

The administration says the school is regaining its academic standing. Enrolment has also surged to about 1,279 students, up from 712 at the close of 2024.

BY PHOEBE MASONGOLE

For years, Bubulo Secondary School in Manafwa District, one of the traditional schools in Bugisu Sub-region, had been stuck in limbo, struggling to move past a state of academic decline.

Established in 1983 by the Anglican Diocese of Mbale as a community-based institution, the school was founded with a mission to expand access to secondary education for children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

However, around 2016, its academic performance began to deteriorate due to infighting and strikes, prompting many parents to withdraw their children.

In the same year, all students who sat the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) examination failed English, a core subject.

In 2018, however, the school embarked on a transformation journey, and its UCE results for last year have been ranked among the best in the district and the wider sub-region.

The school registered 167 students (80 girls and 87 boys) for UCE and attained six As, all in science subjects, 109 Bs and 98 Cs.

In 2024, the school had registered only one A and 36 Bs at UCE level.

Ms Rose Akello Kuloba, the head teacher, told *Daily Monitor* in an interview at the weekend that they are pleased the school is regaining its academic standing.

Enrolment has also surged to about 1,279 students, up from 712 at the close of 2024.

"While the national performance indicated that sciences were the worst

Bubulo SS tracing its way back on top



Students at Bubulo Secondary School in Manafwa District last week. The school has registered a remarkable improvement in the 2025 UCE results. PHOTO/PHOEBE MASONGOLE

performed subjects, in our school, it was the reverse. Sciences, including Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics, were the best-performed subjects. Our students come from rural communities with humble backgrounds, so when they perform as well as they have done, we become very proud," she said.

Ms Akello, who also teaches sciences, attributed the turnaround to teamwork involving teachers and alumni under their umbrella body, the Bubulo Secondary School Old Boys and Girls Association (BUSOSA).

She noted, however, that the school faces a shortage of teachers. Of the 47 teachers at the school, only 24 are on the government payroll.

STAKEHOLDERS SPEAK



Performance. "Sciences, including Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics, were the best-performing subjects at school..." **Ms Rose Akello Kuloba, the Bubulo SS head teacher**



ICT drive. "We launched a drive to equip the ICT department with computers. All this is necessary to address the dire state of the school..." **Bernard Wabukala, chair old students' association**

"The 23 are not on the government payroll. They are paid from school fees contributed by parents and support from former students," she said, adding that the inadequate number of government-paid teachers has greatly affected the school.

Mr Robert Bisakaya, a long-serving teacher of History and Religious Education at the school, said the government should deploy more teachers, especially in sciences and English.

"The English Language was poorly done because the school has only one English teacher on the payroll, who is also handling other subjects such as Literature in English and General Paper," Mr Bisakaya said.

Mr Michael Joeb Kisaka, the BUSOSA general secretary, said the association was formed in 2018 but its activities were disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, forcing members to resume interventions in 2023.

"We began by implementing academic programmes, supporting teachers' welfare, mobilising resource personnel to guide us on the new curriculum, and improving the school's physical infrastructure, including sanitary facilities," he said.

Mr Bernard Musekese Wabukala, a senior lecturer of Applied Economics at Makerere University Business School in Kampala, and a former student (1994-1997), said the alumni are grateful because their efforts are beginning to bear fruit.

"We launched a drive to equip the ICT department with computers. All this is necessary to address the dire state of the school, which once produced top-notch students," Mr Musekese, who also chairs the old students' association, said.

Mr Charles John Khaukha, who served as the school head teacher for 17 years (1985-2001), is credited with laying strong administrative and academic foundations for the school, which will mark 43 years of existence this year.

Ms Halima Wataka, a teacher and assistant female warden at the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU), said before the alumni interventions, many of the school's structures were dilapidated and animals grazed within the compound.

"We, however, need more support in terms of infrastructure and an increment in the grant, because what is allocated to the school is very little," she said.

Mr Robert Nangalama, an accountant, said they are pleased parents have resumed enrolling their children at the school, particularly following the construction of a well-equipped laboratory by the government, secured through lobbying by former students.

"The school previously was on life support, but now we're flying high," he said.