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Mrs Gail van der Riet  
Flamboyant Preparatory School  
P O Box 837  
1240 White River

30 November 2017

Dear Mrs van der Riet,

**IQAA EVALUATION OF FLAMBOYANT PREPARATORY SCHOOL 2017**

“Flamboyant, by its very nature, is a unique School that offers excellent specialised education to its learners. A proficient and well-organised School that bodes well for the future.” - Mentor

“Given the very positive attitude of the Head of School, her internal evaluation team, as well as the staff, there should be no difficulty in the recommendations for improvement and development being effectively dealt with, finances permitting.” - Mentor

I have read all the relevant documents and reports pertaining to the evaluation of Flamboyant School and also had a look at your website and viewed the school grounds on Google Maps. As mentioned in your report, Flamboyant certainly boasts a campus of which it can be very proud. Taking over the property of Themba hospital in 1987 was certainly an inspired move as the benefits of the property continue to this day. Despite the financial restrictions Flamboyant faces, it is very impressive that you have been able to develop a sports field and pavilion since your last evaluation. I congratulate all concerned for their efforts in this regard.

I note from the ISASA checklist, which was completed as part of this evaluation, that you personally have 39 years' experience as a teacher with 30 years' experience in remedial education. I am sure the Flamboyant Board are enormously proud to have you as the head and I congratulate you on sustaining your career over such a long period and continuing to run the school so efficiently. It is never an easy thing to run an independent school in any circumstance, but with the added burden of continuing financial constraints due primarily, I believe, to the nature of the school, I congratulate you on a job extremely well done.

I would also like to add my congratulations to your staff for the grit and determination they have shown over many years, despite their salaries not necessarily being competitive with other sectors of the independent school's market. The work they do is highly specialised

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**Independent Quality Assurance Agency**

**Directors:**

Samuel Isaacs (Chairman)  
Ebrahim Ansur • John Falconer • Stephen Lowry  
• Anne Oberholzer • Mark Potterton • Confidence Dikgole  
Vernon Wood (Executive Director)  
Lynne Rivett-Carnac (Mentor Representative)

and requires a lifetime of hard work coupled with great patience and empathy. I applaud their efforts, especially as it leads to over 80% of learners moving into mainstream education when they leave Flamboyant.

I note in your report that there is some anxiety amongst staff regarding evaluations of their performance. At IQAA we are encouraging a model of peer to peer evaluations which should be non-threatening but professionally uplifting. If classroom visits can feed a teacher at their point of need it should lead to the teacher looking forward to a visit from a colleague. This can be done by putting the power of the visit in the hands of host and not the visitor. Most teachers are continually thinking about the dynamics that play themselves out in their classrooms daily. Perhaps it is a learner with whom they are battling or a series of lessons that simply are not going as well as they would like. It might also be that the teacher is bored with what they are doing and wishes to try something new and creative within a safe environment. This model involves a teacher inviting a colleague to their lesson/s and asking them to keep an eye out for specific issues on which they would like feedback. Such visits only make sense if there is a discussion after the lesson. These discussions have the potential to lead to growth for both the host and the visitor. The model implies that there is no space for visits that may result in decisions around remuneration. If anything, the visits can lead to individual teachers setting further goals which both inspire them and lead to the overall improvement of teaching and learning within the school. I encourage the management team who is responsible for this issue to consider this suggestion.

It is my privilege to read many school reports and most are still battling with the integration of a broader range of South African languages into both their curriculum and day to day life of the school. The fact that you have started an iSwati stream in the Foundation Phase is a remarkable feat. You should consider writing up your experiences in this regard and submitting it to Independent Education for publication as I know many schools could probably learn from you in this regard.

I have never been a supporter of the notion that small classes ensure a superior education, but I have always worked in mainstream schools. Your report makes a cogent argument for smaller classes and the low pupil:teacher ratio you manage to retain, despite the financial constraints it places upon the school. I'm sure many of the 1626 learners who have graduated from Flamboyant are deeply appreciative of the sacrifices many have made to make this possible.

Your report mentions that neither subject heads or senior management are involved with the development of the budget. This might be because of time constraints due to the timetable, but I do encourage you to consider involving them in budgeting as, not only does it grow their experience of such matters, but they can ultimately be made responsible for parts of the budget which align with their responsibilities.

For those staff anxious to include more technology into their classroom because of a lack of expertise, I encourage them to consider the SAMR model contained in the last page of the School in a Mirror manual. Much more detail about this model can be found online, but if teachers can aim, not to make effective use of technology in **every** lesson, but to include it at different levels of the SAMR model in a selection of lessons, then they might not find the idea as daunting. In short, including technology into lessons is not a sprint, but a marathon.

The list of strengths in the report is both substantial and detailed. They reflect the well-run school mentioned earlier. Staff, parents and learners can be extremely proud that Flamboyant, despite the limitations of only accepting learners from a limited pool of potential learners, is able to boast such a complete list of strengths.

The areas of concern listed in the report reflect an open mindedness amongst the Internal Evaluation Team (IET) and a willingness to look at the school critically so that you cannot be accused of resting on your laurels, but are determined to continue to grow and develop into the future.

Thank you for the hospitality extended to our mentor, Derek Reynish. He clearly enjoyed his interaction with you and the school community. Please pass on our congratulations to the IET, especially to Riana Pienaar for leading the team so capably and to Henriëtte van der Merwe for a very well written report. I suggest you consider retaining the team that you have used for this evaluation and ask them to regroup annually. They can initially be tasked with critically reviewing progress with these recommendations in a year's time. In the subsequent years, before your next IQAA evaluation, they can be encouraged to identify a distinctive area in the school each year that needs scrutiny and run a relatively minor evaluation process of their choice, but using the skills they learnt through this full evaluation, with the aim of ultimately informing school management around that issue. Ideally you would aim for topics that are quietly nagging you in the back of your mind.

The advantages of retaining the teams for ongoing evaluation are numerous, but include:

- retaining a culture of evaluation in the school,
- enabling team members to develop their skills and also feel empowered as they have a role to play in the development of the school, albeit advisory,
- ensuring the results of the evaluations will continue to inform your operational (typically 1 year) and strategic (3 to 5 years) plans.

You may proudly share your report, and my concluding comments, with whomever you choose in your school community. A certificate confirming the successful completion of this evaluation will be sent to you in due course, together with an IQAA logo to display on your website and promotional material.

Kind regards



**VERNON WOOD**

Executive Director

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