Schools Improvement Initiative (SII)
Whole School Development

Briefing Document 2
July 2019

The SII was established in 2012 as a vehicle for extending UCT's engagement in schooling to help address the current crisis in education. The Initiative articulates closely with the university's strategy to improve public schooling and to address the under-representation of Khayelitsha learners at UCT. The SII has established partnerships with five schools: three primaries and three secondary schools.

As a university-school partnership, the SII engages in whole-school development at the level of *leadership and management* as well as at the level of *teacher professional development.* More broadly the SII seeks to create *enabling environments* within the schools for teaching and learning through a range of programmes and interventions. To help achieve this, the SII collaborates with a departments and faculties within the university. Interdisciplinary collaboration enables students from across the institution to be placed in the SII partner schools for the duration of their practice learning blocks. Such collaboration includes the Faculty of Health Sciences (Occupational Therapy; Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology); Social Work; Information Systems; Library and Information Sciences and the School of Education.

1. **Leadership and management**
    In addition to mentoring and support of the school principals through a principals' community of practice, support is offered to the School Management Teams (SMTs). At both the level of leadership and management, success is measured against individual targets that are set by the principals and SMTs and are determined by the needs of the particular school. Areas for development broadly include planning, monitoring of the curriculum and monitoring of governance and systems. Individual action plans are informed by the nine focus areas for whole-school development, as outlined in the Whole-School Evaluation Policy. These include:

1. Basic functionality of the school
2. Leadership, management and communication
3. Governance and relationships
4. Quality of teaching and learning and educator development
5. Curriculum provision and resources
6. Learner achievement

7. School safety, security and discipline
8. School infrastructure
9. Parents and the community

Support is given to the Heads of Department to strengthen their capacity to manage the curriculum as this has been identified by the SII as the critical link between governance and systems on the one hand, and classroom-based teaching and learning on the other. Success is measured according to the following areas:

1. Frequency of departmental and/or subject meetings
2. Submission and moderation of Performance Assessment Tasks
3. Quality of assessment and moderation of learners' work
4. Planning
5. Pace and coverage of the curriculum

2. Teacher professional development

Secondary schools

Education specialists from the Schools Development Unit offer classroom-based support in the areas of Mathematics, Life Science and Physical Science. School-based support is structured and organised according to the needs of the individual teachers and frequently takes place in conjunction with university-approved, SACE accredited short courses or two-year Advanced Certificates in Teaching (ACTs). In such cases, success of teachers and managers is measured according to the evaluation criteria for the particular course. These Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) academic programmes are externally moderated.

Primary School

Primary school bridging programmes in Mathematics and Life Sciences was introduced in 2017. The aim of these programmes is to bridge the gaps that currently exist between primary schools, which are located in close proximity; between the Foundation and Intermediate phases and between the primary and secondary schools. Workshops take place, involving teachers from six primary schools (three partner schools and three others), and individual support takes place at classroom-level when requested.

3. The 'whole school'

Libraries

Each of the five SII partner schools has a fully functional library. Of the five, four libraries were established by the SII in partnership with Rotary and The Bookery, with full-time Library Assistants who receive a monthly stipend. The success of the libraries is measured through data submitted by the Library Assistants in the form of monthly reports. The aim of the libraries is to support the improvement of language and literacy

in the schools and the success of the libraries is measured according to the following objectives:

1. Usage of the library by all classes in the school
2. Amount of reading taking place across the grades
3. Involvement of the library assistants in reading-related programmes
4. Involvement of teachers in the use of the library
5. Links with other libraries (school and public)
6. Integration of the library into the daily practice of the school.

For further information:

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