

Independent Schools Branch

Group 3 Inspection Checklist

03996645

School Name: WEST POINT GREY ACADEMY Phone: 222-8750
Address: 4125 WEST 8TH AVENUE City: VANCOUVER
Group: 3 Principal: MR. CLIVE AUSTIN Grades: K-8 *
Enrolment: Elementary [309] Secondary [] Total [309]
(K-8)

1. The school operates in conformity with section 1 of the Schedule of the Independent School Act. ☒
2. Facilities:
 - adequate maintenance ☒
 - adequate cleanliness ☒
 - regular inspections by local officials ☒
 - municipal/regional codes are met..... ☒

Will fax occupancy permit

- School society borrowed money from private company organized by four key leaders

3. Regular practice of safety procedures:

Earthquake drills [☒] Fire drills [☒]

Procedures developed; will be implemented

4. The school operates under an appropriate authority..... ☒

Name: WEST POINT GREY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL SOCIETY

Board of Governors of 5

5. Enrolment consists of more than 50% qualifying students..... ☒

4 or 5 VISA students

6. The school has applied for Group classification, and filed forms 1601, 1602 and 1701. ☒

- Will be completing

7. Comments (note any changes):

- Fall of '97 Inspection for Group I+II is intended
- Building well suited/classrooms brightly decorated for first weeks on a new school!
- nice blending of experienced and younger teachers
- all teachers (except 1) with teaching certificates

Current group classification to be continued: YES [☒] NO [☐]

Date of Visit: OCTOBER 4, 1996 Ministry Monitor: James U. Beebe

Ministry of Education/93-11-09

* Expand per year one grade level
School presently leasing property

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

OCTOBER 12 – 13, 1999

WEST POINT GREY ACADEMY

VANCOUVER

INTRODUCTION

An External Evaluation Committee (EEC) consisting of William Fisher, Donald Neumann and Terrence McBurney was appointed by the Inspector of Independent Schools of the Ministry of Education to visit West Point Grey Academy (WPGA), located in Vancouver, B.C. This External Evaluation Committee has been appointed in accordance with Section 3 of the Independent School Act which authorizes the Inspector of Independent Schools to appoint External Evaluation Committees and to specify their duties.

The EEC spent Tuesday, October 12 and Wednesday, October 13 at the school interviewing the Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster and other administrative personnel; meeting with teachers and other staff members; visiting classrooms; examining student work; and investigating school facilities, instructional resources, administrative procedures, curriculum structure and learning outcomes, teacher planning and student evaluation. A pre-evaluation meeting was held with the staff on Tuesday morning and a post-evaluation meeting with the staff took place on Wednesday afternoon.

The EEC sincerely appreciates the hospitality and cooperation it received from the administration and staff during the school visits. All school personnel were well-prepared, open and highly professional in their work with the EEC.

The school is classified as Independent Group Two. It is located in Vancouver and operates under the authority of the West Point Grey Independent School Society.

Currently the school enrolls 381 students in Kindergarten to Grade Seven and 159 students in Grades Eight to Eleven. No Home School Learners are registered.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Since the last EEC report the major change at WPGA has been the extension of programming to include Grades Ten and Eleven. Additional space has been leased to accommodate those students attending the Senior School. This addition includes facilities for science, art, information technology, music, physical education, reading, administration and a cafeteria. Significant progress has been made in upgrading the school's technology and library resources.

The school leases its buildings and site from the British Columbia Buildings Corporation. The facilities, which include a number of features not commonly found in a school, such as a swimming pool, previously accommodated Jericho Hill School.

West Point Grey Academy is governed by the West Point Grey Independent School Society. This Society has six persons on its Board of Directors and a four-person Executive Committee. Both the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee meet monthly. Additional committees of the Board are appointed for finance, strategic planning, education and parents' liaison. The Executive Committee has a treasurer who works closely with the Headmaster on developing and administering the budget for the schools' operations.

The official registration number for the school, under the Society Act, is S 35195. The last Annual Report was filed with the Registrar of Companies on December 9, 1998.

In addition to its Kindergarten to Grade Twelve program, West Point Grey Academy operates a pre-school for four-year olds. Two teachers provide these children with extensive learning experiences

based primarily on a thematic approach. English language and communication skills are developed through "show and tell", workbook assignments and journal writing. Introductory work is given in basic mathematics operations. Art, gymnasium activities, swimming and field trips complete the educational component of this program.

2. SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE

The school philosophy and activities observed by the EEC suggest that the school is fulfilling the requirement of Section 1 of the Schedule of the Independent School Act regarding school programs.

The mission of Point Grey Academy is to "help students develop intellectually, culturally, socially and physically so they can approach life as dedicated, sincere, diligent young individuals, well-equipped for the duties and responsibilities of life, maintaining above all else high standards of morality, respect, self-worth and character."

West Point Grey Academy plans to extend its course offerings to include a full Grade Twelve program in the 2000-2001 school year. The projected enrolment target for the school is approximately 700 students. Current facilities' renovations are providing for specialized instructional areas, such as senior science labs. A Strategic Planning Committee has just been struck by the Board to envision where the school should be in five years and how to attain this vision. Areas for the committee's major focus are program-emphasis and location of the facility.

3. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

West Point Grey Academy is administered by a Headmaster and Deputy Headmaster. The administrative component also includes two staff members who assume coordinating responsibilities for the primary and intermediate programs. Both the Headmaster and Deputy Headmaster are full-time administrators. The Headmaster is responsible for the overall management of the school. The Deputy Headmaster is responsible for instructional supervision, student discipline and some additional administrative functions. The two

teachers involved in the program coordination focus on curriculum leadership. The administrative group meets weekly to discuss operational issues, planning for school programs and activities and disciplinary matters.

Student files contain information outlined in the Evaluation Catalogue. They are carefully maintained and secured in the general office. The school's auditor confirms that all necessary data has been provided for qualifying students.

The school is in compliance with Section 12(3) of the Act specifying that grants may only be used for operating expenses, and Section 12(4) of the Act specifying that grants may not exceed the total operating costs.

Administrative procedures are appropriate and are well described in the Staff Handbook. Communication within the school is a high priority – weekly assemblies are held separately for the primary, intermediate and secondary sections of the school. Each of the junior and senior school staffs meet monthly and the total staff meets on the third Tuesday of every month. An additional day has been established each month to accommodate special staff meetings.

The school endeavors to maintain open, two-way communication with the home. A comprehensive school notice board is in the main entrance area. Formal communication is maintained through report cards, correspondence from the Headmaster and teachers to parents, open houses and a newsletter. Informal contact is frequently made with parents by telephone. An active Parent Volunteer Group is in its second year of operation.

The appeal process for parents is clearly-defined: parents are encouraged to first review their concerns with the individual originally involved. The next steps are review with a member of the administrative team, review with the Deputy Headmaster, review with the Headmaster and, finally, an appeal to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. It is the opinion of the EEC that this policy reflects the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.

An extensive Student Code of Conduct has been established. The Code is clearly communicated and consistently enforced. Comprehensive policies and practices have been developed to provide for student safety. These provisions cover student supervision and emergencies including accidents, fire, earthquakes and field trips/travel situations. Staff, parent volunteers and senior students work cooperatively to maintain student supervision.

Through staff meetings the topics of child abuse and the various protocols are covered. The EEC suggests that the administration ensure that a policy on child protection is adopted and that it is included in the Policy and Procedures Manual and the Staff Handbook. This policy should also be communicated to parents.

Ministry of Education newsletters and information bulletins are shared with the staff and are filed in accessible areas, such as the staff room and main administration office.

4. TEACHER CERTIFICATION

The teaching staff at West Point Grey Academy consists of 48 full-time and two part-time personnel for a total of 49 FTE teachers. All staff have their credentials in order. It should be noted that all teachers are appropriately assigned. Teachers' files were reviewed and they contained copies of teaching certificates and documentation covering criminal record checks. All teachers employed by the school as of September 30, as reported on the Ministry I-2001 forms and in the Evaluation Catalogue were found to be B.C. certified, as required by Section 3(1)(d) of the Schedule to the Independent School Act. The Headmaster of the school is a B.C. certified teacher, as required by Section 8 of the Act. There is evidence on file that criminal record checks have been completed for all employees or contractors "working with children."

Both the school's growth rate and program expansion have resulted in many new members being added to the teaching staff over the past two years – 19 on a staff of 49. For this reason the administration has developed an extensive orientation program for new staff members. Professional development is also valued by the school

administration. The program is coordinated by a teacher with resources used for conferences and workshops. An "internal program" is organized annually on a thematic basis. Speakers from outside the school are brought in three times per year. This year the primary teaching staff are meeting regularly with their peers from another independent school to review and share ideas and resources on various themes from the primary curriculum.

The Headmaster is evaluated annually by the Executive Committee of the Board. This evaluation is informal in nature and addresses topics involved in the Headmaster's work with the Board. The EEC suggests that a more formal evaluation process be considered which would culminate in a written report on the Headmaster's performance.

Every teacher undergoes a comprehensive, annual evaluation. This program includes external evaluation by a member of the administrative team, as well as a peer evaluation component.

5. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Primary Program

Each elementary grade level has two classes except for Grade Four, in which there are three. These classes are housed in the main school building. Teachers of each grade work closely together as they move through the curriculum at similar rates and provide comparable experiences for their students.

The EEC recognizes the attention given annual plans by all teachers and commends them for the quality of this planning.

The program includes Music (K-Grade Seven), Choral (Grade One – Grade Seven), Band and Music Appreciation (Grades Five - Seven), French (K-Grade Seven), Mandarin (K-Grade Seven) and Japanese (K-Grade Seven). Specialists teach these subjects.

Homework is expected of all students beginning at Grade Two. Specific subjects are assigned each day of the week, Monday to

Thursday. Assignments are noted in the student Agenda which is taken home for parent signature.

Course outlines in all subjects include content, learning outcomes, teaching strategies and evaluation and assessment methods. In Mathematics, Language Arts, Social Studies and Science the learning outcomes are linked to the Ministry prescribed learning outcomes (curriculum organizers).

The Primary Educational Program meets the time requirements and learning outcomes of the B.C. curriculum for all subjects specified in the Educational Standards Order (Sections 2, 3, 4).

Teachers' daily planning and instruction in Language Arts/English was observed to reflect long term plans and Ministry learning objectives.

The school has an abundance of varied instructional materials which are used to meet program objectives. Among those observed in use were: Exploring the Code workbooks, Networks Reading Series, A.R.P. (Accelerated Reading Program), Building English Skills Workbooks, Oxford Junior English, student journals, class sets of novels, and teacher-prepared materials.

Assessment is frequent, marks are recorded and feedback is given. Homework assignments are recorded in Agendas and initialed by parents to provide continuing home-school contact.

Classrooms provide a language-rich environment through class libraries and displays of student work. Students were seen to be reading at every opportunity.

Houghton Mifflin Mathematics is a prime resource in Grades One and Two, Journeys in Math in Grade Three. Teaching strategies observed were varied and appropriate to lesson content and to the student.

Previews, lesson plans and observed classroom instruction indicate that science content as well as process received attention.

The library is a prime resource for instructional materials as content suggested in the I.R.P.s and prescribed learning outcomes are addressed. A variety of projects, both individual and group, have been undertaken. Students are learning research and presentation skills.

Early Intermediate Program

Among the Language Arts/English materials used are: Wordly Wise workbooks, Building English Skills, class sets of novels, and Introduction to Shakespeare.

Instruction and learning materials were observed to be appropriate to course content and student learning levels. Novel reading and study are seen to be central to the program. Spelling and grammar are also emphasized. Students are required to write frequently. Book reports, creative writing and research projects were observed in progress or displayed in classrooms.

Journeys in Math is frequently used as a source for instructional material or for content reinforcement, but Mathematics is not a textbook-oriented course. Teachers have planned to meet Ministry learning objectives through the use of a broad range of commercial and teacher-prepared materials to support classroom instruction.

Course content and methods of instruction in Science meet Ministry expectations. Topics observed are presented in a manner which encourages scientific method as well as content.

Project work, both group and individual, research and reporting are among the learning activities observed in the Social Studies program. The library provides many of the resources required.

Teachers are using a variety of techniques and materials to meet clearly-specified learning objectives.

Extensive Art and Music instruction is offered by specialist teachers in facilities well equipped for their purpose. All students take Music and Choral to Grade Four and either Band or Music Appreciation in Grades Five to Seven. A unique feature is the employment of nine music teachers from the community who offer individual instruction during the school day. Instruments include flute, piano, clarinet, saxophone, violin and classical guitar. This is at student cost.

All students from Kindergarten to Grade Seven receive French instruction. Ministry requirements are met. In addition, students choose one of Mandarin or Japanese and have regular classes taught by a specialist.

Personal Planning is primarily taught as a separate subject, but integrated as appropriate. Personal Planning content is identified and Ministry requirements are met.

Physical Education is taught by specialist teachers in facilities which allow an extensive program, including swimming. The school is active in athletics with students participating in many sports both within the school and in competition with other schools. Instruction is aligned to the provincial I.R.P.s.

Course outlines in all subjects include content, learning outcomes, teaching strategies and evaluation and assessment methods. In Mathematics, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and French as the mandatory second language the learning outcomes are linked to the Ministry prescribed learning outcomes (curriculum organizers).

The Early Intermediate educational program meets the subject/course offerings and goals specified in the Educational Standards order (Section 4).

Late Intermediate/Graduation Program

The Late Intermediate/Graduation English course offerings include English 8, 9, 10, and 11. The program is taught by two teachers, one of whom acts as coordinator. The EEC observed direct instruction from the textbook, text review and class discussion. Oral and written projects, reports and special assignments are also used. Visuals, manipulatives, library access, class sets of novels, plays, VCRs and computer resources are some of the resources available to students and teachers. Wordly Wise are used during the school's "x" block. This resource aids in vocabulary development and thus supplements the communications objectives of the English program. There is evidence that whole language, phonetic, and literature-based approaches are used. It appears that integration with other subjects is provided when deemed appropriate.

The Late Intermediate/Graduation Mathematics program course offerings include Mathematics 8, 9, 10 and 11. The courses are taught by three teachers, one of whom acts as coordinator. Students are grouped or organized by levels within most classes in an effort to place students into learning situations suited to their individual needs. The prime teaching strategies observed by the EEC are direct instruction, worksheet and question and answer activities. There is evidence, however, that math games, calculators, computers, videos, various manipulatives, practice drills and problem-solving approaches are also used.

The Late Intermediate/Graduation Science course offerings include Science 8, 9, 10, Biology 11, Chemistry 11 and Physics 11. Three teachers provide instruction, one of whom acts as the coordinator.

Teaching strategies are limited to direct instruction, seatwork and discussion activities because access to a science lab is currently restricted to the one located in the primary/early intermediate building. The staff has focused on those aspects of the Science program not involved with "hands-on" activities during construction of their lab. The school's administration is confident that construction will be finalized in ample time for lab requirements in all secondary science courses to be addressed. The EEC notes that a variety of instructional resources and computer programs are available to both students and

teachers alike. It appears that many approaches, including field trips and group assignments, are used to address students' learning needs. Science materials, particularly chemicals, are properly stored in a safe area. The EEC suggests however, that the WCB be asked to confirm that the storage area and science labs meet WHMIS requirements.

The course offerings in the Social Studies program include Social Studies 8, 9, 10 and 11. Three teachers provide instruction, one of whom acts as a coordinator. Teaching strategies used by the Social Studies staff are primarily direct instruction, written and oral projects, question and answer, current events and discussion activities. There is evidence that computer and library resources plus maps, globes and video tapes are also used to address the Ministry's prescribed learning outcomes. There was evidence that students are expected to do at least one major project per term.

The Late Intermediate/Graduation French program offerings include French 8, 9, 10 and 11. Three teachers provide instruction, one of whom acts as the coordinator. The late Intermediate/Graduation program instructional emphasis is oral-based with an increasing emphasis on writing and grammar from Grades 8 to 11. CDs, tapes and videos are used to enhance the learning environment.

Mandarin, Japanese and Spanish programs are available as elective courses.

Course outlines, daily lesson plans and classroom observations in the core subjects of English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, and French (Grades Eight to Eleven) include content, learning outcomes, teaching strategies, assessment and evaluation methods and they are linked to Ministry prescribed outcomes (curriculum organizers). The Late Intermediate (Grades Eight – Ten) Program in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and mandatory Second Language instructional programs meet the learning outcomes of the B.C. curriculum as specified in the Educational Standards Order (Section 4).

The CAPP program for Grades Eight to Eleven is taught by two teachers. Course outlines have been established using the Ministry's IRPs as a foundation. Integrated components, including assignments and evaluation are indicated in the course outline.

All students from Grades Eight to Eleven have student learning plans. At the Grade Eight to Ten level a school service component and involvement of resource people from the community complement the instructional program.

Grade Eleven students participate in thirty hours of work experience which is coordinated by one of the school administrative team.

WPGA has organized the senior secondary CAPP prescribed learning outcomes, including the Student Learning Plans for Grades Nine – Eleven and the thirty hours of work experience during the students' Grade Eleven year in a way that meets the needs of their students and their timetabling requirements.

The EEC observed that computer utilization is extensive at WPGA. The core subject areas have all indicated that computer programs are incorporated into their instructional resource base. Research projects, homework assignments and group projects are directed to the information programs contained in the various computer programs. Classes and individuals are assigned to the network as well as an open arrangement for teacher and student use. The computer program is taught from Grades Eight – Eleven, and the Yearbook Ten and Eleven classes also use the computer lab.

There are 106 computers networked in the two buildings, two networked labs (56 computers), 4 computers in the junior library and 20 staff computers. The programs that are available include Windows AS/NT. There is Internet and CD ROM access for all computers. The EEC suggests that priority be given to the installation of computers in the classrooms being used by the teachers in the Late Intermediate and Graduation programs. All elementary classes visit the computer lab weekly receiving instruction from a specialist. Word processing, skill practice and research are available to K – Grade Seven students using the classroom computer, by prior arrangement, in the computer lab.

The library contains at least 9000 titles, many of them new, reflecting the priority given to its development during its first three years. Resources are efficiently housed and accessible in this attractive room. The full time professional librarian and a library technician supervise all functions of the library. Parent volunteers regularly assist.

Kindergarten to Grade Seven classes visit the library each week, selecting books and/or doing research. Students are taught library skills as necessary.

Two computers, networked with others in the school, allow CD ROM use and internet use as well as to the A.R.S. Reading Program, in which students, after reading specially identified books, access follow-up reading exercises.

Electronic cataloguing has recently been changed from the Eloquent to the Athena Program. The library is a vital component of the school program.

No locally developed courses have been authorized for the school, although some locally developed components are included in programs in Physical Education and English.

Distance education courses are provided for nine students requiring remediation. These courses are under the supervision of a designated teacher.

Student progress is assessed by a variety of evaluation methods: both written and oral testing on a continuous basis, conferencing and interviews, projects and formal mid and final term exams. The prescribed learning outcomes of the provincial I.R.Ps. are the criteria used for all student learning assessment. No standardized tests are employed as a constant in the school's program. West Point Grey Academy participates in the Provincial Learning Assessment Program. Results in the 1998 assessment were above the provincial averages and very comparable to the district (Vancouver) averages.

Formal reports to parents are completed for each of the three terms. An interim report is required during the first term and at other times as necessary. Two scheduled parent conferences are augmented by frequent parent-teacher contact. The locally developed reporting format includes teacher comments, student marks (percentage) and class average. K-2 reports are less formal.

The Headmaster is the final authority in matters involving student promotion. Promotional policies are specified for primary, intermediate and secondary levels. Individual situations, where there is need for additional clarification, are discussed with teachers and parents.

The EEC confirms that all authorized courses in the Graduation Program include content, learning outcomes, teaching strategies and evaluation and assessment methods. Daily lesson plans and classroom observation give evidence that the Ministry prescribed learning outcomes are being met.

Diagnostic and referral services involve the use of specialist personnel working outside the school. These services are identified through a process which requires initial interaction between the teacher and the parents of the child affected with the final referral going through the process of communication between the parents and the Headmaster. Special counselling needs are met through a referral process involving counsellors outside the school staff. Two teachers have had some coursework in counselling and one of these teachers is released for 15% of teaching time to do some counselling beyond that offered by the regular classroom personnel.

Many co-curricular activities are organized for the students. In keeping with its mission to develop a well-rounded individual programs include athletics, arts and service. Several athletic teams and individuals compete against other independent schools. Concerts, school musicals and visual arts displays are presented annually. School assemblies and intramurals are offered regularly. Community service projects are numerous and include "Jump Rope for Heart," "30 Hour Famine," and a Christmas Hamper Drive. The school also organizes an

extensive Outdoor Education program as well as numerous clubs' activities.

6. FACILITIES

West Point Grey Academy includes most of the instructional and office areas that were formally occupied by the Jericho Hill School, a provincial institution established for hearing impaired children. The space allocated to the school is leased from the B.C. Buildings Corporation. The junior and intermediate sections are located in the main school building. This area includes, on two floors, eighteen classrooms, three rooms for language instruction, a music room, an art room, the library, the computer lab, an assembly area, the staff room and general and Headmaster's offices. The senior school is located in a separate building which accommodates nine classrooms, separate rooms (three) for music and art, languages, and two science labs. Construction is underway to complete the senior science labs and applied skills area and to hook up the computer lab. The senior school building also has offices for the teaching staff, student services and administration as well as a staff room.

School facilities meet municipal codes for zoning, building, fire prevention and health. Records of inspection by health and fire authorities are on file.

The school facilities are attractive, clean and well-maintained.

Extensive supervision procedures are in place to ensure student safety.

7. SUMMARY

The EEC was impressed with the enthusiasm and professionalism of the staff at West Point Grey Academy. It recognizes the attention given to annual plans by all teachers and commends them for the quality of this planning. The administration of the school demonstrates efficiency in administrative routines and strong curricular and instructional leadership.

Suggestions

The EEC suggests that:

1. The administration ensure that a policy on child protection is adopted and that it is included in the Policy and Procedures Manual and the Staff Handbook.
2. A more formal evaluation process be considered which would culminate in a written report on the Headmaster's performance.
3. The WCB be asked to confirm that the storage area and science labs meet WHMIS requirements.
4. Priority be given to the installation of computers in the classrooms being used by teachers in the Late Intermediate and Graduation programs.

Recommendation

The EEC, after reviewing the Grade Eleven program and through discussions and review of plans for the next school year, believes a program will be in place to meet the Graduation Program requirements as specified in the Educational Standards Order (Section 5). Accordingly, the EEC recommends that West Point Grey Academy forward to the Inspector of Independent Schools a copy of proposed courses for the 2000-2001 school year, when this schedule has been finalized.

8. SUMMATIVE RECOMMENDATION

After examination of the foregoing items, it is the opinion of the External Evaluation Committee that West Point Grey Academy satisfies the requirements for Group 1 or 2 classification for its Kindergarten to Grade Eleven program, and recommends that this classification be granted, contingent upon the conditions of Section 3(1)(a) of the Schedule of the Independent School Act regarding the FTE cost per student in the previous year, which is determined by the Inspector of Independent Schools.