



BISHOPS
DIOCESAN COLLEGE

BISHOPS PREPARATORY SCHOOL

IQAA REPORT

NOVEMBER 2014

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1. INTRODUCTION

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The IQAA "School in a Mirror" Process

Date of evaluation: June – November 2014
Mentor: Dave Shutte
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VISION STATEMENT

Bishops, Cape Town, a South African school aspires to:

- *live the Christian faith in the Anglican tradition, humbly and courageously;*
- *respect, nurture and value each person;*
- *inspire individuals to open their minds and hearts, and to reach their dreams;*
- *offer a world-class, all-round education fully up to date with the best educational and technological advances;*
- *address global issues including the sustainability of the environment both as part of the curriculum and as demonstrated in school operations;*
- *embrace and celebrate diversity in the communities of our school and nation.*

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Bishops (The Diocesan College) is an Anglican independent boys' school established in 1849 by the first Anglican Bishop of Cape Town, Robert Gray. The Prep School separated physically from the College in 1919 when it moved to its current premises. Until 1962 when the Pre-Prep was started the school only catered for boys from Grade 3 upwards. The Pre-Prep has 216 boys from Grades R-3 now and the Prep, 376. Each grade from 3-7 has 3 classes with 24-25 boys in a class.

The Principal is Head of the College as well responsible for the school overall. The Headmaster of the Prep is responsible for the Pre-Prep although a Deputy Head manages the day-to-day running of the Pre-Prep.

The school serves an upper middle class, largely professional and entrepreneurial community. The parent body is generally very supportive of the school and we are in the privileged position of having long waiting lists.

Bishops has extensive facilities across the campuses and these are shared by all sections of the school.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Compliance Statement (see completed statement for whole school)

3.2 Areas of operation evaluated:

3.2.1 Functioning of the school.

3.2.2 Teaching, Learning and Attainments.

3.3 Methods used in gaining evidence for the report:

3.3.1 IQAA Opinion Surveys for parents, teachers and Grade 6 and 7 boys (*See Appendix 1, 2, 3*).

3.3.2 Parent, teacher and pupil focus groups (in the case of the latter, three different groups) met to discuss areas of concern that emerged from the surveys. Minutes were taken and sent to the Evaluation Committee.

3.3.3 Classroom visits by teachers across subjects and grades and the completion of observation forms.

3.3.4 Investigation of all key aspects of two areas of operation (Teaching, Learning and Attainments as well as Functioning of the School).

3.3.5 Extensive Committee discussions and consultation with other staff where necessary.

5. OPINION SURVEYS

All opinion surveys (97%-100%) indicated strongly that boys are happy at the school, enjoying a well-rounded education with good academic standards, and a broad and successful cultural and sporting programme. Similarly teacher surveys showed them very happy to be at the school with strong collegial bonds and supported by parents of the boys they teach. They also expressed strong confidence in the leadership of the school and in the opportunities they have for input into decision-making, professional development and promotion within the school.

Survey results indicated a good, open relationship between parents and school both in terms of communication and direct contact with 94% confirming that they felt welcome at the school and 99% that they supported school events.

Both staff and boys showed a very strong sense of pride in their school. Similarly all 3 surveys indicated strongly that disciplinary practices were fair.

Both parents and teachers expressed concerns about safety of possessions and bullying at the school. Pupils did not register bullying as a problem but also saw safety of possessions as an issue. All focus groups concentrated on these issues. The discussions around safety of possessions included the school's responsibility as well as that of pupils, the high volume of lost property, "borrowing without permission", and how to better secure classrooms, proper use of lockers, and so on. Safety of possession was particularly high as a concern on the surveys with scores ranging from 36% - 53% across boys, teachers and parents.

Pupil focus groups did not see bullying as a problem at the school although they acknowledged that it could occur from time to time. It must be said that the surveys only included Grade 6 and 7 boys and younger boys could have had a different response. All groups discussed the fact that there is often confusion around actual bullying vs an ad hoc irritating or hurtful comment. Nevertheless parents and teacher focus groups agreed that there needed to be ongoing education around respect, consideration and acceptable inter-personal interaction.

The parents' survey did indicate that 27% of parents did not understand the role of the school governing body (in this case, Council). Discussions pointed to this being a communication issue and ideas were mooted as to how to improve on this.

Both pupils and staff raised concerns around size of classes. In discussion pupil focus groups thought this was more about classroom layout and furnishing than the number of pupils. The teachers' discussion group saw it as both pupil numbers, size of classroom and layout.

The pupils' survey results raised approaching teachers about their problems as a concern for some of them. In discussion it was made clear that it did not appear to be about emotional issues but rather about work (particularly marks) and classroom behaviour issues. Teachers reflected on the boys' input on this issue in their discussion group.

The teachers' survey also indicated that improvements to the teachers' appraisal system could be made. Specific suggestions were made in the focus group discussion. Teachers expressed confidence in what the school offers in terms of professional development particularly in access to further study, workshops, seminars and conference attendance.

6. FINDINGS

6.1 CURRICULUM

In line with the School's Vision Statement of offering a world class, up-to-date, all-round education, the curricular programme was found to be very broad offering a full academic programme with a strong co-curricular programme including a large number of sports as well as teams to allow for maximum participation and experience. A very strong and active music department forms a major part of the school's curricular and co-curricular programmes.

Academic meeting minutes, department meetings, weekly music concerts, sports practices and matches, subject curricula available on the Intranet and the newly developed WordPress all attest to this.

A particular success is cross-curricular teaching and the use of the school's sophisticated IT infrastructure with the latter playing a part in most subjects. Science and Design and Technology have a 20% overlap and Art and Design and Technology across the subjects for a number of projects through the year.

6.2 LEARNING

A series of classroom visits, moderation of work by Subject Heads, attainment and progress of boys (both at Prep and following through to college) and termly grade discussions were used to assess this crucial area of the school.

The availability of a high degree of personalised and individual attention emerged strongly. Attainment levels are high with a strong follow through to College as evidenced in annual Prep results as well as those of former Prep boys in the external Matric examinations. Classroom visits showed that boys enjoy their lessons and are positive about learning and achieving.

The full-time Learning Support Co-Ordinator and Director of Studies manage boys needing extra intervention carefully, working with parents, teachers and therapists. Classroom strategies are developed for boys needing these. Support for teachers in developing these is provided and the implementation carefully monitored.

Homework emerged as an area that needs careful consideration. What is its main purpose? How often should it be set? These are questions that need to be addressed. Individual as opposed to group work emerged as a difficulty for boys with many finding working collaboratively with others demanding and difficult. Teachers remain concerned about boys' listening skills in terms of carrying out instructions and sustained concentration in class.

6.3 RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Examination of resources, safety and security procedures and policies, emotional and learning support structures underpin the findings in this section.

Excellent IT infrastructure across the school for learning, communication and availability of information. Every classroom is networked with a smartboard, bulkmail is used extensively to communicate with parents and the *myBishopsLife* portal provides a centralised profile of every boy for use by teachers and parents.

The school has a comprehensive safety and security policy and procedure in place. The Risk Committee introduced in 2013 has compiled an extensive Risk analysis of the school and will provide a watchdog service. In terms of the soon to be promulgated Child Protection Act every adult who works at Bishops or provides any activity involving boys has been fingerprinted for checking against the Sexual Offenders Register and this will be mandatory for all new staff appointments.

A full-time Counsellor, comprehensive House system and Youth Pastor provide extensive and effective pastoral care supporting boys, families and staff as needed. The learning support system has been referred to under "Learning".

Safety of possessions was flagged as an important concern here and borne out in the surveys for all 3 subjects groups and focus group discussions.

6.4 ETHOS

Classroom observations, survey results and many interactions were used as the basis for review here.

The ethos of the school is characterised by pride in the school, a nurturing and happy environment in which boys enthusiastically involve themselves in all aspects of school life. This is underpinned by the Christian life of the school, the teaching of the core value of respect as well as a happy, committed staff who have a very good rapport with the boys and supportive parents. Discipline is reasonable, fair and appropriate.

Concerns remain about bullying, educating around it and managing it when it does occur. Bishops is very sensitive to the overall well-being of every boy and have systems in place to rapidly respond if any forms of bullying do arise.

7. FUNCTIONING OF THE SCHOOL

7.1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Financial management of the school is good with a sophisticated budget process involving all relevant role players being followed. Human Resources, Operations, Maintenance and Grounds provide good support for the core business of teaching and learning. Maintaining a huge infrastructure, as well as keeping up with new technological developments and meeting teaching and extra-mural needs requires the very careful use of financial resources.

7.2 FACILITIES

Facilities are generally very good. Specialist areas such as Art, Technology and Music are state of the art. Needs of the everyday classroom also need to be kept in mind to meet new teaching and learning practices. The recent upgrade to Jagger Hall, the Annexe and After-Care have made it a greatly more effective space in the school. A Library and Multi-Media facility will be a priority for the school going forward. Most areas of the school are accessible for disabled people except for the second storey of Stanmore House. Balancing the need to maintain existing facilities with developing new or upgrading current facilities will always be a challenge in a dynamic and progressive environment. Boys' ablutions are in reasonable condition.

7.3 CONDUCT OF THE BOYS

We place a high expectation on good manners. Pupils are taught to welcome visitors and offer assistance, show respect to adults and greet them. We receive excellent reports on the whole on our boys' conduct. The recent Grade 7 tour was a good example when 75 boys were hosted by Durban and Pietermaritzburg parents. All comments were very favourable on how polite, helpful and engaging our boys were. But this does have to be worked on all the time. General behaviour of the boys is also good with very few incidents of serious misconduct.

7.4 COMMUNICATION

This is a strong aspect of the school with regular emails and smses being sent to parents when and where necessary. The *myBishopsLife* portal has all information pertinent to a particular boy (including activities, timetable, code of conduct, reports, etc) available for teacher and individual parents' use. This is regularly updated.

There are concerns though that in this era of electronic communication between school and parents, boys are not required to take any responsibility for planning and organising themselves and teachers and parents have to ensure that this is not allowed to happen. On the whole staff members are open to discussion with parents on a regular basis; open channels of communication and a good, open relationship between parent and school are being encouraged. Parents expressed a wish for more direct and regular communication from the school's Council.

7.5 COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Community partnership and outreach are an important part of the school at present with the ongoing partnership with *St Paul's Primary*, the work of *EarlyAct*, *VUSA Rugby Academy*, various House projects, Wildlife Club together with a number of one-off connections. Schools, creches, *Chaeli Project*, hospitals, animal support groups have all been supported in various ways at different times. A number of these relationships such as *St Paul's* and *Zonnebloem Children's Home* have been going for a number of years.

Waste management is a priority at the school but one that still needs further development as do our efforts to move to more sustainable forms of energy. The community is being made aware of the need for the above and there are visible signs of recycling across campus.

8. SUMMARY

8.1 MAJOR STRENGTHS

8.1.1 Provision of a full, well-rounded education in accordance with the school's Vision Statement. A full academic programme underscored by the values for which the school stands and a

Christian ethos. A very varied co-curricular programme broadens the opportunities and experience for each boy.

8.1.2 School is a happy experience for Prep boys. Boys are for the most part very happy to be at Bishops. This can be seen in their enthusiastic participation in the curricular and co-curricular programmes. They are proud of their school and give a great deal of time to their school activities.

8.1.3 Support and Pastoral care:

There is a strong support network: learning, emotional and spiritual. The Learning Support Department (the school's Education Psychologist, extra lessons, teachers and external therapists on site) ensure that learning difficulties or delays are identified, addressed, strategies implemented and monitored. The school's Counsellor through Life Orientation lessons, group and one-one-one counselling and family contact provides emotional support in whatever difficult or different situation they might find themselves in. In both areas external referrals can also be made. Spiritually, the Youth Pastor and Chaplain provide spiritual direction and insight in divinity lessons, assemblies, Chapel services, Christian group meetings. While the school is Christian, diversity is encouraged, respected and acknowledged.

The House system provides a family within a family for our boys with Housemasters and Assistant Housemasters developing a 5 year relationship with them in terms of motivation, development, discipline and support.

8.1.4 Academic standards are high. Prep boys as a group perform very well in the College Entrance Examinations; Prep boys continue to feature significantly in College Scholarship awards, academic competitions, Music examinations and Eisteddfau. Grade by grade academic performance levels are generally high and this continues into College. Information Technology is fully integrated into the academic programme and cross-curricular work across Science, Technology and Art is very successful.

8.2 AREAS OF CONCERN

8.2.1 Safety of possessions:

Staff, parents and boys all expressed concerns about this. Items disappear from classrooms and lockers too regularly. The volumes in lost property are very high. This is a matter needing careful investigation.

8.2.2 Bullying:

While the boys' survey and focus groups did not find a problem in this regard, both parents and teachers indicated this as an area of concern. Discussions indicated that it was a complex issue and that there had to be continued education to prevent it. Responses to reports of bullying needed to be as speedy and thorough as possible.

8.2.3 Staff appraisal (review) process:

Staff expressed the opinion that this needed to be made more effective by introducing a less-structured classroom visit programme, taking the programme through from the start of the year and increased follow up from mentors regarding goal implementation.

8.2.4 Role of Council and communication with parents:

Not all parents were clear as to the role of the school's Council, particularly as it pertained to the Prep School. Discussions indicated that this was largely a communication issue and that a process around this needed to be developed.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

ISSUE	RECOMMENDED ACTION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
Safety of possessions	Further education around responsibility for possessions and respect for others' possessions. Enforce and monitor locker usage. Improve classroom daytime security. Re-evaluation of lost property system.	Head and Form teacher Form teacher Maintenance/Teachers	1 st 6 months 2015
Bullying	Re-launch anti-bullying programme using the JAG programme: teachers and pupils. Senior boys to be involved in a leadership role. Introduce anti-bullying signage to the school/re-issue policy/pledge to be considered. Workshops for parents on boys' social dynamics.	School Counsellor Head/Counsellor Counsellor/Housemasters Head/Counsellor Head/Counsellor	1 st term 2015
Staff Review	Review Prep process with whole school Staff Review Committee. Increase classroom visits and thereby the sharing of good practice among teachers. Re-assess mentor role and implement relevant changes.	Head Prep Executive Headmaster's Committee	Initiate 1 st term 2015 and assess Sept 2015
Council Communication	Disseminate information regarding Council's role to parents. Discuss communication lines between Council and Prep parent body. Investigate visibility of Council for parents.	Head/Principal/Chairman of Council Prep Head/Council Council/School Executive	1 st 6 months 2015

9. COMMENT

This process has been a very illuminating and stimulating one, both in terms of receiving feedback and analysing what happens around us on a day-to-day basis. It has enabled us to crystallise what it is that gives the school its unique character and what are the most important aspects of the education that we provide that need to be protected and emphasised going forward. Similarly the areas which need further concentration have manifested very clearly during the process and are now in sharp focus.

We wish to thank our mentor, David Shutte, for his guidance and support.

APPENDIX 1: RESULTS OF OPINION SURVEY – PREP LEARNERS

Questions	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
1. I am happy at school	42%	52%	5%	1%
	94%		6%	
2. I am making good progress	40%	58%	2%	0%
	98%		2%	
3. I am involved in school activities outside of the classroom	64%	29%	6%	1%
	93%		7%	
4. I respect my teachers	47%	51%	0%	2%
	98%		2%	
5. My teachers respect and care for me	33%	63%	3%	1%
	96%		4%	
6. My teachers encourage me to work hard	60%	38%	1%	1%
	98%		2%	
7. My teachers often complain about my work	6%	11%	51%	32%
	17%		83%	
8. Discipline is good at school	36%	57%	6%	1%
	93%		7%	
9. My possessions are safe at school	14%	38%	34%	14%
	52%		48%	
10. I feel safe and secure at school	37%	57%	6%	0%
	94%		6%	
11. I am bullied at school	1%	7%	28%	64%
	8%		92%	
12. I am satisfied with the homework I am expected to do	23%	68%	8%	1%
	91%		9%	
13. The school has high standards academically	54%	44%	2%	0%
	98%		2%	

14. The school has high standards culturally, e.g. in music, drama, art, dance etc.	47%	42%	11%	0%
	89%		11%	
15. The school satisfies my sporting needs	57%	33%	9%	1%
	90%		10%	
16. I find school work interesting	20%	67%	11%	2%
	87%		13%	
17. I am taught to make friends regardless of their skin colour, gender or disabilities	71%	26%	2%	1%
	97%		3%	
18. There are too many learners in my classes	2%	18%	58%	22%
	20%		80%	
19. I find it difficult to approach my teachers with my problems	9%	27%	47%	17%
	36%		64%	
20. The school's facilities are good	58%	35%	7%	0%
	93%		7%	
21. We have internet facilities at school	72%	26%	2%	0%
	98%		2%	
22. I am proud to be at this school	77%	22%	1%	0%
	99%		1%	
23. My parents/guardians support school events	52%	41%	6%	1%
	93%		7%	
24. I give my parents/ guardians all messages from the school	39%	51%	9%	1%
	90%		10%	

APPENDIX 2: RESULTS OF OPINION SURVEY – PREP PARENTS

Questions	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
1. My child is happy at school	54%	43%	3%	1%
	97%		3%	
2. My child is making good progress at school	47%	48%	5%	0%
	95%		5%	
3. My child is involved in school activities beyond the classroom	61%	38%	1%	0%
	99%		1%	
4. My child's attitude towards the teachers is good	55%	43%	2%	0%
	98%		2%	
5. My child's teachers treat my child fairly	44%	51%	5%	0%
	95%		5%	
6. My child is well cared for	48%	50%	2%	0%
	98%		2%	
7. The school keeps me informed of my child's progress	41%	51%	7%	1%
	92%		8%	
8. I am able to approach the teachers about my child	53%	42%	4%	1%
	95%		5%	
9. Discipline at the school is fair	33%	60%	5%	2%
	93%		7%	
10. My child's possessions are safe at school	14%	59%	21%	6%
	73%		27%	
11. My child feels safe at school	45%	52%	3%	0%
	97%		3%	
12. My child is bullied at school	2%	15%	53%	30%
	17%		83%	
13. My child is given worthwhile homework	20%	66%	12%	2%
	86%		14%	

14. The principal provides good leadership of the school	42%	48%	8%	2%
	90%		10%	
15. The school's management team performs well	36%	51%	11%	2%
	87%		13%	
16. The school's academic standards are good	38%	53%	7%	2%
	91%		9%	
17. The school has high standards culturally, eg in music, drama, art, dance, etc	59%	39%	2%	0%
	98%		2%	
18. The school satisfies my child's sporting needs	51%	39%	8%	2%
	90%		10%	
19. I feel welcome in the school	51%	43%	4%	2%
	94%		6%	
20. I understand the role of the school governing body	25%	56%	15%	4%
	81%		19%	
21. The school's facilities are good	63%	35%	2%	0%
	98%		2%	
22. I am critical of the school	2%	22%	50%	26%
	24%		76%	
23. The school does not discriminate unfairly	36%	56%	7%	1%
	92%		8%	
24. I support school events	39%	60%	1%	0%
	99%		1%	
25. The school's disciplinary processes are fair	30%	64%	4%	2%
	94%		6%	

APPENDIX 3: RESULTS OF OPINION SURVEY – PREP TEACHERS

Questions	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
1. Learners are happy at this school	63%	37%	0%	0%
	100%		0%	
2. Teachers are involved in school activities beyond the classroom	100%	0%	0%	0%
	100%		0%	
3. Learners do not have respect for teachers	0%	11%	47%	42%
	11%		89%	
4. Teachers show respect for learners	58%	42%	0%	0%
	100%		0%	
5. Learners talk to teachers about their problems	32%	63%	5%	0%
	95%		5%	
6. Teachers are accessible to parents regarding the problems of children	95%	5%	0%	0%
	100%		0%	
7. Discipline at the school is fair	47%	42%	11%	0%
	89%		11%	
8. Possessions are safe at school	0%	47%	53%	0%
	47%		53%	
9. Learners are safe at school	32%	63%	5%	0%
	95%		5%	
10. Learners are bullied at school	0%	68%	32%	0%
	68%		32%	
11. Homework set is meaningful	21%	68%	5%	6%
	89%		11%	
12. The principal provides excellent leadership to the school	68%	27%	5%	0%
	95%		5%	
13. The school's management team performs well	74%	21%	5%	0%
	95%		5%	

14. The school's academic standards are good	74%	26%	0%	0%
	100%		0%	
15. The school has high standards culturally e.g. in music, drama, art, dance, etc.	89%	11%	0%	0%
	100%		0%	
16. The school satisfies learner's sporting needs	84%	16%	0%	0%
	100%		0%	
17. Parents do not show enough support for the school	5%	0%	48%	47%
	5%		95%	
18. I understand the role of the school governing body	47%	53%	0%	0%
	100%		0%	
19. The school's facilities are good	32%	57%	11%	0%
	89%		11%	
20. Classes are too big	16%	21%	53%	10%
	37%		63%	
21. The teachers are proud to be at this school	84%	16%	0%	0%
	100%		0%	
22. The teachers do not always treat the learners fairly	0%	16%	37%	47%
	16%		84%	
23. The teachers have an appropriate say in the way the school is run	5%	84%	11%	0%
	89%		11%	
24. The teachers have opportunities for professional development	42%	53%	0%	5%
	95%		5%	
25. The teachers have opportunities for promotion in the school	5%	84%	5%	6%
	89%		11%	
26. The teacher appraisal system is effective	11%	63%	21%	5%
	74%		26%	
27. The teachers get on well with one another	74%	21%	5%	0%
	95%		5%	
28. There is no unfair discrimination at school	27%	68%	0%	5%
	95%		5%	

29. Transition between grades is managed well	53%	42%	5%	0%
	95%		5%	

APPENDIX 4: MENTOR'S REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

- **SCHOOL : Bishops Preparatory**
- **MODEL: Core**
- **DATE OF EVALUATION: 30th September 2014**
- **TEAM LEADER: Mr Greg Brown**
- **MENTOR: Mr Dave Shutte**

2. RECEPTION AND TONE

This was my first visit to Bishops and I was warmly welcomed by staff into the hurly burly of a school in the last week of term. The atmosphere throughout the school is warm and friendly and staff and boys generally reflect this ethos in their interaction with visitors.

The team under the leadership of Mr Greg Brown, the head of Preparatory School, was well prepared for the evaluation process and it was clear that internal evaluations were not new to the teachers. An information meeting had been arranged with Ms Noell Andrews and Mr Greg Brown before the intensive phase which became necessary as a result of a change of mentors.

Special mention should be made of the head boy Murray Gordon who was responsible to conduct me on a tour of the school. He was most hospitable and a fine example of a boy from Bishops.

3. RIGOUR AND EFFICIENCY OF THE EVALUATION

- **Team**
Prior to the intensive period, it was decided that the evaluations would be separate. The College, the Pre-preparatory and Preparatory schools conducted independent internal evaluations and the 3 reports would be combined into a composite final report. In consultation with Mr Greg Brown, a timetable for the intensive day was planned for me in accordance with the decisions taken at the information meeting on 1st July 2014. While the intensive day was not an ideal time in the school calendar, the school for ready for the intensive phase of the process.

The Account of Preliminary Findings prepared before the visit was clear evidence that the internal evaluation process had been done thoroughly. Professional self-improvement is part of the fabric at the school.

- **Opinion Surveys**
The opinion surveys formed the point of departure for the evaluation process. The evaluation team was successful in ensuring that opinion surveys were completed and collated in preparation for the visit. Much valuable work was done by the team based on the opinion surveys and interested groups were consulted widely to elicit opinion before and during the intensive period. There was a keen understanding that the final report would provide a crucial resource for future development of the school and ultimately the strategic plan for Bishops School as a whole.

The response by parents and teachers to the opinion surveys was enthusiastic and a comprehensive list of comments that was part of the surveys became a resource of evidence for the evaluation.

4. THE EVALUATION PROCESS

- **Teaching.** During my intensive day, I was able to visit the following:
 - ✓ Grade 7 Mathematics
 - ✓ Grade 6 English

- ✓ Grade 3 Technology
- ✓ Grade 4 Additional language – isiXhosa
- ✓ Grade 5 Art
- ✓ Grade 5 Second language – Afrikaans
- ✓ Focus group with a range of boys from grade 3 to 7
- ✓ In addition, I was grateful to Murray Gordon for his comprehensive and informative tour of the campus and to Mr Chris Groom who shared with me the considerable advantages of the Intranet and *myBishopsLife*.

The planning and preparation of lessons was detailed and effective and frequently interfaced with sophisticated electronic classroom media. Lesson planning is done on the Intranet and all teachers have access to the preparation being done across all departments. This has had the advantage of strengthening the communication between departments and improved the accountability of teachers toward each other.

From grade R through to grade 7, the school ethos is realised in every classroom – most boys understand from an early age what it means to be a Bishops boy.

- **Learning.** Learning takes place within well-resourced classrooms. I experienced a high level of mathematical enquiry among boys who were responsive to any challenge. The support and special attention given to the 4th set English learners ensured that boys were taught on an appropriate level.

I was generally impressed by the high order of responses by the boys during a range of lessons. Boys were confident without being precocious and it was clear that they felt secure with their teachers. While the support for boys requiring help was comprehensive, a formal policy could be considered for pupils requiring extension and challenge.

I was captivated during the Design and Technology lesson because it was an example of excellent cross-curricular work being done in the various grades in the prep school. A visit to the Art room provided another example of how Art Education can be successfully integrated into the wider curriculum. The well resourced computer centre formed the hub for the integration of the learning areas.

Homework diaries were well-used but I was not aware of any guidelines for teachers concerning the amount and frequency of homework.

The transition between the phases (grade 2 to grade 3) should be smooth and developmental. Existing structures that are in place should be strengthened to mitigate the effect of these grades being part of different campuses.

- **Assessment.** The progress of pupils is communicated regularly with parents in formal reports and periodic interview opportunities. While I did not have an opportunity to peruse the assessment policy, assessment seemed well-planned and regular. Control of pupils' work was generally good.
- **Safety and security.** As a result of the public road running through the campus all efforts are made to ensure a safe environment. It was my impression that security was an important issue at the school and where safety procedures needed to be tightened, they were identified by the team. The presence of security guards and the planned extension of the CCTV coverage will further improve security and lessen any petty theft.

5. ESTIMATION OF THE SUCCESS OF THE EVALUATION

Compliance

So as not to duplicate efforts, the Compliance Checklist is the responsibility of the co-ordinating mentor and the Head of the College.

Key Strengths

The evaluation team was successful in isolating the intrinsic strengths of the school. It was heartening that the IQAA process was a catalyst in bringing these to the fore.

Without repeating all the strengths that have already been identified in the report, the specialist facilities at Bishops Preparatory must be highlighted. In particular, the Technology room, the Art studio (I could have been in Paris!) and the Computer centre are teaching areas that add much value to the education at school. The excellent cross curricular work being done in these centres was a highlight of my visit.

I was enchanted during my focus group meeting with a range of boys from grade 3 to 7. Bishops boys, across the campuses were courteous, confident and articulate. Almost without exception, school life is a positive and affirming experience. The network of support structures, in addition to a range of intramural and extramural opportunities, provides a truly wide and indeed excellent education.

Means of communication are extensive and sophisticated and boys, staff and parents should know about all important information and decisions. Some teachers expressed the view that an information overload could result in boys not taking responsibility for their personal arrangements. This is a concern that could be addressed.

Areas identified for attention

The cleanliness of the toilets was good throughout the school day despite the fact that the boy to toilet ratio probably needs attention in future facility upgrades. There was an opinion expressed during the pupil focus group that senior Prep boys deserved their own exclusive toilets!

Mention has already been made of homework. A review of homework policy and practice would be a valuable exercise undertaken by teachers from all the primary phases.

6. GENERAL COMMENTS

It was a great privilege to have experienced Bishops' life during the internal evaluation process. The time spent with the boys and the staff left a lasting impression that here indeed is a quality school.

The role played by Mr Greg Brown in the evaluation process was considerable and I am grateful to him and the evaluation team. His leadership throughout the process was wise and I valued his guidance. I repeat my concluding sentence written for the Pre-Preparatory report – the same applies:

No report can do justice to the meaningful daily, interactions between teacher and boy. It is here that quality education is found, free of policy, free of procedure and straight from a caring professional heart. Bishops, you are a fine school!

7. ENDORSEMENT OF THE INTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

I am pleased to be able to endorse the findings and recommendations of the evaluation team as set out in the report of the self-evaluation process at Bishops Preparatory School. The process was openly and efficiently carried out, with the appropriate rigour.

I believe that this report is a fair and honest reflection of the activities and administration of the school.

Dave Shutte
November 2014