



**IAPS**

**Report of Diagnostic Review Inspection Visit**

**to**

**St Andrew's Preparatory School**

**by an**

**IAPS Review Team**

**from**

**9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

# **IAPS DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW INSPECTION VISIT**

## **REPORT ON**

### **St Andrew's Preparatory School, Turi, Kenya**

Full name of school: St Andrew's Preparatory School

Address: Private Bag, 20106, Molo, Kenya

Telephone Number: +254 (0)20 2025709

Email Address: office@turimail.co.ke

Head teacher: Mr P Moss

Chairman of the Board of Governors: Mrs A Alier

Age Range: 2-13 years

Gender: Mixed

Review Dates: 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> October 2011

The review does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The reviewers check the general health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter; they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their review of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features. Reviewers do not check in detail the school's compliance with prevailing regulations, nor have they been asked to comment on governance.

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## **1. Background to the school**

- 1.1 St Andrew's Preparatory School is a Christian co-educational boarding school for boys and girls aged 2 to 13. It is a non-profit company limited by guarantee. The board of governors are directors of the company. Since the last inspection in 1999 the board has added a new boarding house for girls, extensively refurbished many parts of the buildings, and improved the grounds and playing surfaces.
- 1.2 The school caters for 231 full time pupils, with three part-time pupils in the pre-preparatory section. Of these, 119 are boys and there are 112 girls. In the lower school (Foundation Stage to Year 4, ages 2 to 8) there are 29 boys and 26 girls. The middle school (Years 5 and 6, ages 9 and 10) educates 32 boys and 33 girls. In the upper school (Years 7 and 8, ages 11 to 13) there are 58 boys and 53 girls. The senior school for pupils over the age of 13 shares the same site but is not adjacent to the preparatory school.
- 1.3 Pupils arrive at the school from a variety of countries in East Africa and beyond, with many of the pupils travelling long distances with the school providing a full boarding experience. Many of the pupils are from families where a number of languages are spoken with English not always being the first language. The school supports any pupils requiring help with developing English. No pupils have a statement of educational need. A number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are supported by the Learning Success Centre who work also with pupils who are gifted and talented. The ability profile of the school is judged to be above average with a few pupils being well above and some well below average. At the age of 13 pupils transfer to the senior school following assessment through the Common Entrance Examination system, or to other schools of their choice. Pupils in the lower school are taught mainly by their class teachers but the involvement of specialist teachers grows in frequency as pupils are taught beyond that point. The full range of subjects established as part of an English curriculum provision is on offer throughout the school. Specialist accommodation is used for the teaching of science, music, art, design and technology (DT) and information and communication technology (ICT), and library skills.
- 1.4 The school's mission is an extension of the motto 'Altiora Peto' – "Seeking the Highest through a well-rounded and outstanding education within a Christian community, we seek to develop self disciplined, confident and compassionate individuals who live and lead with integrity".
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. Pupils' standards and their attitudes to work and learning**

- 2.1 Pupils achieve high standards and make good progress by the time they leave school, notably in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and a modern foreign language. High standards are achieved in lessons and are clearly demonstrated in the work of the pupils. These achievements reflect the mission of the school to pursue excellence. Pupils' attitudes to their work are outstanding and contribute in a large way to the successes they enjoy.
- 2.2 Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are well developed across all subjects. The accomplished manner in which they use ICT, their ability to research information and collect and collate their findings are matched by the skills they have in expressing opinions, forming judgements and discussing their views. Their ability to use with accuracy the technical terminology peculiar to subjects is a feature of many lessons. Pupils are confident communicators, they write engagingly when given the opportunity to do so, with some outstanding work evident in English. Their ability in mathematics, particularly in the use of mental arithmetic in solving problems, demonstrates a skill and an understanding that is used across the school. The testing of knowledge and understanding through experimentation in science contributes to a high level of problem solving skills. The very good levels of creativity required for success in textiles, art, drama, music and sport are evident in lessons and in the variety of out of lesson activities that give so much enjoyment to the pupils and help them to achieve high standards in their work. High quality displays around the school testify to pupils' talents. The very good literacy, numeracy and oral skills demonstrated by older pupils are based on solid and extensive foundations developed carefully and thoroughly through the teaching of the lower and middle schools.
- 2.3 Team successes are enjoyed in athletics with pupils holding ten current IAPS District K records. In rugby, swimming, hockey, sevens rugby, football and netball the school performs above its weight in many competitions. One pupil represented his country this year at the Gothia Cup in Sweden. Termly horse-riding certificates are awarded. Sports and all-rounder scholarships are regularly given by St Andrew's Senior School.
- 2.4 The school hosts a Schools Orchestral Weekend each year and schools from Nairobi are involved. Apart from the school orchestra, pupils belong to specialist ensembles, playing in string, woodwind or brass and percussion ensembles. Private music lessons are offered to around 60% of the school population on a weekly basis and a supervised practice system is in place to maintain progress of all the pupils. Most instrumentalists successfully take part in the ABRSM examinations held at the end of every year.
- 2.5 Most of the ensemble groups are presented with ample performance opportunities through the school year within the school community or by participating in other schools' functions and performing for the general public.

- 2.6 Each year pupils have an opportunity to be involved in school productions giving them a chance to show their skills. Many pupils enjoy success in LAMDA examinations.
- 2.7 Pupils perform well in English National Curriculum Tests. Results in English and science are high with significant improvements occurring in mathematics in recent years. Pupils with SEN are well supported by the Learning Success Centre giving one-to-one tuition when required as well as working with class teachers developing their skills in supporting pupils through appropriate teaching and one-to-one support. The name of the Learning Success Centre indicates the wide remit the team enjoys in supporting pupils of all abilities.
- 2.8 The overall high levels of attainment indicate that pupils make good progress in relation to their abilities. The high standards of success in all areas are the result of high quality teaching and of the active cooperation and commitment of pupils in lessons. The strong commitment of pupils to achieving success came through very clearly in the interviews with them. Their written work for the most part is very well presented and shows the ability of the pupils to engage successfully with the tasks given to them. In lessons it is noticeable how quickly they adjust to working alone, or in pairs as well as joining in whole class activities. Their sense of responsibility for their behaviour and for the work they produce is a feature of many lessons and activities. All pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

### **3. The curriculum**

- 3.1 The school offers a good curriculum, which is both broad and well balanced. It supports very effectively two of the aims of the school - to offer a curriculum of the highest standard and to enable pupils to achieve their full potential in all subjects. The last inspection report highlighted shortcomings in the balance and appropriateness of the curriculum and inconsistent attention to core subjects in the lower school. These weaknesses have been remedied – for example, history and geography do not follow the Common Entrance syllabus - and pupils of all abilities are now provided with appropriate academic, social, physical and creative experiences.
- 3.2 The curriculum is timetabled effectively. Pupils are grouped according to ability for mathematics, science and French from Year 6 and in English from Year 7. In Year 7 pupils are taught DT, woodwork and food technology as separate subjects experiencing each subject in turn for a fixed time over the year. All English National Curriculum subjects are taught. In addition French is taught from Year 4. Personal and Social Education (PSE) is taught as a discrete subject from Year 5 and pupil interviews confirmed that they found topics such as friendship and study skills particularly useful. ICT is also timetabled as a discrete subject from the Reception age group enabling the pupils to develop this skill as an effective tool for learning. Attractive and varied displays around the school broaden the opportunities for children to display their creativity and understanding of the topics they are studying.

- 3.3 The curriculum is very well planned. Subject handbooks are detailed and comprehensive in their content and include data analyses of pupil achievement. This is an area which has been identified in the school development plan as a priority for further development so that added value can be measured at subject level.
- 3.4 Responding to the learning needs of pupils is evident in short-term planning. Pupils who need support are referred by teachers to the Learning Success Centre or are given in-class support. Individual Education Plans are in place for some pupils and reviewed termly. These are in need of further development to ensure pupil progress is tracked more effectively. A new policy for gifted and talented pupils has been drawn up and provision for these pupils is evident in planning. In lessons, extension tasks for the more able were set, for example in a Year 7 science lesson when mystery liquids had to be identified. A recently introduced system of subject reviews is in place on an 18-month cycle ensuring quality control of subject handbooks, marking and teaching. This activity remedies the deficiencies identified in the last inspection report regarding a lack of curriculum monitoring and a weakness in providing work suited to the range of abilities in lessons.
- 3.5 The curriculum is enriched by opportunities for pupils to go on outings and visits such as a science trip to Ol Karia power station, a French language trip to Paris, geography field trips to Rumuruti, Naivasha and Baringo, and an annual history trip to Zanzibar.
- 3.6 Music is clearly a key curriculum area with more than half the pupils learning an instrument. Pupils can join a number of choirs; they can take part in music tours and an orchestral weekend that attracts musicians from other schools. The quality of art on display around the school confirmed that this too is a strong subject in the school.

#### **4. Extra-curricular activities**

- 4.1 Excellent provision is made for extra-curricular activities and the extra-curricular programme is very much a part of the school's boarding ethos. Clubs include a range of physical activities such as archery, Tae Kwondo, horse riding and basketball, alongside creative ones such as music, art and design. These opportunities support the academic, technological, creative, aesthetic, physical and social development of the pupils with considerable success.

#### **5. Teaching and assessment**

- 5.1 The quality of teaching overall is good with many outstanding features. In almost half the lessons the quality of teaching is outstanding. Pupils benefit greatly from this quality of teaching making good progress and achieving high standards. The quality of teaching and the outcomes produced are in line with the mission of the school. The quality of teaching has been improved and refined through the many initiatives led by senior management. The active involvement of subject and section leaders in reviews and evaluation of performance is further enhancing the quality of teaching already achieved.

- 5.2 Pupils respond positively to the many opportunities offered to participate in lessons through discussions, presenting their work, offering suggestions and finding answers to challenging problems. In the best lessons astute questioning, encouragement of pupils to take the initiative and giving time for individual and paired work produce a style of teaching that encourages learning, promotes confidence and helps pupils reach high standards. The pace of these lessons is well measured with openings for personal reflection and initiative built in. In the very few lessons where teaching was not of the highest level, the pace was slowed by the teacher taking too much control of the lessons, confining pupils to the role of passive recipients, a role that does not sit easily with them.
- 5.3 Teachers are well informed and bring professional and subject specific expertise to their teaching. The use of specialist teaching through the school from the earliest years enhances the high quality provision of class-based teachers.
- 5.4 Planning is excellent. Very carefully constructed lessons with clear aims, consideration of pupils with need of support, and the judicious selection of tasks that move the learning forward are the bedrock on which the successful teaching is built. Teachers develop pupils' basic knowledge, understanding and skills. The style and the content of teaching in many lessons, as well as the relationships between pupils and teachers, promote pupils' wider personal development.
- 5.5 Provision for pupils in need of learning support is given through one-to-one interventions in lessons or through work that is arranged to suit the needs of the individual pupils. Classroom assistants are valuable and effective contributors to this support.
- 5.6 Very good resources are provided generally through the school but not all classrooms benefit from the rich supply of ICT provision found in some areas. Teachers who have access to ICT in classrooms construct lessons enriched by mixed media usage that stimulates learning and engenders a level of enjoyment among pupils that is conducive to learning.
- 5.7 In lessons throughout the school there is a spirit of enjoyment that flows from active participation, high levels of challenge and the encouragement to be creative and show initiative.
- 5.8 The assessment and marking of work in some subjects is outstanding. In others marking and feedback is more perfunctory or irregular. Senior staff are addressing this inconsistency. In the best examples of marking, comments are incisive, detailed and encourage improvement, indicating targets to be achieved. Verbal feedback in many lessons is very good in addressing the performance of individuals. Written records of this feedback are not kept.

## **6. Pastoral care, welfare, health and safety**

- 6.1 The school's arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are excellent. Pastoral care of the pupils is outstanding. The pastoral care of pupils is exercised through the form group structure led by class teachers up until Year 6. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are grouped in tutor groups, each group having its own tutor base. In addition pupils and tutors are grouped in four house groups where a wider sense of community is generated. The boarding staff, under the leadership of the head of boarding, provide for the welfare and development of pupils outside of lesson times. The role of these staff and the contribution the boarding experience makes to the welfare and development of pupils are significant factors in the success of the school. All staff play a part in the pastoral system of the school.
- 6.2 Teachers have a good overview of pupils' progress and development. Regular contacts between pupils and their tutors, house staff and boarding staff give many opportunities to guide pupils and to address any issues that concern them. These contacts in turn offer pupils many avenues to raise issues and to seek advice. In interviews pupils said they felt free to raise concerns and that they were confident that teachers would take action to resolve any problems and ease anxieties.
- 6.3 Face to face opportunities are provided every three weeks for parents and staff to discuss concerns at 'Viso' (visiting weekends), with parents camping on the school grounds giving pupils the chance to be with their families on a regular basis. Parents who returned the questionnaire before the inspection appreciated the easy access by parents to the head teacher and the senior staff. Between these visits, parents can contact their children each day by designated mobile phones provided. The way the system is set up prevents possible misuse.
- 6.4 Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. The high quality of relationships between pupils helps create an atmosphere of trust so that pupils are at home in each other's company. Many pupils spoke of the warmth and welcome they received from other pupils on joining the school. They remembered acts of kindness, saying how much difference those kindnesses were in making them feel at home. Numerous pupils commented that the school was special because it was like a home to them. The positive nature of relationships in the school community play a key role in developing pupils who are confident, aware of others and willing to exercise a leadership that is based on service. The sound of laughter and the noise of children enjoying themselves are noticeable features of every day.
- 6.5 The personal development of pupils is excellent. Senior pupils show a sense of maturity and responsibility that reflects the Christian ethos of the school and is a result of the high level of attention given to developing the whole person. Prefects exemplify the service concept of leadership and see themselves as supporters and guides for those they serve. They regard their extra duties as a way of contributing to the vibrant life of the school. Pupils speak readily of the chances they have to be of service to local communities. The school charity, 'Love in Action', promotes a greater awareness of the needs of those less privileged and allows pupils to be

involved in practical fundraising projects and to participate in the school's links with local, government run primary schools, orphanages, churches and its own work-force crèche. In addition, pupils can take on leadership roles within the school so enriching their school. This could be through the positions of prefect, house captain and dorm captains, pupil librarians, peer mentors and school council members. Older pupils are encouraged to assist younger pupils in their house groups and in the junior dining room and in so doing they contribute to the wider school life.

- 6.6 The school has robust policies and procedures in place that address all aspects of securing the welfare, health and safety of pupils. The anti-bullying policy is well structured and appropriate to the needs of the pupils. Pupils say there is hardly any bullying and occurrences are dealt with quickly and firmly when noticed by staff. The policies and procedures for child protection and for safe appointments are in place and rigorously followed by those with responsibilities in those areas. Regular review makes sure the policies and procedures are fit for purpose.
- 6.7 The presence of senior staff on-duty teams gives staff the guidance they need and enables senior staff to have a hands-on perspective about the working of the school. This is especially true at the weekend where pupils can choose from a wide range of activities and where they are free to set up their own. The degree of choice given to pupils is possible because they show a high level of responsibility for their behaviour and because teachers are available to watch over them and give assistance when required.
- 6.8 Fire precautions receive appropriate attention with regular drills that include night time evacuations. Healthy eating and exercise are promoted with pupils encouraged to take advantage of the many excellent outdoor facilities available to them. Medical facilities are available with qualified nurses, under the direction of the school doctor, always on hand. Attendance registers are in place and the presence of pupils is checked regularly a number of times each day.

## **7. The quality of leadership and management**

- 7.1 Leadership and management in the school are excellent. The last inspection report recommended clarification of the roles and responsibilities of middle management and this has been done. The senior management team, led by a highly effective head teacher, provides clear and decisive direction in all aspects of the school's work and this enables the school to fulfill its aim of offering an education of the highest standard. Senior managers are open and approachable. The pastoral care and welfare of the pupils are a high priority for management and clear, detailed procedures are in place to support this priority. The excellent personal development of the pupils and their high levels of achievement reflect the success of the leadership team.
- 7.2 The school has an effective development plan in place, which identifies seven strands of improvement, across both the preparatory and senior schools. This clarity of vision, which was encapsulated in the conclusions from a retreat for governors and

senior staff in 2010, benefits the whole community. One particular focus is the recruitment and retention of high quality staff, which, as the last inspection report highlighted, remains a key challenge for the school. Although the development plan is available to staff, awareness of its content and direction is not universal.

- 7.3 Regular weekly meetings allow all aspects of the school's provision and the welfare of its pupils to be reviewed. All those involved with management show great care and commitment for both pupils and staff. The staff appraisal system gives an annual review of performance and success. This system is augmented by subject reviews when managers monitor the quality of subject handbooks, marking and teaching. High quality policies are in place and are effectively implemented by teachers. A detailed and comprehensive staff handbook provides information about every aspect of school life, includes key policies and is reviewed annually. This is a particularly useful document for new staff to the school whose ten-day induction programme is carefully overseen by senior management.
- 7.4 Effective channels of communication allow staff to be fully informed and encourage their active involvement in the life of the school. On a day-to-day basis, the school runs very smoothly thanks to both capable management and the support of a hard-working and committed non-teaching staff that make a significant contribution to staff and pupil welfare. This enhances a strong sense of community and contributes effectively to the pupils' personal development, happiness and sense of well being in keeping with the aims of the school and its underlying ethos.

## **8. Boarding**

- 8.1 The school provides full boarding that enables it to give pupils a unique experience of great value to them. The boarding structure, the quality of relationships, the support from staff and other pupils, the constant attention to the needs of pupils and the wealth of activities provided constitute an all-encompassing environment that accounts for the many successes of the school.
- 8.2 Boarding makes a significant contribution to the academic standards achieved by the pupils because of the confidence pupils acquire from boarding and from the guidance that is so readily available and generously given by house staff and boarding tutors.
- 8.3 The spiritual, social and moral development of pupils is nurtured in an environment that is comprehensive in its provision and consistent in the high level of care and support given through boarding.
- 8.4 The Christian foundation of the school permeates all aspects of daily life and is therefore a central plank in the effectiveness of the school in bringing about the high level of personal development of pupils. The Christian nature of the school appears in many forms, such as in chapel services, regular prayers, Bible study groups, the faith witness of staff and pupils, generous and comprehensive support and service to the local community, behaviour that considers the needs of others and a high quality of relationships that is a significant feature of the whole school. The willingness of

the board of governors to appoint a full time whole school chaplain and a preparatory part-time chaplain demonstrates their commitment to the Christian nature of the school.

- 8.5 Well-structured systems support pupils and enable staff to understand their roles. Required policies are in place and are monitored with adjustments made when circumstances or regular reviews suggest refinement. The improvements in the boarding houses accommodation, commented on so favourable by parents in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and the on-going refurbishments of existing buildings are expressions of the school's determination to provide accommodation that matches the aspiration of the board of governors to give pupils the best experience possible.
- 8.6 Well-planned activities offer rich opportunities for pupils to develop physically, intellectually and socially. Senior staff support and monitor boarding provision to ensure it is always maintained to the highest standard. Frequent formal and informal communications between boarding staff and senior management give the required channels for communication and evaluation so that the school is always finding ways to move the quality of boarding to even higher levels. The willingness of all staff to participate and innovate in boarding activities gives the school a valuable resource in maintaining and refining the quality of boarding that is so beneficial to pupils.

## **9. Overall conclusions and recommendations**

- 9.1 St Andrew's Preparatory School provides a very high quality education for its pupils. The significant successes of the school are built on strong leadership, excellent boarding provision and a Christian ethos that informs all aspects of the life of the school. As a result of these forces pupils benefit greatly in terms of their academic success as well as in their personal development. They grow to an appreciation of the privileges they enjoy and an awareness of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. In a variety of ways pupils learn to exercise leadership and offer a service that aids not only the school but also the communities around the school. This concept of leadership through service is one the school propagates as a way of preparing leaders of the future. The determination to contribute to the betterment of countries in East Africa in this way is a firm ambition of the school.
- 9.2 There is considerable strength in the quality of teaching and learning. Key qualities in the teaching are the prompting of independent learning, the involvement of pupils in their own learning, the brisk pace and tasks that match the needs of pupils and suit the pursuit of the learning objective established for the lesson. The school needs to address the inconsistencies in marking and the recording of feedback so that the very good practice seen in some subjects may be spread throughout the school.
- 9.3 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils enables pupils to grow in confidence, sure of their self-worth and conscious of belonging to a community that is founded on clear values. The challenge to pupils to live up to the

ideals of the school is well supported by the range of staff and the many contact points through which pupils can find all the support they need.

- 9.4 The high level of personal development of pupils is evident in their behaviour, in their cooperation with their teachers and tutors and in the manner in which they look out for each other. In these ways pupils contribute greatly to the success of the school. The broad curriculum, with a wide range of extra-curricular provision, structures the learning experiences of pupils giving them a rich experience of learning opportunities. The effective supervision of the delivery of this curriculum by heads of school and by heads of subjects constitutes a high quality of leadership and management at both this level and, in particular, at senior management level.
- 9.5 School policies and procedures are well thought through and are appropriate. Monitoring of practice and adjustments to keep them in line with the needs and opportunities identified ensure they are fit for purpose. In this way the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are addressed creating a safe and secure environment in which they can learn, grow and enjoy themselves.
- 9.6 The school has remedied weaknesses and responded well to recommendations made in the last inspection.
- 9.7 Pupils are happy. They enjoy their time in their school. They give back generously what they can to develop further the success of the school. The relaxed atmosphere and the mingling and enjoyment of all the pupils and staff gathered for a Sunday barbeque best exemplifies in one activity all the school stands for and achieves. As many pupils commented, "being here is like being in your other home".

## **Recommendations**

In order to build on the good and many excellent features of the education provided the school should seek to:

1. Ensure that the system of marking is consistently applied across the school and that appropriate records of oral feedback are maintained.

## **10. Evidence Summary**

- 10.1 The visit was conducted from the 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> October 2011. In advance of the visit many school documents were scrutinised and reviewed. Other documentation was also reviewed during the course of the visit. In addition, samples of pupils' work were examined. Discussions were held with pupils across the age range and classrooms and facilities were visited. Formal discussions were held with key staff and informal conversations were held with staff and pupils. Registrations, breaks and assemblies were observed or visited. Numerous visits to classrooms and other teaching facilities as well as to the boarding houses were made and observations noted.

### **Review Team**

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