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IAPS

Report of Diagnostic Review Inspection Visit

to

Peponi House Preparatory School

by an

IAPS Review Team

from

12th – 14th October 2011

IAPS DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW INSPECTION VISIT

REPORT ON

Peponi House Preparatory School

Full name of school: Peponi House Preparatory School

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Head teacher: Mr Robert Blake

Chairman of the Board of Directors: Mrs Kristina Pratt

Age Range: 6-13 years

Gender: Mixed

Inspection Dates: 12th-14th 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. The review team 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 Peponi House Preparatory School is a co-educational day school for boys and girls aged 6-13 years. It first opened in 1986, moving to its present site in 1987. In recent years a hall, swimming pool, art room and dining area have been added. The school is managed by the three members of the Board of Directors, led by a chairman. Since the last inspection the school has undergone a change of head teacher, a substantial rise in numbers and on-going building development, including a new music school which is due for completion in December 2011.
- 1.2 The school caters for 324 pupils between the ages of six and thirteen. Of these, 161 pupils are boys and 163 are girls. In Year 2 (ages 6-7) there are 59 pupils (26 boys and 33 girls). In Years 3-6 (ages 7-11) there are 192 pupils (100 boys and 92 girls), whilst in Years 7 and 8 (ages 12 -13) there are 72 pupils, of whom 35 are boys and 37 girls. All pupils attend the school on a full time basis.
- 1.3 Almost all pupils live within a reasonably short travelling distance of the school and come from a variety of linguistic, cultural and professional backgrounds. Forty two nationalities are represented in the school. Only a very few pupils come from families where the first language spoken is not English. Fifty seven pupils have a language other than English as their mother tongue but only two receive support with their language development.
- 1.4 Thirty five pupils have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN) and all receive additional support from the school. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Admission to the school is non-selective, although most pupils seeking to join the school are assessed beforehand to ensure that the curriculum offered is appropriate to their needs. The ability profile of the school is judged to be above average. At the age of thirteen the majority of pupils move on to Peponi School in Ruiru, although a small number move on to independent senior schools both in Kenya and the United Kingdom. Some 25 pupils have received scholarships to their secondary school in the past two years.
- 1.5 Most pupils in Years 2 to 4 are taught by their class teacher, although there is a growing amount of specialist teaching as pupils proceed through the school, notably in Year 5. In Years 6 to 8 most pupils are taught by specialist subject teachers. Specialist accommodation is available for the teaching of most subjects to the older children. The school's mission statement states that it is a multi-cultural community which encourages respect for self and others. Its emphasis is on excellence through a broad, balanced curriculum which aims to maximise the potential of each pupil as a whole person. The overall mission statement is supported by a number of aims related to the individual child's academic and personal development.
- 1.6 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 By the time pupils leave the school they attain standards that are good overall, particularly in some subjects, notably English, mathematics and science. In this way the school achieves its aim of maximising the potential of each pupil. This shows that the good standards found at the previous inspection have been maintained. The last inspection also commented that the higher attaining pupils did not reach the standards of which they were capable. The school recognises that it still has some work to do in this area but has good plans in hand to address this issue. Pupils have particularly good attitudes to their work and their learning throughout the school, which is again in line with the school's aims.
- 2.2 Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are very well developed across a wide range of activities and subjects. They speak and respond exceptionally well in conversation and are well able to express themselves confidently, even though there is a wide spread of ability within the school. Pupils read most competently and record their work and practical findings with a considerable amount of accuracy. Pupils reason through arguments well. When discussing issues, in subjects such as English, where Year 8 discussed the topic of euthanasia, pupils displayed a good deal of maturity, discussing each other's arguments and responding logically and accurately, in preparation for a debate they were having at a later date. In addition, when given the opportunity, pupils are well able to deduce their own conclusions as well as work together with others to work out solutions to a wide variety of problems. Very good standards of creative development are to be found both in pupils' art work and in the quality of displays around the school. Pupils have well developed numeracy skills as well as information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Individual and teams successes are to be found in rounders, football, cricket and hockey, where teams from the school won or reached finals in local competitions, the most recent being a cross-country team win against other Kenyan schools. In swimming and athletics individual pupils achieve notably high standards. In other areas such as chess, art, poetry, music and drama, pupils perform to a good standard and achieve success in ABRSM music examinations. Such successes have a most positive impact on pupils' personal development.
- 2.3 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in externally moderated English National Curriculum tests. However, on the evidence available, pupils' attainment is judged to be high in relation to age-related norms. The pupils study a broad and balanced curriculum and each year most move on to Peponi School with approximately a third gaining scholarships. Inspection evidence confirms this judgement and includes consideration of the levels at which pupils are working in relation to age-related English National Curriculum targets. Pupils with SEN also achieve well given their levels of ability, largely as a result of the good quality of support they receive both within the classroom and in individual support lessons.

2.4 Such levels of attainment indicate that pupils make good and often very good progress in relation to their above average ability. This can be seen from Year 2 right across the school to Year 8. Good, effective teaching and the pupils' own positive work ethic and perseverance, as seen in lessons and in discussions with them, are the major reasons for the considerable amount of progress that they make. In lessons pupils give of their best and work hard. They are highly motivated individuals and have good powers of concentration. The presentation of pupils' work is of variable quality. At its best, and where teachers insist that pupils adhere to the 'Big Five' rules for presentation, then it is of a very high quality. However this is not always the case as some staff do not insist sufficiently. The lack of effective overall monitoring of the situation means that in these cases pupils' presentation of their work is barely satisfactory. Pupils show a good deal of enjoyment in the subjects that they study and the activities in which they take part. Furthermore, they apply themselves very well either when working with others or when working individually. They take a pride in their work and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

3. The curriculum

3.1 The school offers a good curriculum with a breadth and balance that benefits the learning of the pupils. Consequently the school achieves its aims of giving every child the opportunity to excel and be nurtured in a stimulating, open-minded educational environment. The curriculum assists the pupils in achieving the good, and in some areas outstanding, standards they attain. Since the time of the last inspection, ICT is used much more and given a fair proportion of timetable allocation. In addition, the school has made very good progress in extending the curriculum and developing its quality. Heads of department are in place and their role is well-described in their job descriptions. However, there is room for further clarification of their role and scope for far greater co-ordination and guidance. They have the opportunity to monitor their subjects but need focus and a central overview of and action plan for their findings. Some members of the school's management team monitor the curriculum but there is a considerable overlap of responsibilities. Roles need much clearer definition in order to ensure that the good and often outstanding work of many of the heads of department is recognised and used as exemplars of best practice for all staff. Excellent systems are in place for communicating curriculum content to the parents.

3.2 The curriculum is well planned by individual teachers and clearly identifies good progression in the acquisition of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across all the subjects taught. However, the policies and schemes of work lack consistency and are of variable quality and effectiveness. ICT is taught as a separate subject and is well used in several subject areas. However, scope exists for extending the use of ICT in all subjects to enhance the pupils' learning. The school regularly reviews the curriculum and is always prepared to enhance the provision, for example by the inclusion of Spanish last year.

- 3.3 Pupils of all abilities are provided with experiences in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. Emphasis is placed on acquiring the skills of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum covers all the English National Curriculum subjects and is enhanced by the addition of French, Spanish, Kiswahili, circle time and religious education. From Year 4 pupils are arranged in sets for mathematics and from Year 6 for French, and this allows for good extension work as well as support for those who find the subject more difficult.
- 3.4 In addition, the curriculum is enhanced by special curriculum days of focus such as Literacy Day, World Maths Day, World Environment Day and art exhibitions to celebrate the pupils' work. The recent languages assembly and similar events contribute effectively to the pupils' academic performance and their personal development.
- 3.5 Pupils requiring learning support are effectively identified and offered strong support. This enables them to benefit from all that the curriculum offers. A central register for inclusion and individual learning plans are in place. These are not always well known to the staff so that provision for these pupils can be haphazard in some classes and between different subjects. In classes where the pupils' requirements are known, differentiation is apparent and gives these pupils the same opportunity as others to access the curriculum. Gifted and talented pupils are included in a comprehensive and informative register but they are not always catered for and are not always provided with work that is sufficiently challenging and extending them. This means that these pupils are not given the opportunity of extending their knowledge and skills at a sufficiently rapid pace. Excellent plans to improve the provision for such pupils through the recently created senior school year group coordinators are in place.
- 3.6 The school is providing increasing opportunities to embrace the culture and life of Kenya through the curriculum and this is apparent in displays around the school as well as in a number of subject areas. The school has had visits from the poet Val Bloom, there is a developing post Common Entrance programme, a weekly French lunch and a "buddy system", all of which make a significant contribution to the pupils' development both academically and socially.

4. Extra-curricular activities

- 4.1 The school offers an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities, which gives the pupils numerous opportunities to extend their learning and personal development.
- 4.2 Activities include an excellent range of physical activities such as tae-kwando, trampolining and karate, as well as the full range of sports both during activity times and as part of the extra sports provision during practice times. In addition, pupils wishing to experience more artistic activities also have a full range including T-shirt painting, fibres and fabrics, photography and pottery. All such activities offer pupils the chance to experiment and try out new things. Excellent opportunities for

music and drama are also in place. Activities are rotated termly and the pupils appreciate the fact they can change and experience a different activity. The activity programme is of a very high quality and is greatly appreciated by the pupils, who in discussion described them as fun and exciting.

- 4.3 Opportunities to enhance the curriculum by the use of high quality educational visits are used regularly. Pupils commented positively and enthusiastically about the trips they had attended. The pupils experience a number of such trips including the Year 5 trip to Mombasa, a visit to the United Nations Environmental Programme and the annual Year 8 trip to climb Mount Kenya. The excellent range and diversity of these visits greatly enhances the taught curriculum and gives the pupils a number of positive life experiences coupled with first hand experiential learning.

5. Teaching and assessment

- 5.1 Pupils achieve well largely as a result of good and on occasions excellent teaching. Teaching contributes significantly in enabling pupils to achieve the success that they do. Consequently the school is able to fulfil its aim of maximising the potential of each pupil. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in raising the quality of teaching, which at that time was judged to be satisfactory overall with some, on occasions, being very good. Such good quality teaching is evident right across the school. The good standards pupils achieve and the good progress they make is clearly related to the good quality teaching they receive. The teaching of English in particular is of a high quality. Furthermore, subject specialist teachers enable the pupils to learn particularly well, most notably in subjects in the upper part of the school.
- 5.2 Pupils are able to discuss their work in subjects such as English, mathematics, science and history as a result of the opportunities they are given. This has a major effect on improving pupils' oral communication skills and their self-confidence. Basic skills are emphasised in subjects such as English and mathematics right across the school and this enables the pupils to attain the standards that they do, particularly in these subjects, by the time they leave the school. Pupils' creative skills, notably in subjects such as art and music, are developed very well as a result of the good teaching they receive. In addition, pupils physical skills are well developed as a result of the good and often outstanding teaching found in physical education and games.
- 5.3 Teachers' subject knowledge and individual lesson planning are good and they make effective use of the available resources to help pupils to understand the knowledge and skills that they are being taught. In the best lessons the teaching is enthusiastic and motivating. Effective questioning techniques enable pupils to understand quickly and so to achieve well. On most occasions in these good and outstanding lessons, the work set for the pupils is varied and well matched to pupils' abilities. Praise and encouragement are well used to develop and reinforce the pupils' learning. On those occasions when teaching is not as good a slower pace to the lesson is evident. Also, such lessons tend to be over-directed by the teacher. In addition, the work set is not always precisely matched to pupils' differing ability

levels. As a result, pupils have fewer opportunities to think for themselves and take on some responsibility for their learning. Their rate of progress is slower in such lessons.

- 5.4 The good provision and programme of work for pupils with SEN enables teachers to plan individual help in their lessons for those who need it. Also pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) are given good support to enable them to make good progress in their understanding and learning. Most classrooms and departments contain a good level of resources. However, this is not the case with all. Indeed, in some cases resource provision is barely adequate. The school is aware of this but does have difficulties getting resources from overseas to be delivered promptly. Most classrooms have inter-active whiteboards which are appropriately used to support pupils' learning. Such resources help to produce good, stimulating lessons. In addition, they fire pupils' level of interest and enthuse them. Overall, ICT is adequately used to support pupils' learning but there is a need to extend this usage to some other subject areas.
- 5.5 The marking of pupils' work is of variable quality. The best marking contains helpful comments and gives pupils suggestions for improvement and targets for them to work towards. However, this is not always the case and in some areas pupils' work is poorly marked and contains few comments. The school has recently become well aware of this inconsistency and now has begun to take steps to monitor the marking of pupils' work more thoroughly, but as yet this has not been consistently applied across the school. Pupils also say that on many occasions they are given verbal feedback, so that they know what they have to do to continue to improve. Assessment data is used to check on pupils' progress, although there are different systems in use. The current system does not allow the school to have a clear overview of each pupil's levels of progress. The school is aware that a single coordinated system needs to be put in place as a matter of some urgency so that assessment can be more effectively used to inform teachers' planning.

6. Pastoral care, welfare, health and safety

- 6.1 The school's arrangements for the pastoral care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good. The school has done well to ensure that effective systems are in place which raise the awareness of all those involved with the pupils in this area. A relaxed and friendly atmosphere prevails and this emanates from the enthusiastic and caring leadership of the head teacher. He makes the pupils' welfare a priority. The policies which are in place make an appropriate contribution to providing a safe and secure environment for the pupils. In conversation, the pupils made it very clear that they feel safe at school.
- 6.2 Since the last inspection the high quality of pastoral care has been successfully maintained. Pupils spoke highly of the relationships between them and the majority of the staff, who they feel they can turn to for advice, support and assistance with problems both in school and outside. Registration and circle time are used well to address any issues that might arise. Pupils know who they can turn to and

expressed faith in a large number of their teachers and, in particular, the school's counsellor. They feel they can express any concerns or worries they might have and are confident they would be listened to and action taken. Pupils relate extremely well to each other and are mutually supportive of their peers. Pupils report that there is very little bullying and that this is a great improvement from the recent past when suspensions occurred due to bullying. They spoke with compassion for the victims and recognised the fairness of exclusions for the bullies. They have confidence in the staff to deal with any issues of this nature. Pupils accept all cultures and this is through the example set by the staff. This was particularly apparent in a lively, informative and excellent assembly related to a modern version of the 'Good Samaritan' based in Kenya.

- 6.3 The school has a range of effective policies in place with regard to pupils' welfare. There is, however, no formal health and safety committee and no regular system of reviewing the provision in this area. Appropriate risk assessments are in place and potentially dangerous areas such as the swimming pool are well supervised.
- 6.4 The school's anti bullying policy is well constructed and appropriate. In addition, successful strategies for rewarding good work and behaviour are in place. The sanctions were described by the pupils as mostly fair and acceptable but it was felt that the detention system was overused on occasions by some staff and this meant they had no breaks during very busy school days. More serious sanctions are rarely used, but there is a clear procedure and the pupils are fully aware of the order of sanctions. For serious sanctions there is no paper trail or any record kept in a specific book. Pupils have the opportunity to be put in positions of responsibility, which they welcome and strive to achieve.
- 6.5 The school's child protection policy contains all the necessary elements and is supported by the staff. There are two designated child protection officers who have received the appropriate training. Recent training for all staff has been received and they have signed a document to show their attendance. The child protection policy is available to parents. The safer recruitment of staff is given high priority and there is a robust system in place for carrying this out.
- 6.6 Fire precautions receive appropriate attention and fire practices are held regularly. Health and safety matters are supervised effectively. The school offers a range of food at lunch time that is of an acceptable quality and variety. Excellent opportunities exist for pupils to have physical exercise and the sports' programme is greatly appreciated and enjoyed. Medical facilities for pupils who become ill are satisfactory and readily available with a well-qualified and respected nurse in attendance. However, the accommodation is small and inadequate for the number of pupils at the school. The attendance registers are well maintained and the school is robust in following up unexplained absences. All such measures ensure that pupils at the school are well cared for and looked after.

7. The quality of leadership and management

- 7.1 The overall leadership and management of the school are effective in achieving the school's mission statement of creating a multi-cultural community which encourages respect for self and others. This is well promoted by the head teacher. The head teacher also provides effective and enthusiastic leadership. He has a clear vision for the continued development of the school and a good knowledge and understanding of its needs. In addition, he has good plans in hand to achieve them.
- 7.2 Sound progress has been made in leadership and management since the last inspection with the further development of the senior management team and the development of the role of subject and year group coordinators. However, some work remains to be done, largely in reviewing the roles and responsibilities of certain senior managers in order to enable a more effective system for rigorously monitoring the work of the school to be put place. This is particularly the case in the areas of curriculum and pastoral care, in order for the school to have a clearer knowledge of the progression and continuity of pupils' learning and achievement. Furthermore, the role of the heads of departments needs greater clarification in order to enable them to have a clearer understanding of the needs of their department, the quality of teaching, pupils' learning, the amount of progress they are making and the standards they are attaining in that particular subject. In addition, the good work of many heads of departments as well as that of the very good year group coordinators, needs much greater consolidation, so that much of the very good practice being carried out can be shared and disseminated to colleagues.
- 7.3 The very good levels of pupils' personal development and their good levels of achievement are clear indicators of the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management. The school has a sound development plan which sets targets for curriculum development in the next year as well as departmental development plans for the same period. However, it currently lacks an indication of who will lead the development of a particular objective, any indication of the timing involved and any cost implications. It may well be that a one year plan is too limiting and a more appropriate time span of three years would be more useful.
- 7.4 The selection of high quality staff is a priority of the school. A good system of induction for all new staff is in place. It recognises that all new staff need to understand the running of the school and the role they play in it. Professional development is good and is also recognised as being a major priority. This is organised both within the school, through the use of external expertise in areas deemed as essential and of high priority and, if appropriate, through the use of training that might take place overseas.
- 7.5 Policies and procedures are of good quality and are in place for all aspects of school life and, in the vast majority of cases, are implemented effectively by the staff. However, this is not always the case, for, as the school has recently recognised, the

policy related to the marking of pupils' work and the presentation of their work has not always been fully and effectively implemented by all staff.

- 7.6 Teachers, classroom support staff and other non-teaching staff are deployed appropriately and contribute a great deal to pupils' learning and welfare, particularly those pupils with SEN or EAL. Staffing levels are good so that strong and useful support is given to pupils.

8. Overall conclusions and recommendations

- 8.1 Peponi House Preparatory school is an effective school with many good features. Pupils receive a good quality education. Good progress is made by the pupils so that by the time they leave the school the standards they attain are high. This applies to all groups of pupils including those who are very able as well as those with EAL or SEN. In addition, this reflects the school's effectiveness in reaching its aim of maximising the potential of each pupil. Such achievements made by the pupils are largely the result of good and, on occasions, outstanding teaching and the pupils' own enthusiasm, particularly good behaviour, high quality relationships and their most positive attitudes. The main strengths of the teaching are the enthusiasm of the teachers, their own subject knowledge, individual lesson planning and the ability to motivate the pupils. However, on occasions such high quality teaching is not reached as the pace is too slow and the work is insufficiently closely matched to the pupils' abilities. The assessment of pupils' progress lacks a consistency of approach at both whole school level and in the marking of pupils' work.
- 8.2 Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in addressing the weaknesses identified at that time, notably in introducing more ICT in to the curriculum and in the recruitment of classroom support assistants.
- 8.3 The curriculum right across the school contains all the necessary educational experiences for the pupils. It is broad, balanced and appropriately planned, although some schemes of work are of variable quality. Outstanding extra-curricular experiences greatly support the taught curriculum and enable a whole rounded education to be provided for the pupils.
- 8.4 The personal development of pupils is outstanding. They are confident, have extremely good attitudes to their work and to the school. In addition, they show considerable respect for each other and a tolerance for each others' differing views and backgrounds. Pupils' personal qualities are well supported by outstanding levels of care and appropriate safeguarding, welfare, health and safety procedures. Pupils work together very well enjoying first class relationships between themselves and with the staff. They know the adults they can turn to for support should they need it.
- 8.5 The leadership and management of the school are effective in achieving the school's aims. The head teacher has an effective and enthusiastic leadership style and he is well aware of the development needs of the school. Certain functions of the senior

management team need to be more rigorously carried out, particularly those related to curriculum and the overall systems related to pastoral care. Effective monitoring systems and detailed clarification and coordination of the roles of subject leaders and year group coordinators are lacking. School policies are of good quality, thorough and well carried out in most cases. However, this is not always the case, for example the marking and presentation policies are not always closely adhered to by all staff. Sound school improvement planning is evident and appropriate to the on-going development of the school. However, as the school recognises, a longer term plan with more significant details is needed. Overall, parents are most happy with their children's education and the pupils, in discussions with them, showed that they thoroughly enjoy coming to their school and are most happy to be there. However, a minority of parents expressed some concerns with various aspects of the school. These have been shared with the school and in the areas in which the inspection findings concurred, the school now has plans in hand to address the issues.

Recommendations

1. Review the roles, responsibilities and effectiveness of certain functions of the senior management team in order to put in place rigorous systems to monitor the work of the school and coordinate the work of subject leaders and year group coordinators. This should include the systems for curriculum development and pastoral care in particular.
2. Establish a common and effective system for assessing the progress of pupils and use the best practice found in some subjects to inform the arrangements in others.
3. Put in place a more rigorous process to monitor the marking and presentation of pupils' work so that all staff are informed and follow the school policy.
4. Establish a longer term development plan covering three years that includes a number of objectives, costings, identified personnel and time scales.
5. Improve the medical accommodation to a point where it reflects the number of pupils at the school.

9. Evidence Summary

- 9.1 The visit was carried out from the 12th-14th October 2011. In advance of the inspection school documents were reviewed. Other documentation was reviewed during the course of the review. In addition a sample of pupils' work was scrutinised from each year group. Discussions were held with pupils and classrooms and other school facilities were visited. Discussions were also held with senior staff. Registration, lunch, break times and assemblies were also observed.

Review Team

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