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of Prep Schools

**IAPS**

**Report of Diagnostic Review Inspection Visit**

**to**

**Greensted's International Junior School**

**by an**

**IAPS Review Team**

**from**

**9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

# **IAPS DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW INSPECTION VISIT**

## **REPORT ON**

### **GREENSTEDS INTERNATIONAL JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Full name of school: Greensteds International Junior School

Address: Private Bag, Nakuru, Kenya

Telephone Number: +254 (0)50 50770/50774/50819

Fax Number: +254 (0)50 50775

Email Address: [juniorschool@greenstedsschool.com](mailto:juniorschool@greenstedsschool.com)

Head teacher: Mr Ed Bolderston

Chairman of the Board of Governors: Mr Geoff Nightingale

Age Range: 2-11 years

Gender: Mixed

Inspection Dates: 9<sup>th</sup> -10<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 Greensteds International Junior School was founded as an independent preparatory school in 1936. It is located 17 kilometres south-east of Nakuru, the largest town in Kenya's Rift Valley and is situated on a beautiful site with substantial grounds. As the junior school to Greensteds International School, it shares its fifty acre site and some of its facilities. These include an extensive well maintained sports field, science laboratory, recording studio and a cafeteria for recreational activities. Both schools share a governing body and are governed as a charitable trust.
- 1.2 The school caters for 90 pupils between the ages of two and eleven years. Of these forty are girls and there are fifty boys. Pupils can board from the age of eight and at present there are twenty pupils boarding, twelve boys and eight girls.
- 1.3 Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic and economic backgrounds. Many nations are represented within the school population, but predominantly they are from the local Kenyan community. Pupils can enter the school at any age between 2 and 11. Although the school is non-selective and pupils do not have to sit an entrance examination, they are given a detailed diagnostic test of their academic ability and potential soon after entry. The ability profile of the school is judged to be generally above the national average but with a wide range of abilities.
- 1.4 Three pupils have a language other than English as one of their mother tongues (EAL) and six pupils have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN). At the age of eleven nearly all pupils transfer to Greensteds Senior School.
- 1.5 The school shares its mission statement with the senior school and together they aim to create an environment where there is a shared passion and enthusiasm for learning, teaching, achieving and being together. They aim to guide the development of pupils into self-confident young adults, able to contribute positively to the community and lead full lives.
- 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 It was not possible to collect sufficient evidence in this area for a judgement to be made.

## **3. The curriculum**

- 3.1 In accordance with the school aims, the scope and variety of the curriculum is broad. It includes all the subjects taught in the English National Curriculum and in the Foundation Stage, the curriculum supports the English six areas of learning.

- 3.2 In all years, a good balance of subjects enables appropriate coverage of creative, academic and practical activities. A well planned timetable ensures that core subjects are given appropriate time and there is a strong emphasis on literacy. French and Kiswahili are introduced in Year 3 and a weekly library lesson is a feature for all age groups. Shamba (allotment gardening), which is part of Kenyan culture, is a significant weekly opportunity for pupils from Year 3. In the course of this, pupils are taught the value of self sufficiency through growing their own food.
- 3.3 All staff are involved in planning, which is thorough and detailed and takes account of pupils' cultures and heritage. For example, some geography and history projects are centred on Kenyan history, geographical features and the local environment. The new role of curriculum co-ordinator is intended to enable the continuous review of subjects to take place across the school. This is in its early stage of development.
- 3.4 The curriculum is complemented by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities which make a positive contribution to the quality of the pupils' personal development. Day and residential trips and whole school events, such as Book Week, add much to pupils' enjoyment of the curriculum, extending their experience and learning, and developing their social and moral conscience. From Year 1 upwards all pupils take part in the residential activities, mostly under canvas.
- 3.5 Pupils with SEN are strongly supported both by the creation of individual education plans (IEPs) and by the work in and out of lessons of the learning support staff. A small number of pupils have EAL and the internet is well used to translate their mother tongue into English enabling them to access the curriculum effectively. The identification and provision for more able pupils is in its early stages of development.

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

- 4.1 Pupils benefit from the excellent extra-curricular programme which is available to all. It includes an extensive range of activities, such as bike club, tae kwondo, horse riding, scouts and shamba, which all make use of the exceptional outside facilities. The added benefit of shamba club is the sale of vegetables to raise money for a local orphanage.
- 4.2 Many pupils from Year 1 upwards are involved in the school's scouting activities. These give pupils the opportunity to practice life skills and support their independence and problem solving. The 'Active Minds Thinking Skills' programme, which is part of the extra-curricular provision, is giving the pupils the opportunity to design their own theme park.
- 4.3 Pupils take part in inter-school music performances, such as the 'British Curriculum Schools of Kenya' concert, and house competitions. These augment the music curriculum well. They also have many opportunities to represent their school in a range of sports competitions and festivals.

- 4.4 Staff meetings are regularly held to monitor the effectiveness of the extra-curricular provision and to decide upon further enhancement of the programme. The extensive range of activities is made possible by the commitment and enthusiasm of all staff and is strongly supported and valued by the pupils and parents; the older pupils enthusiastically support and help their younger peers in many of these activities.

## **5. Teaching and assessment**

Due to a lack of time and unforeseen circumstances no teaching was observed.

- 5.1 At the time of the visit, the procedures for assessing pupils' progress were under review. Pupils undertake standardised tests at age seven and eleven and these are used to track their progress in mathematics and English. Within the class context, assessment is continuous, for example through internal tests and examinations. Pupils generally have a clear understanding of how to make progress, often supported by targets that are set for them, particularly in literacy, where the newly initiated 'Writing Journeys Journal' uses given criteria to track pupils' progress throughout the school. A comprehensive data based tracking system has as yet not been put in place. The information and communication technology (ICT) facility at present is not sufficiently robust to support this and suitable assessments in many subjects have as yet not been identified.
- 5.2 The best marking of pupils' work is comprehensive, informative and positive. It gives clear explanations to pupils about how to improve for future learning. However, this approach is not generally consistent throughout the school.

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

- 6.1 The arrangements for pastoral care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent, in line with the school ethos of compassion and inclusion. Pupils are extremely well looked after and the school's arrangements and well-designed pastoral structures fully support the needs of pupils of different ages, enabling them to grow up as confident, independent young people.
- 6.2 Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent and this view was strongly reinforced by pupils' comments that 'the teachers all understand us' and 'I feel like I am at home here, you can feel like yourself'. Pupils care for one another and interaction between younger and older pupils is strong, adding much to the family atmosphere that pervades.
- 6.3 The needs of pupils are regularly discussed and shared at staff meetings and the class teacher has immediate responsibility for the pupils in their care. Pupils know who to turn to if they need support and are confident that they will be listened to and their concerns resolved.

- 6.4 The school's anti bullying policy is well constructed and most appropriate and procedures are implemented well. All staff are vigilant, including support staff, in ensuring the pupils are well cared for and nurtured. The school has excellent arrangements for promoting good behaviour and dealing constructively with unacceptable conduct. The school rules, which are well known by the pupils, securely underpin this. Golden time, 'shoot for the stars' and house points all promote positive behaviour. The school council gives a proactive opportunity for pupils to share their concerns and appreciation. The 'Celebration Way' corridor displays a talent tree featuring photographs of all pupils and staff in the school and highlights their special talents. These talents are respected and celebrated by all. Parent questionnaires strongly indicated an appreciation of the care given to their children.
- 6.5 The school has drawn up a range of effective policies concerned with pupils' welfare. These policies are aligned to the current legislation for English primary schools but with modifications for the local environment and legislation. Risk assessments are undertaken for all parts of the school and for educational visits. The school's child protection policy contains all the necessary elements and all staff are vigilant in supporting it. The school now carries out required checks on staff.
- 6.6 Fire practices are regularly held and all staff have received appropriate training. The school has excellent arrangements for first aid and for dealing with illness, accidents and dispensing medicines. The two school nurses on site provide exceptional medical and pastoral care for pupils. The school is keen to support healthy eating and pupils say they 'you can eat until you are satisfied'.

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

- 7.1 The school is very well led, and the head teacher is extremely effective in promoting the aims of the school. He is highly skilled at moulding the staff into a unified team who work with a shared goal of a positive and caring approach towards each individual pupil in the school. This produces an excellent response in the attitudes of pupils towards all aspects of school life, which is reflected in the pupils' outstanding personal and social skills and infectious enthusiasm.
- 7.2 The school is cohesively run and a family spirit pervades, with the arrangements for the day-to-day management of the school adding significantly to this. All staff in the school, teaching and non-teaching, support the excellent personal development and welfare of pupils, so that the school's aim to create an environment where there is the shared passion and enthusiasm for learning, teaching, achieving and being together are well met.
- 7.3 Since his appointment, the head teacher has established many new initiatives and is clear in his vision for the on-going development of the school. As he has moved the school forward, he has been very keen to listen to the ideas and thoughts of others, and has done so through regular focused meetings and discussions. Consequently,

decisions have been made that have involved all teaching staff. This has enabled the head teacher to build close relationships and a common aim amongst staff. At present he has no senior management team and the monitoring of the success of teaching, the curriculum, planning, and the effectiveness of systems, rests heavily on his shoulders. He has recently appointed subject coordinators and is beginning to delegate some responsibilities for the monitoring of teaching and learning to them, but this is not yet firmly established.

- 7.4 At present the monitoring of teaching and learning through examining pupils' work is undertaken in some subjects by the curriculum coordinators and the head teacher rigorously and regularly observes lessons and scrutinises work. This feeds into staff appraisals and target setting for staff.
- 7.5 Policies and procedures have been produced for all aspects of school life and are implemented successfully. As the school is small many of these systems are understandably informal and communication within the school works extremely effectively. The administrative and all other support staff provide high quality assistance, upon which the school depends.
- 7.6 The needs of the school are thoroughly analysed and as the previous development plan comes to an end, the head teacher is now considering priorities for the new plan. This will link with the senior school plan and include the many developments to move the school forward that have been identified; for example, to build on the assessment system already in use for literacy; to improve ICT provision to enable a clear tracking system for pupils; and to introduce peer observation to share good practice.

## **9. Boarding**

- 8.1 The pupils' boarding experience at Greensteds plays an extremely valuable part in their education and development. It contributes successfully to the school's aim to foster a sense of community and mutual respect in a multi-cultural environment, together with promoting social graces, courtesy and consideration for each other. The care and nurture of boarding pupils by the matrons is outstanding and house staff and pupils enjoy excellent relationships. Pupils respect the staff and each other and make every effort to maintain harmony, valuing the friendships they make. They are more than happy with their boarding experience and speak highly of all aspects of it.
- 8.2 The matrons are extremely successful in making the boarding houses a homely environment in which pupils are comfortable and happy and where they enjoy the security of a kind but firm approach. The accommodation has been designed so as to maximise interaction between pupils and encourage a feeling of security and a family atmosphere.
- 8.3 A very good range of activities is available to boarders after school and at weekends including an extremely well supported Sunday school. These make use of the many

school facilities including the swimming pool and the extensive grounds. All staff work together at weekends to maintain the high quality provision and care.

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

- 9.1 On the basis of the evidence that was able to be gathered, it would seem highly likely that Greensteds School offers a particularly good quality of education for its pupils with some excellent features. It provides a secure and nurturing environment in which pupils can learn. From the scrutiny of work observed and interviews with pupils, standards reached are high and the presentation of work is of good quality.
- 9.2 The assessment of pupils' work, especially in English, is good but systems are not yet in place to track pupils' overall progress across the school. The school recognises that this is an area for development.
- 9.3 Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They have a clear sense of fairness and belonging and are keen to promote the school's family ethos. They are joyous in their relationships with each other and their staff in this small, yet very close community. Boarding pupils are extremely well cared for and this care ensures that their boarding experience enhances the education they receive.
- 9.4 The head teacher leads the school exceptionally well, supported by an extremely enthusiastic staff. He has rightly recognised the need to establish a small senior management team in order that he can delegate some aspects of school life.
- 9.5 School policies are of good quality, thorough and usually well carried out. However, the marking of work, usually helpful to pupils, is on some occasions less so and does not always show pupils clearly how to improve. The school development plan for the coming three years is in its early stages of construction.
- 9.6 Parents are extremely happy with their children's education and care and pupils were exuberant in their praise of their school and of the enjoyment they had in all aspects of school life.

### **Recommendations**

1. Develop an appropriate management team to support the head teacher in the management, monitoring and oversight of all school aspects.
2. Complete the school development plan for the next three years.
3. Develop a comprehensive tracking system to enable pupil's progress to be fully monitored across the school.

## **10. Evidence Summary**

- 10.1 The visit was carried out from the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> October 2011. In advance of the visit many school documents were scrutinised and reviewed. Other documentation was reviewed during the course of the visit. In addition samples of pupils' work from several year groups were thoroughly scrutinised. Formal discussions were held with all levels of staff including the headmaster of the senior school, medical staff and those responsible for boarding. Informal discussions were carried out with pupils, in particular those who were boarding. No lessons were observed during the visit but, extra-curricular activities for the boarders at weekends were observed.

### **Review Team**

Mrs Linda Donowho  
Miss Penelope Kirk

Lead Inspector  
Team Inspector and Head, IAPS school