staff having been trained in EpiPen administering and briefed about allergies, which is impressive.
- The school has a lot of support specialists in place to ensure the safeguarding of the young students.
- Fire drills are done regularly.
- Communication with parents is immediate if accidents or incidents occur.

Recommendations

- There are not clearly spelled out practical processes on the intricacies of how to manage tricky situations with regards to children, to respond to legal requirements and in support of their well-being, especially when it comes to family dynamics. The Pre-Preparatory needs to focus on clear written processes for staff and parents regarding specific support for the well-being of the children.
- Forms and contact details in hard copy need to be accessible as with so much loadshedding, it is not always easy to access contact details online.
- More people with first aid training would be beneficial.
- All academic staff should be cleared on the sexual offenders list and child protection register.
- In addition, the Pre-Preparatory should continue to train staff in Safeguarding and awareness as there cannot be complacency in this important area.
- The procedures for reporting for the young students need to be continuously reinforced.

10. Staffing

The school is appropriately staffed to meet the requirements of the school's educational programme, operational requirements, and co-curricular programme.

Commendations

- Bishops' Pre-Preparatory employs quality teachers and specialist teachers who are experienced and they want this to remain a priority when recruiting.
- Staff are encouraged to attend Professional Development programmes outside of the school and are given financial assistance to study further.
- Bishops Pre-Preparatory also have Internships which is really a mutually beneficial situation, as the Interns provide extra hands in the classroom.

Recommendations

- Clarify job descriptions for assistants, supervisors, and secretaries.
- New staff should be taken through the Code of Conduct as part of their onboarding process. • Establish an orientation programme for new staff.
- Add to the headcount – appoint an extra teacher who can fill in for absent staff to avoid having unfamiliar staff in to teach the boys.
- Help is necessary in the classroom for Grade 1 and 2 – perhaps an intern in each class or classroom assistants.
- Appoint a more qualified person to manage the sport programme administration – budgets, coaches, allocation of fields, festivals, sports payroll, rainy day procedure.
- Responsibility allowances should be extended to the Pre-Prep – they are awarded at Prep and College.
- More manpower is required to carry out teaching and learning effectively – perhaps each class with an intern or teacher assistants for each classroom.
- In addition, Performance Management needs to be applied more regularly. Management needs to clarify the staff KPIs.

11. Facilities & Infrastructure

The school's buildings, facilities and infrastructure effectively support the needs of the school's education and co-curricular programmes.

Commendations

- The emphasis on the constant upgrading of facilities, including access for the disabled, is noted.
- The IT available and training for staff and students in its use ensures high levels of competence.
- There is an active building committee that documents future plans and needs.
- Classrooms in the Pre-Preparatory are digitally up to date with projectors and sound bars.
- The school's information management systems are the latest development in technology and in line with current and future needs.
- The use of industry-standard software complies with European and South African data privacy and security laws.
- The school is becoming more self-sufficient with solar panels, generators and bore-hole water.

Recommendations

- Overhead roofing is needed for some outdoor spaces for rainy weather play.
- The school needs spaces for collaborative/team teaching; install stacking doors leading to outdoor areas that are not used.
- A swimming pool is a big need at the Pre-Prep as the boys can hardly stand in any of the pools.
- There is a need to streamline all the information platforms so that they have a more user-friendly way of accessing information.
- The online booking facility for facilities is not used effectively and this often results in double bookings and unfortunately the Pre-Preparatory and Preparatory always have to compromise.
- Most toilets in the Pre-Preparatory are due for an upgrade and this is going to be a part of the audit and upgrade plan.

- In addition, there is a need for streamlining of information platforms.
- Provide a user-friendly parent App that parents can access and navigate easily on their phones.

12. Health & Safety

The school's Health & Safety policies and procedures ensure that it is a safe place for staff and students.

Commendations

- There are 16 Cameras on the Pre-Preparatory campus to help keep children safe.
- The sanatorium, its staff, and facilities offer invaluable services to the school community.
- The Risk Manager ensures that all possible scenarios are covered.
- Health and safety procedures are in place and regularly checked and the Health and Safety Manager is easily accessible to the Pre-Preparatory.
- The school complies with all regulations as prescribed by the Occupational Health and Safety Act of South Africa and responsibilities are clearly defined to ensure this compliance.
- The Safety Committee offers hands-on support and advisory services to the school.
- The Bishops Child Abuse Policy is based on the WCED Policy Abuse No More: Dealing Effectively with Child Abuse.
- Bishops has many policies in place to protect students from harm as stated above.
- Staff are trained to operate emergency equipment which is regularly checked.
- The Risk Manager regularly reminds staff and students of emergency procedures.
- Appropriate student supervision is provided by adults at all times.
- All vehicles are regularly serviced and checked before outings and the Risk Manager keeps these records.

Recommendations

- Supervision: There is a break duty roster but because of the size of the playground and the number of climbing frames, they could do with even better supervision of boys outside – more presence and engagement by staff. The Pre- Preparatory needs to look at having more staff on duty during outdoor play.
- Documentation: There should be better, more accessible documentation of injuries and concerns, particularly in the case of head injuries.
- Details around indemnity for lifting and transporting children should be refined. Parents who provide small-group transport should be included in the process. The safe use of the buses should be considered too.
- In addition, complacency must never set in as safety and security are priorities, especially with so many staff and students living on the campus.
- The adventurous activities undertaken are crucial in the lives of young students and time and effort and focus must continue to cover all possible dangers to their health and safety.

13. Communication

The school communicates regularly and effectively with its community.

Commendations

- Bishops Pre-Preparatory have regular communications with parents and there are many platforms regularly updated and used to share all communications.
- There are excellent team meetings with all role players for children who are needing the extra support.
- Deadline setting is well communicated and adhered to by staff.
- Parent/teacher meetings happen regularly

Recommendations

- Is there too much information in parent emails? One selected means of communication for parents where information can be accessed. At the moment there are WhatsApp groups, emails, MyBishopsLife portal and the website.
- While the content of the communication is good – the effectiveness of it reaching parents needs to be improved. Short, effective digital communication to parents is preferable to long narratives which are now outdated.
- Teachers are encouraged to try to phone parents first, rather than sending emails which may lose tone and level of care.
- Management of the WhatsApp groups within the classes is difficult for staff to control as there can be too much banter. Some groups are broadcast groups which seem to be more successful and should be recommended.
- In addition, there is a need for improving the effectiveness of reaching parents and especially new young parents. The website for the Pre-Preparatory needs to be focused on and updated with innovative news and the video that was prepared last year.
- Marketing of the Pre-Preparatory School is vital and there is a need to ensure that time and focus is spent on it. It is the catchment area for new students to Bishops and this base is what feeds the Preparatory and ultimately the College.