

124 schools closed in Buyende

BUYENDE

By Tom Gwebayanga

Pupils in 124 primary schools in Buyende district may have to find new schools before the school term opens.

The schools were closed by Dison Bwire, the district education officer, on grounds that they did not meet the minimum standards to operate.

Among the issues raised were lack of pit-latrines, conducive classrooms, professional teachers and good administration structures.

Speaking during a press briefing at the district headquarters last Friday, Bwire said the directive followed an investigation that established that the directors had not heeded the earlier warnings, but were simply bent on minting money from parents.

"Mid-last year, we warned them to fix their problems, but by the close of the year, they had paid a deaf ear and the schools are still in shambles," Bwire said.

Bwire said this is the second time the department has closed such schools, the first being in 2011, when over 65 private schools were closed, but others started mushrooming again.

The affected schools cut across the six sub-counties



The structures of Gumpi Wamuda Primary School in Bugaya sub-county, which was closed due to lack of the minimum standards. Photo by Tom Gwebayanga

Among the issues raised were lack of pit-latrines, conducive classrooms and administration

of Kidera (22), Kagulu (26), Buyende (18), Bugaya (26), Buyende town council (14) and Nkondo (18). In Kagulu, Jupiter Junior, Bright Future Kagulu, Holly Trinity Kakenyi,

Hudaya Islamic, Irundu Hills, Igalaza Parents and Bright Valley Ngole were affected.

In Kidera sub-county, Gumpi Wamuda, St James Gogonyo, Light the World Kigweri,

Fatuma Islamic, Nabitula Light, Alego's Care, Shine Junior Gwase and Green Star were closed.

In Nkondo sub-county, Buyende Grammar, Prophet Elijah, Nanvunaano Parents, Lake Shore PS, Bright Future Iringa, Vine of Life and Tenywa Education Centre were closed.

In Buyende town council, Cornerstone, Golden Gate-Buyende, Masaka Parents, Joben Junior School, Luqman Islamic, Victory Butaasa, Good

Hope Kinambogo. In Buyende sub-county the affected schools are, Ikanda Islamic, Divine Vision, Heritage Preparatory, Rise & Shine, Brian Trust, Good Heart and Moonlight PS.

The inspector of schools, Aaron Gwolaba, said out of the 220 private schools, only 96 have been allowed to operate, in addition to the 91 under the Universal Primary Education.

Gwolaba said: "We have been lenient, but even among those we spared standards have not been fully met. The directors should fulfil the requirements. Failure to comply will result in taking other stringent measures."

Bwire said private schools have a tendency of holding dubious promotions even when pupils have not performed well to boost the parents' morale and maintain the school enrolment, besides "poaching" on government schools.

The directive took the directors and headteachers by surprise. Many argued that the department officials should have been lenient.

"We were struggling to fulfil the obligations, but time and resources would not allow," Frances Nanangwe, the director of Igalaza Parents School, said.