

WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT



REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION ON ITS OVERSIGHT VISIT TO HOEPEL HOEKIE EDUCARE AND HOLLAND EARLY LEARNING CENTRE IN PAARL

25 APRIL 2023

REPORT

The Standing Committee on Education (hereafter the Committee) having conducted oversight visits to Hoepel Hoekie Educare and Holland Early Learning Centre in Paarl on 25 April 2023, reports as follows:

The delegation

The delegation of the Standing Committee on Education included the following Members:

Baartman, DM (Chairperson of the Committee)
Christians, FC (ACDP)
Plato, D (DA)
Sayed, MK (ANC)

Apology

Fry, C (DA)

The following parliamentary official accompanied the committee:

Ms. W Hassen-Moosa, Procedural Officer

1. Overview

As part of the effort to ensure the provision of quality education and care for children in the early childhood Developmental stage, oversight visits to Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres have become part of the Committee programme. On such visits, the objective is to critically assess the learning environment, staffing, and programmes available at the centres. This report presents a detailed account of the various points covered during oversight visits to ECD centres.

2. Visit to the Hoepel Hoekie Educare in Paarl

Ms C Millier, the co-ordinator for three ECD Centres in the farming area of Paarl together with Ms Cornelius received the Committee. Prof S Naiker, the Chief Director of Inclusive Education and Special Programmes for WCED and Dr B Govender, the Deputy Director for ECD for WCED was present at the visit.

2.1. Key aspects discussed at the Educare

This oversight report provides an overview of the Hoepel Hoekie Educare (hereinafter the Centre), situated on private property at Laborance Farm. The report includes information on the registration status, facilities, staff, programmes, learners, and other relevant details. Additionally, it highlights the challenges faced by ECD Centres and makes recommendations for improvement.

According to Ms Cornelius, Hoepel Hoekie Educare is currently registered until 26 October 2023. It is registered to accommodate 20 children between the ages of 2 and 6 years old. The Centre consists of two classrooms with two staff members, a principal and a practitioner. It is important to note that the Educare is not funded by the WCED.

The centre features an open-plan area divided into several sections, including a play area, kitchen area, reading area, fantasy area, blocks and games area, and a storeroom. The educators at the centre

provide guidance and stimulation to the learners, focusing on their growth and development. The programmes offered include activities that enhance hand-eye coordination, stimulate the brain through ongoing activities, and provide additional support.

The Centre is closed for three weeks and has a total of seven learners. These learners are divided into two classrooms based on age groups: 2–5 years old and 6 months–2 years old. The Centre aims to prepare the older learners for Grades O and R, fostering their growth into active individuals. Most of the learners enrolled at the Educare come from Laborance Farm and its surrounding farms.

Hoepel Hoekie Educare organises regular outings for its learners. These outings contribute to their overall learning experience and exposure.

There is no capacity-building support from the WCED provided to the Centre at present. The Early Education Centre (TEEC) and the Social Sector Organisation (SSO) assist the Educare/ECD Centre with re-registration processes. One notable challenge mentioned is the costly and complicated process of obtaining a rezoning certificate, which varies among different municipalities.

Parents of learners attending the Centre are required to pay fees ranging from R30 to R50 per week per child. However, parents struggle to pay R50.00 per month for fees. Ms Miller indicated that there is a drop in attendance during the winter months, as most parents are seasonal workers and cannot afford proper winter clothes for their children. ECDs in the area are still recovering attendance numbers after COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms Miller indicated that there is a fee for rezoning costs, which are part of registering an ECD centre; however, the specific cost varies depending on the municipality. WCED is actively engaging with municipalities to establish a mutually agreeable resolution.

While facing challenges related to rezoning costs and support from municipalities, the centre is committed to the growth and development of its learners.

3. Visit to the Holland Early Learning Centre in Paarl

Ms S Daniels, the principal of the ECD. Prof S Naiker, the Chief Director of Inclusive Education and Special Programmes for the WCED and Dr B Govender, the Deputy Director for ECD for the WCED were present during the visit.

3.1. Key aspects discussed at the Centre

Holland Early Learning Centre follows the Early Education Centre (TEEC) programme, which is aligned with the National Early Learning Development Standards (NELDS). The principal of the Centre is trained on the National Curriculum Framework: Birth to Four Years (NCF). The facility is conditionally registered for 20 children between the ages of 2 and 6 years. Its registration certificate was issued on 8 August 2021. The Centre primarily serves learners from the shelter opposite the facility.

According to Prof. Naiker, Boland Cape College has been contracted to implement the NCF at registered and unregistered sites. Registration of sites is a key area where the Social Sector Organization (SSO) supports ECD sites to become compliant and register. TEEC serves as the contracted SSO, partnering with WCED for ECD registrations in the municipal district.

The Holland Early Learning Centre currently has one qualified practitioner serving as the Principal. WCED has advised the principal to seek additional support or staff, as managing and actively facilitating early learning development can be challenging.

WCED has contracted Boland TVET College to administer the ECD Levels 4 and 5 learnerships to practitioners at registered and unregistered ECD facilities. Training for the NCF has been provided by Boland TVET College to registered and unregistered centres since 2017.

The Holland Early Learning Centre operates within an open-plan community hall, which includes ablution areas for learners and a kitchen area. The hall is divided into sections, including a fantasy area, a library room, and a play area. The centre is fully equipped with cameras for safety and security purposes. Currently, there are 20 registered learners at the centre, but it can accommodate more. However, the number of learners and educators permitted is determined by the health and safety officer of the municipality. ECDs are still in the process of recovering attendance numbers after the impact of COVID-19.

4. Recommendations

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the WCED should:

- 4.1. Engage with municipalities to find common ground and suitable solutions for the challenges mentioned around the costly and complicated process of obtaining a rezoning certificate, which varies among different municipalities.
- 4.2. Assist ECD Centres with applying for ECD farm subsidies to assist with the shortfall of fees.
- 4.3. Continue engaging with municipalities to find suitable solutions and to provide capacity-building support to the ECD when registering.

5. Resolutions

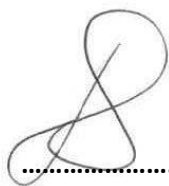
The Committee RESOLVED to engage with the Minister of Local Government to assist the committee with addressing the matter with Municipalities across the Western Cape on the issue of the costly rezoning certificate fees.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, oversight visits to ECD centres are crucial in ensuring the provision of quality education and care for learners in their early developmental stage. During such visits, the various aspects that define the quality of care offered to learners are assessed. The learning environment, staffing, programmes available, and administrative policies are among the essential factors considered. The Committee successfully concluded its oversight visits and took cognizance of the amazing work done by both centres.

6. Acknowledgments

The Committee thanked the WCED, principals, and teachers of the ECD centres visited.



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ADV DM BAARTMAN, MPP
CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT
DATE: 13 June 2023