



# LEADERSHIP FOR LITERACY

## *Case study school C(L): Raw case study notes*

### ***Name of study:***

Leadership for literacy or officially “Succeeding Against the Odds: Understanding resilience and exceptionalism in high-functioning township and rural primary schools in South Africa”.

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# C(L) Primary School

## Case Study Report

N T and G W

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### Contents

List of Tables.....	3
List of Figures.....	3
List of abbreviations .....	4
Introduction.....	5
School background and context.....	5
Language .....	7
School performance .....	8
Resources .....	10
<b>A. MATERIAL RESOURCES</b> .....	10
A3. MATERIAL RESOURCES: TEXT .....	10
A4. MATERIAL RESOURCES: TIME.....	16
<b>B. HUMAN RESOURCES</b> .....	19
B5. HUMAN RESOURCES: READING SPECIALIST .....	19
B6. HUMAN RESOURCES: PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS.....	23
<b>C. SYMBOLIC RESOURCES</b> .....	24
C7. SYMBOLIC RESOURCES: KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTION OF READING .....	24
<b>D. STRATEGIC RESOURCES</b> .....	28
D8. STRATEGIC RESOURCES: FINANCES.....	28
D9. STRATEGIC RESOURCES: READING PROGRAMMES & ASSESSMENT .....	29
D10. STRATEGIC RESOURCES: COLLABORATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT .....	30
D11. STRATEGIC RESOURCES: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP .....	32
Implications for quant study .....	35
Appendix A .....	36
Appendix B.....	37

## List of Tables

Table 1: Comparative statistics of matched pair .....	9
Table 2: Comparative performance on G6 and G3 English literacy .....	9
Table 3: Allocations for LTSM .....	10
Table 4: Readers and textbooks seen in the G3 class observed.....	11
Table 5: Writing in G3 learner books.....	12
Table 6: English readers and textbooks seen in the G6 class observed .....	12
Table 7: Writing observed in G6 learner English books .....	13
Table 8: Reading practices in Grade 3 .....	18
Table 9: Reading practices in Grade 6 (Mrs T).....	18
Table 10: When should the various reading skills be introduced? .....	24
Table 11: Estimate how many learners can read fluently with understanding .....	25
Table 12: Differences in teaching reading and maths.....	27
Table 13: Educators interviewed during quantitative visit, February 2017 .....	36
Table 14: Activities undertaken during qualitative visit, June 2017.....	37

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Typical classroom at C(L) .....	6
Figure 2: Learner enrolment at C(L) .....	7
Figure 3: The school library .....	14
Figure 4: Computer lab.....	15
Figure 5: Unopened packs of books seen in computer lab .....	15
Figure 6: Teacher laptops stored in the computer lab.....	16
Figure 7: Foundation Phase timetable .....	17
Figure 8: First lessons in Masihambisani, G1 isiZulu reader.....	21
Figure 9: School budget for 2017 .....	29

## List of abbreviations

CAPS

DP

FP

FPHOD

G3

G6

HL

IP

IPHOD            Intermediate Phase Head of Department

JM

LOLT

P

## Introduction

The school was visited by three fieldworkers for one day on 20 February 2017, as part of the quantitative survey of 61 schools. This was followed by a three-day qualitative visit by two fieldworkers over the period 12-14 June. Educators interviewed during the respective visits are listed in Table 13 and Table 14 in Appendix A.

## School background and context

- Confirm quintile of school
- Description of learner SES
- General state of school from School observation
- No. of learners and teachers
- Total school budget

C(L) is a Catholic public school on private property situated in the grounds of a large and well-maintained church, signifying an active congregation. The school celebrates its centenary in 2018.

Morning prayers are held for 10 min every morning; the principal elaborated:

*Although the department doesn't want assembly but we are a Catholic school. But this doesn't take lesson time, we start early, picking up papers, praying and lessons start at 8.*

The IPHOD explained the advantages of being affiliated to the church as follows:

*The most important thing is that we get support from the Catholic church, we are here to serve the community; they communicate with us; the Catholic school board visits us and identifies our needs and supports us. Eg building computer lab, bursaries for G7s, training educators (eg address learners and educators about bullying; give us certificates for SACE CPD points), looking after orphans, organize nurses to visit the school every year.*

C(L) is classified as a Quintile 2 school, the second poorest category. No fees are charged directly although parent contributions for various activities average around R100 per pupil over the year (see Figure 9 and accompanying text). According to the asset-based survey of learners' home backgrounds conducted by the project, C(L) serves the poorest community of all eight Case Study schools, although it is around the 25<sup>th</sup> most affluent of the 61 schools in the project population.

The school serves learners from families mostly living in KZN peri-urban area in the Pinetown district and participates in the Jika Mfundo programme, which is making an impression, as described below. Housing in the area is predominantly formal, much of it substantial, and situated on relatively large plots. The school consists of a mix of brick and mortar and pre-fab structures. While the general appearance is one of a Quintile 2 school with few facilities and low-cost structures, it is relatively well maintained: desks and chairs are available for all children, the floors of classrooms are tiled, windows are intact, electric lights operational and blackboards in good working order (see Figure 1). Books and wall decorations are few and generally rather tatty.

Figure 1: Typical classroom at C(L)



According to the principal the school has a caring attitude towards its learners. Not only are meals provided for all learners at 10am, as is the case in all Quintile 1-3 schools, but food is put aside for the many orphans to take home and, for many of them, these are the only meals they receive. The school also collects money and coordinates donations from St Thomas More and St Andrews missions so that the orphans can enjoy Christmas treats. This attitude is well captured by the DP as follows:

*I love my job, I like being with the learners. And I learn a lot from them; when I am down, they ask me what is wrong and comfort me.*

Total learner enrolment is 870 (Figure 2) and there are 22 educators in total: 17 teachers, three HODs, a Deputy Principal and the Principal. The school does not have an admin clerk, although there is an intern for 18 months, from the Elangeni college, who the P says is very helpful, assisting with general administration, and loading SASAMS data. There are 18 classrooms, of which 5 are prefabricated buildings which, judging from their condition, have been there for at least 10 years.

Class sizes, as indicated in Figure 2, progressively increase from GR and G1 (30-33) to G5-7 (48-61). The school appears to have a policy of keeping class sizes in grades R and 1 around 30, which is commendable considering the importance of these years in establishing a firm foundation. The P explains that there is an intake into G5 from neighbouring schools which end at G4: this places a burden on C(L), because the school has a higher academic standard to some of its feeder schools and is in high demand.

The greatest challenge faced by the principal is the behavior of some children:

... especially those who didn't start with us, and especially the boys. And the G7s, their behavior changes as they realise they are going to high school.

Figure 2: Learner enrolment at C(L)

GRADES	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
RA	19	14	33
B	13	18	31
C	14	16	30
1 A	17	15	32
B	17	15	32
C	15	17	32
D	14	19	33
2 A	20	26	46
B	24	25	49
3 A	21	18	39
B	14	21	35
C	16	22	38
TOTAL	204	226	430
4 A	18	20	38
B	16	20	36
C	16	21	37
5 A	32	27	59
B	33	28	61
6 A	28	29	57
B	28	30	58
7 A	19	27	46
B	24	24	48
TOTAL	214	226	440
GRAND TOT	418	452	870

## Language

- confirm language policy of school – LOLT and FAL

The LOLT in the FP is isiZulu, and in Grade 4 the LOLT switches to English. The HL of the large majority of learners is isiZulu, with a few Xhosa speakers and coloured learners who speak English. All six of the respondents who were formally interviewed spontaneously expressed

a preference for starting with English as LOLT in the FP. The question was not put directly during these interviews, but came out in the discussion in a variety of ways.

According to the P, there is:

*... some pressure from parents to go straight for English, especially in maths because many of the words are very difficult, and children don't know the words, they know the numbers in English and not isiZulu. It's a shock for them. Then, change to English in G4 is very difficult, especially for the maths teachers, who have great difficulty in transforming them to using the English words. They really need to do something about that.*

The IPHOD agreed, quite independently of the P:

*The problem with English is G4 when they switch. I wish all the LOLT is English from G1. I don't understand why they teach isiZulu. In maths especially it is a problem. We have discussed changing LOLT to English in the SGB, and written to the department to request this. The parents asked us to do it in January.*

The SGB decision mentioned above was confirmed by the DP. The FPHOD explains the cause of this feeling among parents as follows:

*They [learners] like English better. Their mothers and dads can't always speak isiZulu well, they mix English with it. Maths in home language is very difficult because they don't hear these numbers anywhere in the world; they don't use them in their normal language.*

According to the G3T:

*isiZulu is the most difficult; it doesn't excite them, unlike English, which excites them.*

Explaining the fact that her slow learners seem better at reading English than isiZulu or maths the G3T went on to say:

*All teachers complain about the same thing. We can't explain that. Maybe it's because English words are shorter, while isiZulu words are long. If it was up to me, I would say the school should adopt English as LOLT from FP: our kids struggle in G4 when they have to do all their subjects in English. Parents can then choose whether they send their children to an English or an isiZulu school.*

Supporting this view, the G6T said:

*... some teachers will find isiZulu harder; it's about having a love for the subject. ... And the idioms and proverbs which not any teacher can do. English is easier than isiZulu; need fewer words.*

## School performance

- Recap results on performance of G3 and G6 reading tests, and ANA scores.
- Identify school as High or Low performer in matched pair

C(L) is paired with C(H) Primary. Table 1 and Table 2 summarise some similarities and differences between the two schools. See Appendix B for a discussion on matching these two schools.

**Table 1: Comparative statistics of matched pair**

School	Pair type on basis of G6 Eng Lit	Pair type on basis of G3 African test results	Pair type on basis of G3 Eng test results	Median G6 Eng literacy perf. ranking out of 61 schools	Median Gr. 3 African ORF ranking out of 61 schools	Median G3 Eng ORF ranking out of 61 schools	District	LOLT	Majority language of students	QUINTILE	SES ranking*	Total enrolment
C(H)	B	U	B	5	52	2.5	Coastal	Eng	Zulu	2	12	408
C(L)	U	B	U	48	38.5	38	Inland	Zul Eng	Zulu	2	25	870

B = better performing school of the pair, U = Worse performing school

\* SES ranking at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of the asset-based survey instrument

Interestingly, although the performance of C(L) learners is inferior in many respects, it outperforms C(H) in isiZulu by a significant margin. This is an important topic in the comparative analysis of the Case Study schools, but is not explored in any detail in the present report.

**Table 2: Comparative performance on G6 and G3 English literacy**

SCHOOL	Average Grade 6 performance, English								G3 English
	Percentage			Marks					Percentage
	FEF (entire class)	GTM (entire class)	ORAL COMPREHENSION (sample of class)	FEF (entire class) Max possible mark = 16	GTM (entire class) Max possible mark = 17	VOCAB (entire class) Max possible mark = 72	ORAL READING FLUENCY WCPM (sample of class)	ORAL COM-PREHENSION (Max 16)	% of Gr3 sample that are reading at slower than 40 WCPM in Eng (about 10 tested per school)
C(H)	41%	36%	31%	6.5	6.1	9.3	82.8	2.5	38%
C(L)	26%	19%	36%	4.2	3.3	4.2	66.1	2.9	80%
<b>ALL 61 SCHOOLS</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>81.1</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>75%</b>

Key: FEF – Fly Eagle Fly; GTM – Giant Tooth Mystery. These are written comprehension exercises taken from PIRLS.

When asked to explain the poor English reading scores in G3, the DP explained:

*... its because they do a lot of Zulu, and only start reading in English sentences in G3. That is why we want [to] use [English] in all subjects in the FP.*

## Resources

Use all available data sources to answer guiding questions in sections below. Bear in mind the following inter-relationships:

Presence of resource → management of resource → use of resource

### A. MATERIAL RESOURCES

#### A3. MATERIAL RESOURCES: TEXT

**Indicators of text:** Language availability; Quantity; Quality; variety; Use; library quality

#### Key Questions:

- Are there sufficient resources, especially books, to make a programme of reading feasible? Sufficient refers to language range, graded reader range, variety.
- Are the texts utilized?
- Are there clear management practices in place for procurement of texts – is it clear who is in charge of these processes?
- Do procurement practices differ between FP and IP?
- Do allocation and distribution of resources differ between HL and FAL?

#### Textbooks and Stationery

##### Procurement

The school is given an allocation for LTSM from the KZN DOE. This is based on learner numbers and the school's Quintile ranking, and comes to a total of R727 626 (see section D8 below for a full discussion of the school budget). The allocation comes with the specification that 60% is spent on LTSM, of which 40% (R174 630) is for textbooks, 30% (R130 972) for stationery and 30% for 'other LTSM' (Table 3). This leaves R291 050 for non-LTSM expenditure such as utilities, telephone and day-to-day school maintenance.

Table 3: Allocations for LTSM

	Total	LTSM	Textbooks	Stationery	Other LTSM
Percent	100%	60%	40% of 60%	30% of 60%	30% of 60%
Amount (R)	727 626	436 575	174 630	130 972	130 972

While the school chooses which books to buy and what top-ups are needed each year, the department procures all LTSM. The P is not satisfied with this situation and would prefer to go back to direct procurement, which used to be the case in the past:

*We are not happy with the stationery, because they only bring a few exercise books; when they gave us the allocation we could buy more. And we included teachers' resources, but we don't get that now. They just bring one pack for each learner, and when extra children come during the year they don't get.*

There was agreement by members of the SMT interviewed that teachers participate in the selection of books. The process is coordinated first by phase committees and then by a school-level LTSM committee, which distributes the budget by phase. The department then supplies according to the school request, a system which works well according to the DP.

The P notes that a considerable sum is spent on photocopying (R60 000 for ink, paper and cartridges and R3 000 for ‘coping’ (copying?) services; see Figure 9), particularly in the FP, where full sets of workbooks in all subjects are available for Grades 1-3, while in GR there are no workbooks; assessment tasks also require photocopying.

### Grade 3

In the G3 class visited a total of 247 readers and textbooks were available for learners to read or work from (Table 4). In addition, each child had a copy of a DBE workbook in both EFAL and isiZulu. A number of Jika Mfundo information booklets were also seen in the shelves.

Table 4: Readers and textbooks seen in the G3 class observed

Language	Name	No copies	Description
isiZulu	Vula Bula reading series	120	4 levels, with A and B series in each level; each level consists of 4 stories
	Izingamu Zonyaka	20	Collection of literature of various genres
English	New Heights - Oxford	Youth – 60 Eyes – 20 King of the Street – 1 Sally’s New bike – 2 Too Small – 2 Solutions - 2	
	Successful English - Oxford	15	Textbook containing a range of comprehension and grammar exercises
	Big Books	5	

According to both the G3T and the FPHOD, the Vula Bula series and the Oxford readers were supplied by the Jika Mfundo project. The teacher said that before the school joined Jika Mfundo, they used the Shuter and Shuter reading series, although these were nowhere in evidence in the classroom during our visit; they may have been in the library. She said that children find Vula Bula exciting and easy to read, although the B2 readers are missing from her set. However, the Oxford readers are a ‘headache’: she thinks they are intended for English HL readers and are more suitable for G4 learners; she wants to order a different series.

For phonics, the teacher uses the Jika Mfundo programme in both HL and EFAL. This includes lesson plans and a disc, although the latter is only in English. She said that she uses all the literature shown in Table 4, and she also sources information from the internet, but relies on the DBE workbooks most frequently:

*... they love them because they are so colourful; even Jika Mfundo instructs us to use the workbook every day. Its good, but it shows a lot of stuff which we, the black nation, are not familiar with. They are not interested in animals under the sea: an octopus, really! But transport they like: they have seen aeroplanes and these excite them. N goes to visit grandmother’s farm: they love that.*

The FPHOD agreed that the DBE workbooks are very useful: ... *because it is clear with the pictures*. Initially they did not find them easy to use, but:

*... Jika Mfundo clarified everything. The trackers tell you which page to do for each lesson. They empower HODs and one teacher to facilitate workshops at school. I am able to do that, but we don't have enough time to cover the programme for every day that JM gives us, it's impossible. I would still use their lesson plans and trackers if JM went away: they cover a lot of concepts every day, and sometimes you can't do everything. With JM we now cover all topics: it makes it clearer; we weren't aware of all the details from the CAPS documents.*

When asked how many readers a FP learner should read in a week, the FPHOD thought around 2 or 3 for G2 learners and around 8 in HL but fewer in EFAL. However, she conceded that the school has insufficient quantities for these targets to be met. She also said that classroom libraries contain too few books overall and that the school is trying to increase its book stock.

An examination of the exercise books and DBE workbooks of one G3 learner in the class observed indicate that learners are doing insufficient writing in general, and too little extended writing in particular (Table 5).

**Table 5: Writing in G3 learner books**

<b>Book</b>	<b>isiZulu</b>	<b>English FAL</b>	<b>Comment</b>
DBE workbook No. pages (extended writing)	59 (6)	62 (2)	In both cases the teacher was selective, not doing all exercises, and a number of the structured extended writing exercises were omitted.
<b>Exercise books</b> No. dates on which writing occurred (extended writing)	Spelling: 10 (0) Exercise: 20 (3)	Spelling: 9 (0) Exercise: 19 (0)	The 3 pieces of extended writing in the isiZulu book consist of 21, 5 and 9 lines, respectively

## Grade 6

Apart from the DBE workbooks, few books were seen in the G6 classroom visited (Table 6).

**Table 6: English readers and textbooks seen in the G6 class observed**

<b>Name</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Description</b>
Top Class (Shuter and Shuter)	90	Textbook containing a variety of comprehension and grammar exercises
Chatroom Trap The Story of Football The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Green Apricots Blue Jeans	5	Novellas
Assorted textbooks in Social Science, Maths and Science		
The classroom contained no reading corner.		

According to the G6T she uses the DBE workbooks and worksheets which she constructs most frequently, the latter to fill gaps where she thinks learners require more work:

*Because I can give them work where I think they are lacking, and they can do it at home. They don't take the textbooks home, because they share, and they don't take care of the books, and they only want to work with new ones. They have their own DBE workbook and they take them home. They are good: it links with the textbook we are using, and the activities are at the level of the children. And the children can write in them.*

She would like to have a novel to study because she thinks learners would find it interesting:

*... because they listen to stories and watch the soap operas, and reading a novel would be interesting for them.*

While there is library, this is not of much use to her:

*There is a library, but there is a lack of space, and very few isiZulu books. It's in a room, but they can only go there for certain tasks and then we have to ask the teacher responsible to be there. We need a space dedicated as a library. The teacher has [a] full teaching load, but she has attended workshops by ELETS and we can say she is a librarian.*

Despite the lack of reading material, or perhaps to make up for this shortage, the G6T does a lot of writing with her classes (Table 7).

**Table 7: Writing observed in G6 learner English books**

<b>Book</b>	<b>No of days on which writing occurred</b>	<b>No of extended writing pieces</b>	<b>Comment</b>
DBE workbook	77	6, all 5 sentences or longer, the longest 11 sentences	Omitted two of the main writing exercise on pp 74 and 80
Exercise book	53 days (covering 63 pages)	3 extended pieces	No corrections, despite many errors, no comments on mistakes by teacher
Creative writing	42 days	17 extended pieces	
Assessment book	7 tests + 4 rubrics	None	Tests are very short. Rubrics contain only ticks against skills listed; hard to see how these were derived

### **Library**

Mrs M, who has a full load as SPHOD and teaching maths to G7, is recognized as the school librarian. Although a classroom has been allocated to the library it is in a very early stage of development and contains very few books (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The school library



Mrs M has attended library training courses, offered by the NGO ELET, on three occasions, in 2004, 2007 and 2017. This included how to run a school library, how to display books, and how to select and classify them. This was organized by the other Mrs M from the department.

Apart from the fact that the library is currently extremely poorly equipped, because of Mrs M's teaching load other teachers and learners are unable to access this facility except by special arrangement. According to Mrs M, a volunteer through the church, used to assist in the years 2007-12 with classifying books (red for books suitable for SP learners, blue for IP and yellow for FP). She also showed teachers how to use books for story reading and silent reading. Mrs M was receptive to the suggestion from fieldworkers that the church be persuaded to adopt the library as a project, and undertook to take it up.

#### *Electronic Resources*

The school has a computer lab with 20 stations for learners (Figure 4), data projector and portable screen. According to the P, teachers run the computer lab, but there is a need for a full-time lab assistant.

Figure 4: Computer lab



An inspection of the computer lab suggested that it is seldom if ever used by learners. This was indicated by the fact that the tables carrying the computer stations were pushed together, as shown in Figure 4, and the room was used as a storeroom for a mobile science lab and food (middle and left foreground of Figure 4), books and an assortment of boxes. Unopened packs of textbooks were seen on one of the tables (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Unopened packs of books seen in computer lab



The P also spoke about an e-book allocation (R35 000; see Figure 9), which is being planned. These materials are in the process of being procured and a service provider is coming to

train teachers. The school has procured laptops for all teachers, also stored in the computer lab, and supplied them with email addresses; a process facilitated by the district. During the inspection of the lab, the intern and three teachers were working on their laptops, while another was photocopying material.

**Figure 6: Teacher laptops stored in the computer lab**



#### **A4. MATERIAL RESOURCES: TIME**

**Indicators of time:** time-table slots for reading; actual reading time; format of reading time.

**Key Questions:**

- Is time structured in a way that provides clear allocation for reading instruction with detailed formats for teaching reading?
- Is this time used?
- Is time allocated for reading sufficient for grade? How does it compare to curriculum expectations?
- Is there any monitoring of time spent on reading?

The FP timetable is shown in Figure 7. The total times for each of the four subjects for G3 (Home language – HL, Life skills – LS, maths – MAT, and First Additional Language – FAL) are all in accordance with CAPS requirements.

Figure 7: Foundation Phase timetable

TIME	FOUNDATION PHASE COMPOSITE TIMETABLE 20													
	10min	15min	15min	30min	30min	30min	30min	30min	30min	30min	30min	30min	30min	30min
MON	1	HL	HL	MAT	HL	MAT		MAT	HL	LS	LS	LS	LS	MAT
	2	LS	SR	WC	GR	TG		GT	Phonic	CA	Book	PE	PE	GT
	3	HL	HL	MAT	HL	MAT		GT	HL	LS	LS	LS	LS	MAT
TUES	1	HL	HL	FAL	MAT	LS		HL	HL	MAT	LS	LS	LS	MAT
	2	Phonic	LS	LS	GT	CA		GT	HW	GT	Perk	PE	WC	
	3	HL	HL	FAL	MAT	CA		GT	HL	MAT	LS	LS	LS	MAT
WED	1	HL	HL	FAL	LS	HL		MAT	MAT	MAT	HL	LS	HL	
	2	SR	HW	Writ.	Book	Phonic		WC	GT	GT	GT	PE	LS	
	3	HL	HL	FAL	Book	Phonic		WC	GT	GT	GT	PE	LS	
THURS	1	HL	HL	FAL	MAT	MAT		HL	HL	MAT	FAL	LS	LS	
	2	SR	SR	LS	GT	GT		GR	Writ.	GT	LS	PE	MAT	
	3	HL	HL	FAL	GT	LS		HL	FAL	HL	FAL	LS	LS	
FRI	1	HL	R&P	GR	LS	CA		GR	LS	HW	Book	LS	PE	
	2	HL	HL	HL	MAT	CA		FAL	HL	LS	MAT	LS	CA	
	3	HL	HL	HL	MAT	LS		R&P	GR	Perk	MAT	LS	CA	
		6 HRS	7 HRS	FAL 3 HRS	4 HRS	HL 7 HRS		MAT 7 HRS		TOT 142-23 HRS				

The G3T and G6T were asked about time spent on the various components of reading, as well as their own reading practices, and their responses are recorded in Table 8 and Table 9. There is a significant difference in time which one Grade 3 teacher claims to spend on reading activity over a week (Table 8), indicating poor instructional leadership in regard to reading. It also signals a missed opportunity for teachers to share practices. Interestingly, the Grade 3 teacher who practiced reading most frequently did so for 540min every week, which also compares favourably by the 405min claimed by the Grade 6 teacher (Table 9).

Table 8: Reading practices in Grade 3

Teacher	Activity	Last week, how many DAYS did you spend time on	Last week, how many MINUTES PER DAY did you spend on	Total time in MINUTES for	Last week, how much time was set aside for students to read?	Which of the following do you mostly read?	Approximately, how many books are there in your home?
Ms M	Phonics	4	15	60	More than 60 mins	Newspapers, online new, magazine, Bible	25-100
	Shared reading	5	20	100			
	Guided Group Reading	4	7	28			
	Reading in English	4	15	60			
	Phonics in English	4	10	40			
Ms N	Phonics	4	30	120	More than 60 mins	Newspapers, Bible	More than 100
	Shared reading	4	15	60			
	Guided Group Reading	3	30	120			
	Reading in English	3	30	120			
	Phonics in English	3	30	120			

Table 9: Reading practices in Grade 6 (Mrs T)

	Last week, how many DAYS did you spend time on	Last week, how many MINUTES did you spend on	Total time in MINUTES	Last week, how much time was set aside for students to read?	Which of the following do you mostly read?	Approximately, how many books are there in your home?
Reading with the whole class (shared reading)	5	45	225	More than 60 mins.	Novels, newspapers, online news, Bible	Very few
Group guided reading/individual reading	1	60	60			
Allowing student independent reading	1	60	60			
Comprehension passages and questions	1	60	60			

## B. HUMAN RESOURCES

### B5. HUMAN RESOURCES: READING SPECIALIST

**Indicators:** identification of reading specialist; recruitment of teachers

**Key Questions:**

- Is the management and structuring of staff in the school in any way related to the promotion of reading instruction?
- Is there a reading specialist that everyone can identify in the school or at each grade?
- How much autonomy is exercised in recruitment of teachers?
- Are teachers identified, recruited or deployed based on specialized skills?

#### *Staff selection*

When asked about how HODs are selected, the P began by insisting that, although the standard procedure is generally followed, SC(L) is different in that an attempt is made to recruit or promote educators who exhibit leadership qualities:

*They apply, send CVs to district. The SGB chooses interviewing committee, can coopt someone from outside to assist; the Church has a representative. The selection committee reads all CVs, scores them, and discusses their expectations. We select 5 candidates for interviews and give them 5 questions related to curriculum and education. It's a good system because we select the best candidate, unlike other schools where excess teachers are deployed to schools. We are really working here, there is no time to waste and other teachers find it difficult to adjust when they come from schools which are not hard working like us.*

Questioned about the role of the union, the Principal said that, while the views of union representatives are respected, the school selects educators according to merit:

*We tell the union that we, the interviewing committee, will decide. [The] union is there to observe, not to select. We can take your opinion, but we make the decision. You must have a strong interviewing committee; you have to select people who are good, are educated and know the laws. We even select our teachers like this.*

However, the Principal soon concedes that in reality these procedures are not followed entirely, if at all:

*The department does try to deploy excess teachers and I have to take them. I'm not happy with that system: they come with a letter to say they must start at your school, so you don't have a choice. They deployed a high school teacher to a post in Grade 1. I have now put her in G3, and I'm complaining to the Circuit Manager.*

#### *Presence of a reading specialist*

##### **Foundation Phase**

Two of the three educators asked about the best reading teacher in the FP agreed that it is Mrs M. According to the DP:

*They are all good, but the one who is able to work with slow learners is Mrs M; she has a talent for it. She helps the others; they take their weak readers to her and after a week they are able to do something. I don't know what it is that she does, maybe it's her approach.*

The FPHOD agreed, adding that Mrs M is quick to identify reading problems, although how she developed this skill is a mystery to the HOD.

According to the G3T, her HOD is the person to turn to when she is struggling with a particular child:

*... she comes for class visits and then she'll assist you with certain strategies. For example, when I came to the school, I really struggled with isiZulu phonics, so she advised me to split the word, and that worked. We also have unannounced visits, but she will come on request.*

In addition, the G3T works closely with her G3 colleague:

*I am confident. I also work with the other G3 teacher. Right now, we are doing assessment, and we have to do a common grade assessment, so we have to work together. For my grade on Thursday we have an extra class for learners who are struggling, and the two of us meet to discuss how we are doing in keeping up with Jika Mfundo, and how we can catch up if we're falling behind. Most days we talk informally about where we are and how we're doing.*

One wonders what these teachers talk about when they have the meetings cited here, because, as we have shown, the one teacher claims to undertake reading activities with her class nearly twice as often as the peer she claims to interact with on curriculum matters.

### **Intermediate Phase isiZulu**

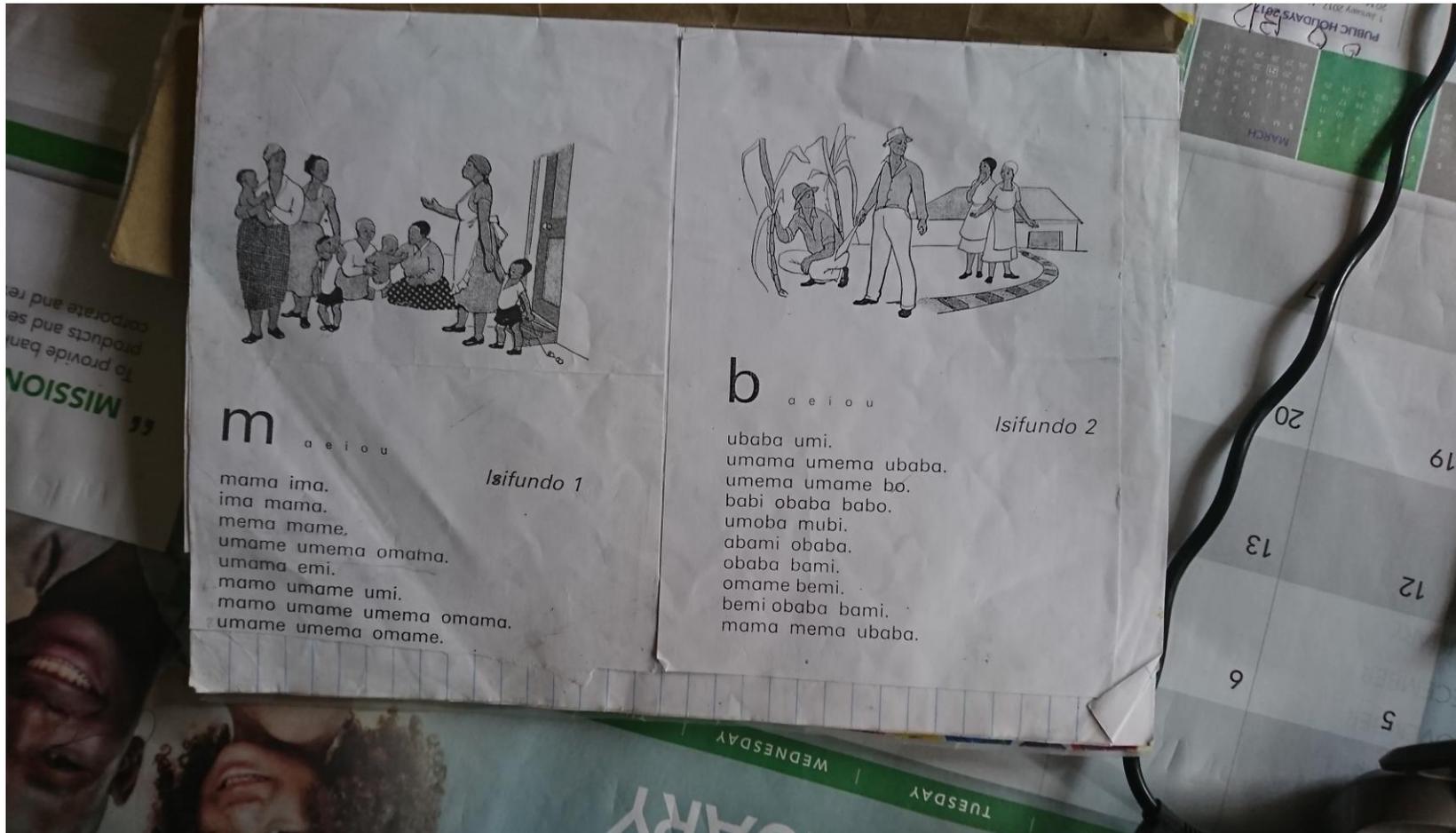
The case of Mrs M illustrates both the endemic systemic features which inhibit reading in most Quintile 1-3 schools, and something most idiosyncratic, a teacher seen by her peers as highly skilled in reading instruction in isiZulu. Three points emerge from the work of Mrs Mk at C(L). The first is that all educators (DP, IPHOD, G6T) who were asked who the best teacher at teaching reading in isiZulu in the IP is agreed that Mrs M is the school expert. From the explanation given by G6T it is clear not only that Mrs M is the undisputed expert, but that her peers also understand Mrs M method:

*... she is very good at identifying the problems weak learners have. She starts with the sounds they learn in earlier grades, and two-syllable words. It would be good to have someone who could do that fulltime. There is a period for them to come to her, and she tries to be early in the morning and gives extra classes.*

This is Mrs M's 33<sup>rd</sup> year of teaching, having taught every grade in the primary school except Grade 1. She started at C(L) in 2011:

*I found a lot lacking in reading isiZulu: in G6 I found half the class not reading. I started with those struggling, using the G1 book (Masihambisani, see Figure 8), I started with the first sounds; when they got to G7 the teachers were so happy. After management saw that this had made a difference, they asked me to do the isiZulu reading in the other grades.*

Figure 8: First lessons in Masihambisani, G1 isiZulu reader



Currently she teaches isiZulu and maths to Grade 4. She said she has 56 Grade 4 learners in her isiZulu class, a figure that is difficult to square with the enrolment numbers shown on the Principal's wall (Figure 2), which lists three Grade 4 classes of 38, 36 and 37 learners. It is possible that the total number of learners (111) has been divided into two classes of 55 and 56.

When Mrs M heard that we wanted to talk to her about how she goes about teaching slower learners in the school to read their mother tongue, she dashed off to collect the 'evidence' (as she put it) for her exposition: a child's exercise book and reconstructed copy of *Masihambisani* which consists of photocopied pages pasted into an exercise book. At the beginning of the year there were 13 who could not read any isiZulu, so she gave them special attention. Currently she is still providing remedial reading exercises to 7 pupils, seemingly having given up on the other 6:

*I try this intervention, but some still don't learn. I ask the parents but they can't help. But there are those who go hand in hand with me.*

The second point of interest arising from Mrs M's remedial work is that her method is clearly based on a phonemic approach which was practiced in the past but is now discredited. Regarding the struggling learners who are making progress, she describes this method as follows:

*I took them aside and give them the G1 book, working through each sound in turn. Now when I dictate the words containing the sound and they get them, then we move on, one sound at a time. I even make up my own words with the sounds.*

Every Friday she gives her learners a short test, dictating 10 words learnt during the week, which learners are required to write down. After sufficient progress has been made with sounds and words, she starts building sentences with them. One exercise in this regard is a cloze task, where a list of words is provided, from which learners are required to choose the correct word to fit into a blank space in a short sentence.

The third and perhaps most important point to emerge from an analysis of Mrs M's case is how she acquired her skills in reading instruction. When asked about this, she was clear that she had not learnt them at either the Nduzuma College, where she did a Primary Teachers Certificate on leaving school (in the early-eighties) or at Umlazi College, where she studied part-time for a Senior Primary Teachers Diploma:

*[I] can't remember what they taught us about reading there. [I] started teaching in 1984 and found the *Masihambisani* book. There was a time when they told us not to use *Masihambisani*, but I always kept mine, and make copies for my learners. I can see that it helps a lot.*

*I can't say [where I learnt these skills], I was just concerned. I taught many years in the FP and I could see that if I do this, maybe they will understand. I learnt that from Mrs T's [the IP HOD at St C] mom, who was my previous teacher. I learnt how to write a story involving all these sounds.*

It seems that Mrs M's pedagogy stems from her own primary schooling combined with classroom trial and error, honed through three decades of classroom experience. And while both the teacher education she received and the 'support' provided by her instructional leaders outside the school have tried but failed to undermine this method in her case, she has never been offered any alternative. If this is true then it is a very telling observation regarding the current state of reading instruction in the school system.

## **B6. HUMAN RESOURCES: PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

**Indicators:** level of qualifications; institutions studied

### **Key Questions:**

- Do the levels of qualifications of principals and HODs suggest requisite expertise to manage reading instruction in the school?
- Do the levels of qualifications of teachers, and the institutions at which they studied, suggest requisite expertise to teach reading?

According to Table 14 all educators interviewed are suitably qualified for primary school teaching, and therefore should have the requisite expertise to teach reading. However, as the case of Mrs M illustrates, qualifications do not necessarily indicate expertise. There is clearly a crisis regarding reading instruction, with the old methods having been discredited and no new approach being offered in its place.

Nevertheless, the DP is confident that all G3 and G6 teachers have been formally trained for the phase and subjects they are teaching, even though learners and teachers struggle to adapt to the changeover in LOLT in G4. She quotes the fact that a few learners go on to enter Model C schools as a sign of the excellent education offered by C(L):

*But our children shine in Hillcrest when they go there in G7. Most of our children go to Hillcrest; a company (BMS) chooses 2 children a year for bursaries to Hillcrest. Our children excel everywhere they go. Because of the dedication, hard work and team spirit of teachers; teachers must identify weaknesses and call people to help us.*

Interestingly, the three most senior educators – P, DP and IP HOD – all studied BEd (Hons) in Ed Psych at NWU. According to the DP, the purpose was to learn how about the assessment and remediation of learners with learning barriers. The IP HOD explained they found out about this course during a seminar held for all SMTs by the district; she enrolled for the programme:

*... because of the challenge we face at the school, and to learn how we can help learners. Very helpful, and I wish I could do Masters, but it's very expensive.*

**What is the greatest challenge you face in this school?** Ms N: Lack of parental involvement in their children's education; Learners; lack of interest. Ms M: Curriculum standards are high for EFAL.

**What do you like most about teaching at the school?** Ms N: Staff development and support from the SMT. Teachers helping each other with challenges. Ms M: I love kids who are eager to learn.

## C. SYMBOLIC RESOURCES

### C7. SYMBOLIC RESOURCES: KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTION OF READING

**Indicators:** understanding reading instruction; promotion of literacy in the school; awards/competitions?

**Key Questions:**

- Is there a culture of reading in the school, deriving from an importance placed on reading and on staff's own reading practices and expertise?
- Is expertise in reading available in the school reflected in understandings of structuring reading curricula and scaffolding reading instruction across grades?
- Are there any incentives offered to learners to read?
- What is the broad understanding of reading instruction in the school? How shared and coherent is this understanding?

#### *Is there a school-wide shared understanding of how to approach reading?*

Five educators were asked when each of the reading skills listed in Table 10 should be introduced to learners. There were wide discrepancies, revealing the absence of a common understanding within the school concerning the sequencing of reading skills. Interestingly, there is more agreement between the two teachers and the FPHOD than between this group and the IPHOD and DP, while neither group tracked particularly closely to the expectations of the curriculum (Cor Ans in Table 10).

**Table 10: When should the various reading skills be introduced?**

<b>At which grade <i>should</i> the following reading skills be introduced</b>	<b>Cor Ans</b>	<b>DP</b>	<b>IP HOD</b>	<b>G6T</b>	<b>FP HOD</b>	<b>G3T</b>
Knowing letters of the alphabet	R	1	R	R	1	R
Knowing letter-sound relationships	R	1	1	1	2	1
Reading words	R-1	1	1	1	1-2	R-1
Reading isolated sentences	1	1	1	1	2	2
Reading connected text	1	1	2	3	2	3
Identifying the main idea in the text	1	1	3	3	3	3
Locating information within the text	1	1	4	3	2-3	3
Comparing a text with personal experience	1	1	5-6	3	3	3
Making predictions about what will happen next in a text	4→	1	6-7	3	3	3
Making generalisations and drawing inferences based on a text	4→	2	7	3	3	3
Describing the style or structure of a text	4→	5-7	7	6	3	3
Determining the author's perspective or intention	7→	7	7	6	4	3

#### *Is there a shared understanding of how learners are progressing with reading?*

There was better agreement between teachers and their HODs in response to the question: *Approximately how many children in Grade 6 can read fluently with understanding?* The answers, summarized in Table 11, indicate that children's reading skills in isiZulu are regarded as being superior to those in English.

Table 11: Estimate how many learners can read fluently with understanding

Grade	Educator	isiZulu	EFAL	How do you know?
G3	FPHOD	75	50-60	I sit with educators in class, and I see the children reading. They like English better. Their mothers and dads can't always speak Z well, they mix English with it. Maths in HL is very difficult because they don't hear these numbers anywhere in the world; they don't use them in their normal language.
	G3T	85	40	In English they can read but not understand what is happening. Ask them questions
G6	IPHOD	90	60	Very stressing question; since I've introduced methods of spelling to sentence to paragraph. Most can read but they cannot write. I use the assessment rubric, from CAPS, teachers guide and Jika Mfundo: Pace, pronunciation, fluency, reading with expression
	G6T	70	N/A (she teaches isiZulu)	Because of the help of Mrs M, there are very few who are struggling. I know this, because we do a lot of reading, and they have to do it individually. We also do assessment of reading comprehension, which shows whether they have understanding.

The ubiquitous explanation for the differences in reading proficiency between two languages is that English receives far less attention in the curriculum than isiZulu. The same explanation was offered to explain the results of the test conducted by *Succeeding Against the Odds* in February, which revealed relatively good isiZulu scores and very poor scores in English. This was one of the topics which prompted educators to express a strong wish to change the LOLT in the FP to English, as discussed above.

#### *Is a culture of reading promoted within the school?*

When asked about the extent to which the school promotes a culture of reading, the most common response by interviewees was to point to activities such as reading in assembly and participation in Spelling Bees and other intra- and inter-school competitions.

The P elaborates:

*In the spelling competition last year two of our learners are among the top 4 in the district... Won R50 00 from Jika Mfundo to improve our computer lab; .... [there are] awards for teachers: every year we select those that did very well: we give them certificates, and R500 for the best teacher. The SMT decides, and gets the views of teachers. We select teachers who go out of their way to do well, arrive at school early and go the extra mile, using their own time. Also, each class selects 5 learners who stand out in academics, extramural activities, neatness and behavior.*

The IPHOD also pointed to reading activities built into the weekly timetable:

*... read for 30 minutes before assembly from 7 to 7.30. Most kids are here at that time so we keep them busy with reading. Also, a reading period of one hour per week. Give the learners*

80 words a week to learn; spelling, meaning – we use dictionaries – comprehension, and use them in creative writing.

### *Is there a difference between teaching reading and teaching maths*

Questions to respondents on their views regarding the difference between teaching reading and maths were designed to test the following hypothesis:

*The predominant view of the difference between teaching reading and maths is that anyone can teach reading, without training, because reading is a natural extension of speaking, whereas maths is a specialized discipline, and hence requires explicit training.*

Five respondents were asked whether they think anyone can teach reading and maths. The evidence is detailed in Table 12, and the results give strong support to the hypothesis. 3.5/5 respondents said that teaching maths requires specialist training; one demurred, while the one ambiguous voice said that it doesn't matter before G4, but after that it does. This is a clear majority in favour of that part of the hypothesis which relates to maths teaching. As the IPHOD explained:

*Maths needs someone who specializes in it and loves it. Reading you focus on drilling spelling, etc, but maths needs understanding.*

This quote reflects the view that literacy driven by habit and taught by stimulus/response; it lacks a cognitive dimension. Maths on the other hand is viewed as a discipline requiring explicit education and 'understanding'.

4/5 respondents said anyone can teach reading, as expressed by G6T:

*Reading is language, something that we do when we wake up, so even if the person is not good, he can speak, and teaching reading is like speaking.*

Table 12: Differences in teaching reading and maths

Question	DP	IPHOD	G6T	FPHOD	G3T
Can anyone teach maths?	No	No	Yes: up to G4, but after that you need specialist training	No	Yes
Can anyone teach reading?	No: it depends how you like the subject. Some ask others to develop them.	Yes	Yes: depending on whether you can read! But some teachers will find isiZulu harder; it's about having a love for the subject.	Yes	Yes
What is the difference?	Maybe in maths it is terminology that confuses people. If they understand the terminology they can teach. But some teachers don't want to teach maths, so there are more workshops and materials.	Maths needs someone who specializes in it and loves it. Reading you focus on drilling spelling, etc, but maths needs understanding.	It depends on what you are dealing with. Long division has many steps.	Reading is language, something that we do when we wake up, so even if the person is not good, he can speak, and teaching reading is like speaking.	No difference. All ts can do both because learners come to G3 knowing how to count and read.

## D. STRATEGIC RESOURCES

### D8. STRATEGIC RESOURCES: FINANCES

**Indicators:** budget income and expenses

**Key Questions:**

- Is there any indication that budget is used strategically for reading and reading instruction?
- What takes up biggest proportion of budget expenditure?
- Does budget reflect a pro-active management or one that is limited to recommended departmental provisions and allocations?
- How much of the budget is spent on books?

The school's total allocation from the KZN DOE for the year 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018 is R727 626. The grant comes with the specification that 60% is spent on LTSM, of which 40% is for textbooks, 30% for stationery and 30% for 'other LTSM'. The remaining 40% of the total allocation (R291 084) is for repairs and maintenance, office furniture, consumable items, domestic and security services. The school budget for 2017 is shown in Figure 9, which does not show the amount allocated for LTSM, as this is not paid to the school. It does show the 40% of departmental allocation which is transferred.

In addition to the departmental grant, the school undertakes a number of fundraising activities to pay for items like a security guard, which the department does not pay for security. According to the principal around R1700 is raised every Friday when children contribute R3 for the privilege of wearing 'civies'. Selling food is another regular fundraising activity, although the amounts brought in vary from a high of R400 on Monday, diminishing over the week as learners' money run out. Other activities include a dance competition, a Miss C(L) pageant and the Miss N event, which is an opportunity for learner to display their cultural dress and habits.

Figure 9: School budget for 2017

Expected Income	Amount		Expected Expenditure	Amount	
Standard and Norms	R291084	00	Electricity	R35 000	00
Parents donation	R68000	00	Water	R35 000	00
Fundraising	R22400	00	Telephone Bill	R8 000	00
			Post Box	R2000	00
			Audit Fee	R2000	00
			Coping Service	R3000	00
			Bank Charges	R13584	00
			Repairs and maintenance	R30000	00
			Plumbing and Repairs	R10 000	00
			Cleaning material	R5000	00
			Affiliation	R3000	00
			Transport	R5000	00
			Rental	R1 000	00
			Disinfectant	R18 000	00
			Ink Paper & Cartridge	R 60000	00
			Furniture	R10 000	00
			First Aid Refill	R500	00
			Workshops	3000	00
			Office Stationary	R5 000	00
			Sports Equipment	R5 000	00
			Cleaning Equipment	R5 000	00
			School function	R3 000	00
			E book programme	R35000	00
			Cleaning Service and Supply	R52000	00
			Security Service and Supply	R20400	00
			Administration service and supply	R18000	00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>381484</b>	<b>00</b>		<b>R381484</b>	<b>00</b>

#### D9. STRATEGIC RESOURCES: READING PROGRAMMES & ASSESSMENT

**Indicators:** Reading assessment practices, reading specific programmes,

**Key Questions:**

- Are there programmes and practices in the school that are geared towards the improvement of reading instruction and outcomes?
- What is the nature and duration of these programmes?
- How is reading assessed in the school?
- Are assessment results used for further interventions?

**Are there programmes and practices geared towards improving reading instruction?**

According to the DP each teacher has targets:

*... we look where learners are lacking: reading, writing. And we develop those aspects that are weak: we have programmes like reading in assembly. They use a book for each level and when the learners achieve that they move to the next level.*

The G6T corroborates this assertion:

*Every year teachers must give us the targets for each term. At the end of the term we look at how we are going to reach the targets for the term if we did not reach it. We are working to 80% in every subject.*

The G3T explains how she works with weaker readers:

*[I] have a reading corner: these are usually the smart kids. For the weaker ones I have created a memory book, which kids take home and stick something in which they have read, or write down what happened on the weekend. Which is a way of making them read. ... On Friday our kids don't come to school. I have arranged some activities for Fridays, and now more of them come: after break we do practical work, like drawing, drama, cooking, painting. Normally I try to gain their confidence before we start. I make them read words together. Then I ask someone to go and take a word, and then the class must nominate someone to take a word, and the class gets excited.*

### ***Is there a common approach to the assessment of reading in the school?***

On the question as to whether the school uses standardized formal assessments tools to test the reading ability of all students, the IPHOD said that the district office issued common tests in maths and English at G3 and G6 levels in September, which schools can choose to write. C(L) uses these tests after their September exams, because they arrive late. These are marked internally and the quality is highly variable:

*... sometimes they are very easy, sometimes very difficult; sometimes they just set the test without reading CAPS.*

The FPHOD and G3T agreed that Jika Mfundo issue common tasks, together with a marking rubric, for participating schools to use.

HODs moderate internal tests and exams. This consists of two steps. First, pre-moderation occurs before the papers are written in order to determine whether they are at the appropriate standards specified by CAPS. According to the SPHOD (the librarian) this is an elaborate process which entails checking that the requisite proportion of items which test all seven levels of cognitive demand are present:

*Paperwork! It takes a lot of time!*

Post-moderation is then done using a sample of learner scripts to check the marking and assess the achievement of learners. The FPHOD adds that subject advisors go through the same post-moderation process.

Streaming?

DP: No. It is not allowed, it is discrimination. We put the one who is good in reading with the one who is slower so they help each other.

IPHOD: No, not allowed to do that because it discriminates. This is a bad policy, because you need to use different methods for slow learners, and now we have to use two methods in every class.

FPHOD: No. It's not easy to say who are the clever ones. And we mix them so that they can help each other.

## **D10. STRATEGIC RESOURCES: COLLABORATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Indicators:** professional development programmes; collaborations; classroom observations

**Key Questions:**

- - Have there been opportunities for professional development or collaboration amongst teachers around reading instruction?

- How much sharing of practice is evident/reported? Do teachers watch each other teach? Are they doing the same things in classrooms across the same grade?
- What support/expertise is available to teachers for teaching reading?

### *Within-school cooperation and professional development*

The school has a Deputy Principal and three HODs, one for each phase. According to the Principal their function is to monitor and mentor teachers, and to check the work of both teachers and learners. They hold phase meetings with teachers, where the work for the year is planned, including excursions for learners. HODs visit teachers in class according to a schedule during the first and second terms, but in the third term visits are unannounced. This description was corroborated by a number of other interviewees. Following classroom visits HODs discuss the lesson with the teacher concerned and make recommendations for improvement, including assistance in the form of a workshop or assistance from another teacher. The P asserted that teachers approve of the system:

*They are ok with it, it's for development, we don't criticize.*

She said that she also does class visits, selecting one teacher per grade per term, where she checks that HODs are doing their work. Class visits are in addition to the IQMS system, when the visits are done in a more structured manner and the HOD is accompanied by a peer of the teacher's choosing.

The FPHOD that, apart from her schedule of class visits, when suspects that a teacher is having a problem she goes and sits in the class and carries on with her work, while she observes the teacher:

*I find out what the problem is, and I direct her to someone who is good, like Mrs M.*

The G3T interviewed confirms the value of these visits:

*Its scheduled once a term. It happens in all the grades, in the term plan. Yes, it was really developing. ... IsiZulu is a bit hectic; I used to take it for granted because they speak it. I didn't realise that you have to learn how to write it.*

The IPHOD also pointed to the fact that the department used to have a policy of special remedial classes for reading, which were conducted by specially appointed remedial teachers, but this was discontinued in 2007. She thinks that it was a big mistake to end this practice and recommends that it be brought back.

While it is clear that members of the SMT have a structured approach to assessing the work of teachers and assisting them where necessary, cooperation between teachers is more varied. The G6T, for example, feels isolated:

*It's better for two teachers in the same grade to do this [work together]. But I am all by myself in Grade 6 isiZulu (with two classes, but there are 60 in each class). It's very difficult and there is no more corporal punishment. I scream, they scream. Sometime I give the naughty ones the blocks (Lego) and show him the design and he must get on with it. Some of them can't do maths. I ask them to draw the top view, the side view. We are lucky to have people from CASME who are helping us to teach maths for 6 years now.*

Nevertheless, the G6T does feel supported by the subject committees which span phases:

*We try to have them every term: they give you good ideas for class.*

### **Professional development from outside the school**

There is wide agreement across the school that, aside from providing books, the Jika Mfundo project is of great benefit in assisting teachers to translate CAPS into classroom activities, to pace their lessons and to formulate appropriate assessment tasks. A number of respondents also mentioned CASME which assists the school in a very similar way with maths and science.

The G3T has a clear recollection of the last Jika Mfundo she attended which gave her ideas about how to do group graded reading, news reading and to establish a reading corner in her classroom. The IPHOD confirms the value of Jika Mfundo interventions, but wishes that they went further in providing assistance in dealing with slow learners:

*It is helpful, but doesn't cater for learners with learning barriers. The way they structure the activities, the assessment and it also helps when you are away, the substitute teacher knows where to start.*

In addition, the district office provides workshops for SMT members and teachers, although these are often of a general or administrative nature and not specifically addressed to the teaching of reading. Occasionally NGOs and publishers present workshops at the school. One with sticks in the mind of the G6T was delivered by Maskew Miller and involved the Gcina Mhlope.

A number of educators mentioned a visit some years ago by a church group from the US, who spent a year at the school working mainly with learners.

When asked whether they had any knowledge of national programmes such the National Reading Strategy and the like, the FPHOD said she had heard of the 100 Books per Class project and Teaching Reading in the Early Grades, but didn't how these worked. She added that:

*One document for reading came last year, which said we should practice reading every day for at least an hour, can't remember the title. From national. Even have a competition for the district.*

Similarly, the IPHOD knew about Nali Bali and the GPLMS (which she heard about from CASME).

## **D11. STRATEGIC RESOURCES: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP**

**Indicators:** target setting; use of results; problem solving

**Key Questions:**

- Does management demonstrate strategic leadership of reading instruction in the school through their use of reading results, target setting and interventions?
- To what extent does the principal and deputy provide a 'container' for effective reading instruction?

When asked what the best advice she had given anyone on reading, the IPHOD emphasized the value of demonstrating pedagogical strategies to teachers:

*I like to do demonstrations. When I do class visits, I write down areas that need attention, and I do a demonstration. .... Last year I did a demonstration in English at a school in Inanda, how to promote writing.*

She attributes the invitation she received to perform this demonstration to the reputation the school has built up of providing excellent education:

*... its popular, because of our achievement and results, and the community-mindedness of the teachers, our programme for orphans. We make sure that we always win competitions.*

In response to the same question, the G6T mentioned advice she had received from a teacher at a neighbouring school during a cluster workshop:

*... about preparing to read a story to learners; first look at the picture and ask learner what they think it is about, which makes them more interested and understand the story better; also give different children chances to read, which motivates them.*

The FPHOD remembered the following as being particularly good advice:

*Starting with sounding [out the phonemes] and coming to the word. Point to the letters as they read. ... They don't concentrate when they're not pointing*

The best advice the G3T remembers came from her father:

*My dad told me: If you don't read yourself how can you teach children to read. You must start by teaching them to love to read, and if you don't love reading yourself you can't do that. Teach them to love books; never make a book dirty.*

A variety of answers were received in response to the question: *What is the one thing that could improve reading at the school?*

According to the DP:

*If the our programmes are not achieving our targets, we can go and ask other schools what they do.*

The IPHOD said:

*First train the parents: they need to have time for reading at home. Some are trying to help their children but others are not interested.*

The solution offered by the G6T was to go back to basics:

*It starts with good foundation work: we should do more reading in FP, if they could do a bit at home every day. We do have periods only for reading, but you can't get every learner to read during that period.*

For the FPHOD the secret is to focus attention on readers who struggle, while stimulating the fast readers:

*... we are trying to keep the slow learners behind after school. With the ones who are reading well, I am trying to develop homework clubs, so they go to one house and work together. I am on the verge of achieving that. Most learners don't have someone to help them at home.*

### **What would you do to improve reading at a school where it is poor?**

This question was put to 5 educators, who responded as follows:

DP:

*I can start by developing a teacher, asking someone from outside to develop the teachers, and use the experience I have from this school, because we are the best.*

IPHOD:

*Equip them with skills that they can use to improve reading; for example, the reading material given to learners must be at the right level; learners must enjoy reading. Do demo lessons on how to teach reading. Invite others to help the educators.*

G6T:

*Workshop them on what I have been doing and suggest they try it. Establish subject coms where they discuss their problems and strategies. Move from the known to the unknown. Institute a readathon; find ways to stimulate interest in reading; give them certificates, start it in class and then across the school. Maybe you can come back some other time and help us.*

FPHOD:

*Check first who are interested in teaching reading, or who understand that there is a problem, and help them first. Then we let other teachers in bit by bit. Start by emphasizing how important it is to read: everything they do at school is written. It starts with loving reading. (If you want to hide something from the teacher, write it down)*

G3T:

*Calls for development. There are schools that are very good at reading, and they love reading. Poetry seems to attract young blood to reading. Bring in technology. Get teachers reading and they will learn skills that they can teach their kids. Last year I took them to a movie and got them to write about it.*

## Implications for quant study

-Draw out some of the aspects of the qual study that would feed into the October instrument. What can/should be measured and how? What should not be attempted?

To be discussed 1 August.

## Appendix A

Table 13: Educators interviewed during quantitative visit, February 2017

Date	Name	Position	Teach	Home Lang	HL of learners	Qualification	Experience	Largest class
20 Feb	Ms M	Teacher	G3: all subjects	isiZulu	isiZulu	PGCE	3	40
	Ms N	Teacher	G3: all subjects	isiZulu	isiZulu	Diploma	11	36
	Ms (?) T	Teacher	G6: English, Soc Science	isiZulu	isiZulu	Hons degree	21	58
		Principal						

## Appendix B

Table 14: Activities undertaken during qualitative visit, June 2017

Date	Name	Position	Teach	Education	Experience: Total (man) in years
12 June	Mrs M	Principal	G7 EMS	EXCLUDED FOR ANONYMITY PURPOSES	22 (11)
	Mrs Z	Deputy	G7 LO		34 (12)
	Mrs T	HOD, IP	G6 Eng, G5 Soc Sc		22 (9)
	Mrs N	HOD, FP	G3 maths, GR-3: RI		17 (<1)
13 June	Ms G	G6T	G6 isiZ, G6 math		12 (0)
	Ms M	G3T	G3 all		4 (0)
14 June	Mrs Mt	Librarian	SPHOD and G7 math		
	Mrs Mk	isiZulu reading specialist	G4 isiZulu and math		