



STRATEGIC PLAN 2015 - 2020

Half - Term report

September 2018

Throughout much of 2015 the school worked to create a Strategic Plan to guide it through the following five years. Teachers and learners, admin staff, parents and board members all contributed to a wide-ranging discussion about what we wanted the school to be and how we would get there.

These discussions were distilled into a summary that was made available to all members of the community in early 2016. Now, 60% of the way through the Plan, the board and the management of the school would like to report on the progress we have made as well as what we expect the school to achieve over the next two years (i.e. by 2020).

The overarching aim of the Strategic Plan is captured in the three words: quality, sustainability, connectivity.

QUALITY

Everything the school does, it should do well. This refers, obviously, to the quality of teaching and authenticity of student learning, but also to the efficiency and effectiveness of the school's operations and administration, the quality of the facilities, and even the school's relationship with and interaction with the host country, Namibia.

SUSTAINABILITY

The school has existed for more than twenty-five years. Any responsible development should ensure that all initiatives and improvements are planned and executed on a scale and within a timeframe that do not jeopardise the school's continued viability. Equally, as a leading educational institution, the school should model and adhere to environmental and social policies that recognise and respect the world's finite resources.

CONNECTIVITY

A central concept of the school's international curriculum is that everything is interconnected. Academic subjects cannot be taught in isolation. People and peoples are not, after all, islands. The education of a child is as much the responsibility of parents and society as a whole as it is the job of the teacher or the school. Communication is not just about transferring knowledge but about understanding and empathy. Collaboration, trust and mutual respect must be at the core of any successful school.

The Strategic Plan addresses five key – and, of course, related – areas of the school’s operations. These are:

- A. TEACHING AND LEARNING**
- B. FINANCES, FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS**
- C. PERSONNEL**
- D. COMMUNITY**
- E. GOVERNANCE**

For each of the five, a number of goals were set. It is with regard to the progress we have made in each of these that this report has been written.

A. TEACHING & LEARNING

- A 1 *A consistent and seamless curriculum is taught at WIS.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- **The ACE protocol of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) has been adopted as the school’s preferred instrument for accreditation.**

ACE is the most innovative and progressive accreditation instrument available. At its heart is an explicit emphasis on a common language for teaching and learning. More than a dozen WIS staff have been recognised by NEASC as school visitors and the core concepts of ACE will increasingly inform teaching and learning at WIS.
- ✓ Mathematics & Language Subject Leaders have been appointed in the Primary School.

PYP class teachers with particular interest and expertise in Mathematics and Language are working with colleagues and the PYP Coordinator to ensure that practice throughout the Primary School is coherent, consistent and current.
- ✓ The Approaches to Learning (ATL) Report.

A committee comprising half a dozen teachers from across the school spent a year reviewing teaching practices and writing a whole-school guide to ensure a consistent approach.
- ✓ PYP Evaluation Visit.

In March 2017 the school underwent a three-day visit by two representatives of the IB to evaluate the PYP at WIS.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * **Middle School Working Party.**

The Middle School Working Party will conduct a thorough review of the curriculum in Grades 6 to 8 with a view to ensuring that it adequately meets the needs of all learners.
- * **DP Evaluation Visit.**

In September 2018 the school will be visited by two representatives of the IB to evaluate the Diploma Programme at WIS.
- * **NEASC Accreditation Visit.**

The school was last formally accredited in March 2015. Re-accreditation will need to happen in 2020 and the start of this process will be a three-day visit by two representatives of NEASC in November 2018.

A 2 *The diverse learning needs of all students are met.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- **MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) testing has been piloted and will be more widely adopted across the school.**
- **Learning Support (1)**
The number of staff in the Learning Support Department has been increased from five to seven: four full-time teachers and three full-time educational assistants.
- ✓ **Learning Support (2)**
Thanks to a generous grant from the US State Department Office of Overseas Schools, three members of the LS Department were able to attend a three-day workshop in Johannesburg on different learning styles.
- ✓ The Secondary School English as an Additional Language (EAL) position has been made full-time.
- ✓ A specialist Drama teacher has been appointed in the Secondary School.
- ✓ The entire teaching staff attended a two-day workshop on differentiation in the classroom delivered by a professor from the Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth.
- ✓ The teaching day in Grades 9 to 12 has been extended by fifty minutes Monday to Thursday to better meet the needs of IGCSE and IBDP students.
- ✓ Two additional Educational Assistant (formerly TA) positions have been created in the Primary School.
- ✓ A new full-time teaching position has been added in the Secondary School.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * The IB Career-Related Programme (CP) will be evaluated for possible adoption.
The IBCP – launched by the IB in 2012 – is intended to complement the Diploma Programmes in Grades 11 and 12 by providing vocational courses of study.
- * Additional academic subjects and courses will be introduced as staffing, facilities, and budgets allow.
The (re-)introduction of Music in the Secondary School must be a high priority.

A 3 *Community Action and Service Learning are integral parts of all students' learning.*

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * Community Action and Service Learning will be embedded in the revised Middle School curriculum (see below).
- * Well-established Service Learning models from schools in Johannesburg, Moshi, and Lilongwe will be used as examples to emulate.
We have useful contacts with other schools in southern Africa that are further advanced in this area than we are.

B. FINANCES, FACILITIES & OPERATIONS

B 1 *Medium- and long-term planning ensures the school's stability and viability.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- ▶ **The school's financial reserves have been maintained at more than three months' operating costs.**
 - ✓ In 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 tuition fees were increased only by the inflation rate.
This honoured the undertaking made by the board in 2014.
 - ✓ The annual Capital Levy was increased from N\$1,000 to N\$3,500.
This levy will contribute to the improvement of facilities (see below).
 - ✓ The school's reserves are prudently invested to generate additional income.
 - ✓ Fees are now paid in advance rather than in arrears.
This has significantly reduced the number and amount of bad debts.
 - ✓ Fees may now be paid in Euros and US\$.
In a variety of ways, this is a cost-saving measure for the school.
 - ✓ When fees are paid in cash a handling fee is now charged.
Previously, the school absorbed this additional cost.
 - ✓ Fees may now be paid by credit card.
 - ✓ In 2017-2018 fees were increased in real terms for the first time in four years.
Teachers' salaries have been far from competitive internationally. They are gradually being improved, the better to attract internationally-experienced staff. Fee increases help to make this possible.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * Annual real but measured fee increases.
Necessary to fund planned development and improved teachers' salaries.
 - * Review annually the impact on fee increases on enrolment and demographics.
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B 2 *The facilities enable the delivery of a first-class education.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- ▶ **Refurbishment of the auditorium.**
Significantly improved lighting and sound system.
- ▶ **Construction of a new 100m² Staff Room.**
The Staff Room is a multi-purpose facility where bi-weekly staff meetings are held, training is conducted, and where planning takes place.
- ▶ **Conversion of the space formerly occupied by Toddlers.**
A much-needed Admissions Lounge has been constructed along with three new offices.
- ▶ **Appointment of an internationally-renowned (and local) architect specialising in sustainable structures.**
- ✓ Consultation (via a questionnaire) with the community on priorities for development.
- ✓ A masterplan for the short-, medium-, and long-term development of the campus is close to completion.
- ✓ The P.A. system throughout the school has been replaced.
- ✓ A phased replacement of ageing fixtures such as chairs, doors, and window blinds.

- ✓ Construction of a new PTA Centre.
- ✓ Repainting of the Portuguese Centre.

Maintaining a clean and attractive appearance throughout the school is more than cosmetic and has a direct impact on student learning.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * The development masterplan will be shared with the school community and input invited.
- * Implementation of solar power.
- * Construction of additional sports facilities.
- * Construction of a cafeteria.
- * Construction of a new workshop in a more appropriate location.
- * Conversion of the current workshop into a teaching facility.
- * Renovation of the sports hall.
- * Renovation of Science laboratories.
- * Improved security.

Improved access control and the upgrading of CCTV.

B 3 The school's systems, policies and practices are relevant, efficient and effective.

DONE (2015-2018)

- The Child Protection Policy has been completely re-written.
- The Data Protection Policy has been completely re-written.
- iSAMS has been acquired and implemented.

All student data is now in one place and immediately accessible to those who need it. As the school gains familiarity with the system, further modules are being added.

- ✓ A substantially-revised Finance Policy has been adopted.
- ✓ Fees are now paid in advance and not in arrears.
- ✓ The board Policy Committee has been revived.

Things change. Policies need to be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.

- ✓ The Staff Handbook has been completely re-written.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * The review and revision of policies will continue.
- * A Procurement Policy is in preparation.



C. PERSONNEL

C 1 *The school attracts, recruits and retains teaching staff of the highest calibre.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- ▶ **New salary structure.**
The new structure is designed to recognise and reward appropriate experience and the particular skills that the school looks for when recruiting teachers.
- ▶ **Improved salaries.**
The school still pays well below international norms but salaries have been improved and there has been an obvious and beneficial impact on our ability to recruit internationally.
- ▶ **Growing number of teaching staff with prior experience of PYP, IGCSE and DP.**
Each year the school has more teachers with prior experience of working internationally and of teaching the programmes we offer.
- ▶ **By design, every year a greater percentage of the school's operating budget is spent on professional development.**
Not only does this keep teachers up to date, it also improves morale and retention.
- ✓ Review of the role of Teacher Assistants.
A committee chaired by the Primary Principal has conducted a thorough review of the roles and responsibilities of Teacher Assistants (re-named Educational Assistants as of August 2018).

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * Evaluation of new salary structure.
To attract and retain internationally-experienced teachers, the employment package must be competitive.
 - * Achieve the goal of spending 2% of the operating budget on staff professional development.
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C 2 *The school's administrative and support staff are of appropriate number, experience and competence to ensure effective and efficient operations.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- ▶ **Three new administrative positions have been created.**
*Secretary to the Educational Director & Board of Directors (2016).
Assistant to the School Nurse (2016).
Workshop Manager (2018).*
- ✓ The Finance Office has been restructured.
Two positions have been deleted and two new ones created to better meet the needs of the school.
- ✓ Successful recruitment.
Two key administrative positions have fallen vacant during this period and in each case the school has been able to recruit and appoint staff with considerable appropriate experience.
- ✓ New offices.
Two new offices have been added.

- ✓ Creation of admin staff salary scale.

A consultant was engaged to confirm the competitiveness of WIS admin salaries and create an appropriate scale.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * Relocate Admissions.

A new Admissions Lounge will provide a much improved facility to welcome and process new families.

- * Create new offices.

Some administrative staff still work in cramped and less than ideal conditions.

The opportunity will also be taken to bring the three members of the Finance Office closer to improve efficiency.

- C 3 *The management and leadership of the school have appropriate and necessary skills, time and resources.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- **Appointment of an internationally-experienced Director (2015).**

- ✓ Appointment of a Secretary to the Educational Director.

- ✓ Continuity of school leadership.

The school has now completed three years with the same leadership team and no changes are anticipated in the near future.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * Review the responsibilities of Subject Leaders and Coordinators throughout the school.
- * Succession planning.



D. COMMUNITY

D 1 *Communication between WIS stakeholders is frequent, easy and constructive.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- **The Oryx.**
The weekly newsletter was launched in September 2015.
- **New reports throughout the school.**
Semester reports have been completely revised for all Grades.
- ✓ Primary Blogs.
Class blogs have become an important means of communication.
- ✓ PTA Community Centre.
Since opening in August 2017, the PTA Community Centre has become a popular venue where parents and teachers interact.
- ✓ Annual General Meetings.
Two informative and well-attended AGMs have been held in December 2016 and January 2018.
- ✓ Fees meeting.
The Board invited all parents to a meeting about fees in April 2017.
- ✓ Numerous information mornings and evenings for parents.
Parents have been invited to learn more about the PYP, MAP testing, DP subject choices, college application, and more.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * AGM planned for November/December 2018.
 - * Consultation with the community about future development.
 - * Continuing dialogue with community about fees.
 - * Adoption of iSAMS Parent Portal.
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D 2 *The school meets the needs and expectations of all stakeholders.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- **Financial Aid Committee established (2017).**
Families in genuine financial need are being assisted.
- ✓ Survey concerning development priorities.
Parents, staff, and learners identified priorities.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * Conduct a Satisfaction Survey of all parents.
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D 3 *The school actively promotes staff and student wellbeing.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- ✓ **Child Protection.**
All staff have been made aware of the new policy and clear and appropriate procedures are in place.

- ✓ Construction of a new Staff Room.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * The food served in the new cafeteria will promote healthy eating.



E. GOVERNANCE

E 1 *The WIS community is fully engaged in school governance.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- ▶ **The Articles of Association have been entirely re-written.**
They now state much more clearly and accurately how the school is governed.
- ✓ Each year there are more parents standing for election to the board than there are vacancies.
When voting at the AGM, parents have a genuine choice and it is apparent that members of the community wish to serve on the board.
- ✓ No fewer than five (out of twelve) board members must be current WIS parents.
In fact, at present, all members are current WIS parents.
- ✓ Untypically in international schools, the WIS board includes a staff member with full voting rights.
Employees of the school are no less members of the community than are parents.
- ✓ Board meetings are open.
Members of the community are welcome to observe the open sessions of board meetings and some do.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * Ensure that those who are new to the school or the board understand the nature and purpose of school governance.
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E 2 *The school's philosophy and vision are widely understood, accepted and respected.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- ✓ Regular reference to the school's purpose and unique role.
In the weekly newsletter, on the website, in conversation with parents, in communications with the Government of Namibia, and elsewhere, explicit reference is made to the school's purpose and philosophy.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * Continue to promote and celebrate the school's unique character and role.
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E 3 *The Board adheres to best practice.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- ✓ Weekend retreats are held annually.
These include sessions concerned with understanding the proper roles of the board as a whole and of individual board members.
- ✓ The board is diverse.
In terms of gender, nationality, and experience.
- ✓ A Nominations Committee has been established.
The Committee conducts the annual elections and recommends candidates for appointment to the board.

- ✓ All formal meetings are comprehensively minuted.
- ✓ Formal board meetings are held approximately every five or six school weeks.
- ✓ Much of the work of the board is devolved to committees.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * Board Self-evaluation.
Annually, the board must conduct a thorough review of its achievements, practices, strengths and weaknesses.
 - * External consultant.
It is good practice periodically to invite specialists in governance to work with the board reviewing its membership and processes. The last such visit was in 2014.
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E 4 *Strong, beneficial and enduring relationships exist with key local and national stakeholders.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- **Scholarship Programme.**
This offers 100% scholarships to able and motivated Namibians who ordinarily could not afford to attend the school.
- ✓ Cordial relations are maintained with Government ministries such as Home Affairs and Education.
- ✓ The school was privileged to be visited by the First Lady in 2017.
- ✓ Strong relationships exist between the school and embassies and diplomatic missions.
Within the time-frame of this report the ambassadors of Portugal, France, Turkey, Ireland and the United States have all been welcomed to the school.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * The school is in discussion with the Embassy of the Peoples' Republic of China to establish a Memorandum of Understanding.
 - * The scholarship programme is being built on close relationships with government schools.
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E 5 *A transparent system and process exists to monitor, review and revise the school's Strategic Plan.*

DONE (2015-2018)

- ✓ The Strategic Plan is regularly reviewed at monthly board meetings.
- ✓ This half-term report.

TO DO (2018-2020)

- * Work must start on the next Strategic Plan.
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