

# Kayunga school struggles to revive past glory as enrolment shrinks

BY FRED MUZAALE

**KAMPALA.** Authorities at Kanjuki Secondary School, which was once a progressive and popular secondary school in Kayunga Sub-county, Kayunga District are struggling to revive its lost glory amid dilapidated infrastructure and low enrolment.

The 42-year-old Church of Uganda founded school, was in mid 2000s among the best performing secondary schools in Greater Mukono area and the best in Kayunga District with its enrolment hitting 1,500 learners.

Mr Andrew Nsereko, the headteacher, who assumed office at the end of first term, blames the school's decline on conflicts between some predecessors who took over its administration after 2013.

"The decline of this school has been gradual. There has been a lot of intrigue and infighting between past head teachers and parents, teachers and members of the Board of Gover-

nors," Mr Nsereko explains.

He adds: "A week before I took over office, the chairperson Board of Governors, Ms Sarah Nansubuga, resigned her position at the height of infighting and conflicts."

The headteacher says conflicts had given the school a bad image, prompting some parents to enrol their children in other schools. Amid low learner enrolment, which now stands at about 300, Mr Nsereko says, the new school administration is struggling to meet the various operational costs to effectively run the school. Low fees collections, Mr Nsereko says, are making it hard for the administration to renovate the dilapidated classrooms, pit-latrines and dormitories.

He says because of the previous high student numbers, the school has a lot of unutilised infrastructure and beds, which are now habitat for bats.

"When I was posted to this school, I discovered that most parents prefer to pay school fees in kind. Parents say they want to supply cassava in ex-

change for school fees. Additionally, the bursary scheme had been abused.

I found that almost every member of staff had a student under bursary scheme and I tried to streamline how bursaries are given," the former Mukono High deputy headteacher says.

He also explains that because the school lacks a fence, it has become prone to incidents of burglary.

"We want to build a perimeter wall around the school, but we lack the financial resources to do so even when the ministry wants us to implement that," he says. Despite low student en-

## FACTS

Statistics show that Kayunga District has a total of 1,776 primary teachers on government payroll, working in 167 schools, while those teaching in 13 secondary schools are 400.

rolment, the headteacher says the academic performance of the school has remained vibrant because it has good teachers.

Mr Moses Mukeera, the new chairperson of the Board of Governors, says the decline of the school was normal, noting that every institution has its highs and lows.

"The problem with Kanjuki SS is that those who were in administration failed to address its challenges, which led to its near collapse," Mr Mukeera says.

He, however, says that as members of the Board of Governors, they have met all stakeholders including Mukono Diocesan leaders, parents and the district authorities to brainstorm on ways of reviving his alma mater.

"We want the BoG to pass a resolution asking the government to enrol the school under the Universal Secondary Education (USE) programme as one way of attracting more learners because most parents in the area are peasants, who cannot afford the high

tuition fees," Mr Mukeera says.

Mr Ronald Mukiibi, the Kayunga District senior education officer, re-echoes the chairperson, Board of Governors' proposal.

He says with the many secondary schools in the area under USE programme, few parents can decide to take their children to a school, where they pay over Shs500, 000 in tuition alone. "The school needs a stable administration to attract more learners. The emergence of many secondary schools in the Kanjuki SS' catchment area has also affected our enrolment. My advice to the school management is to ask government to enrol it under USE programme," Mr Mukiibi says.

Dr Dan Bubaale, the Kayunga District education officer, urges the new head teacher to cooperate with all stakeholders to revive the school.

He observes that the school has the potential to get more students given the many primary schools in its catchment area. Since its establishment, the school has had five head teachers.