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**IAPS**

**Report of Diagnostic Review Inspection Visit**

**to**

**Braeburn Mombasa International School  
(Primary)**

**by an**

**IAPS Review Team**

**from**

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

# **IAPS DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW INSPECTION VISIT**

## **REPORT ON**

### **Braeburn Mombasa International School (Primary)**

Name of school: Braeburn Mombasa International School (Primary)

Address: PO Box 83009, Shanzu, Mombasa, Kenya

Telephone Number: +254 (0) 415487427

Email Address: primaryheadteacher@braeburnmombasa.co.ke

Head teacher: Mr Bill Sawyer

Braeburn Group Managing Director: Mr Rob Williams

Braeburn Group CEO: Mr Terry Childs

Age Range: 2 – 11 years

Gender: Mixed

Inspection 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 Braeburn Mombasa International School (Primary) is a co-educational day school for boys and girls aged 2–11 years. It became part of Braeburn Schools Ltd in 2004 and is situated on the outskirts of Mombasa, Kenya. The school shares a large site with its senior school and also shares a number of facilities, notably in ICT and those for swimming and games. It is managed by the seven members of the board led by a managing director and chief executive officer. Since the last inspection in 2007 the school has undergone a change of head teacher and deputy head teacher.
- 1.2 The school caters for 133 pupils between the ages of two and eleven. Of these, 66 pupils are boys and 67 are girls. In the pre-preparatory department (Playgroup to Year 2 (ages 2-7) there are 70 pupils (36 boys and 34 girls). The preparatory section (Years 3-6, ages 7-11) contains 63 pupils (30 boys and 33 girls). All pupils attend the school on a full time basis and five pupils board, along with some senior school pupils, from Monday to Friday.
- 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. A small number of pupils come from families where the first language spoken is not English. Fourteen pupils have a language other than English as their mother tongue and these all receive support with their language development.
- 1.4 Seventeen pupils have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN) and all receive additional support from the school or external consultants. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Admission to the school is non-selective, though 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 eleven, most pupils transfer to the senior school section of the Braeburn Mombasa International School. Most pupils are taught by their class teacher, although there is specialist teaching in information and communication technology (ICT), French, physical education/games, music, Kiswahili and swimming from Year 2 onwards. Specialist accommodation is available for the teaching of ICT, music, drama and physical education/games.
- 1.5 The school has a variety of aims, of which the main ones are to create confident individuals; to help children to develop into responsible citizens; and to ensure that all learners achieve success. These, as well as other objectives, are well exemplified in the 'Braeburn Circles' that are displayed throughout the school.
- 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 The standards that pupils attain by the time they leave the school are good, particularly in some subjects, notably English, mathematics and science. This matches the aim of the school of ensuring that all learners achieve success. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when pupils' standards were judged to be satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes to their work and their learning are particularly good in the vast majority of cases, which is again in line with the school's aims.
- 2.2 Across a wide range of subjects and activities, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are well developed. Pupils express themselves with confidence and are articulate in conversation, in spite of there being a wide spread of ability within the school. They are most competent readers and display a good deal of accuracy in their work. Pupils reason through arguments well. In subjects such as English, where discussions were held regarding the differences between fiction and non-fiction books, a very good level of discussion was evident among Year 3 pupils. In addition, when given the opportunity, pupils are well able to think for themselves and work out solutions with others. Good standards of display are evident both in pupils' art work and in the quality of displays around the school. Pupils have good numeracy skills although their ICT skills are not quite so well developed. Team and individual successes are also evident in rounders, football, cricket, swimming, cross country and athletics, where the school competes very well with other 'coast' schools as well as schools from Nairobi and beyond. In other areas such as music and drama, pupils' perform to a good standard and achieve success in LAMDA and ABRSM examinations. Such successes have a most positive impact on pupils' personal development.
- 2.3 In externally moderated English National Curriculum tests, pupils reach standards that are above those reached by pupils in maintained English primary schools, particularly in English and science. Indeed, results for the last three years for which comparative data is available show that pupils' standards are improving in English, mathematics and science. Such levels being achieved are the result of a well-planned and effective curriculum. Pupils with SEN also achieve well given their levels of ability, largely as a result of the good quality support they receive both within the classroom and in individual support lessons.
- 2.4 Such levels of attainment indicate that pupils make good progress in relation to their above average ability. This can be seen right across the school even though pupils' progress in some classes is more rapid than in others. Such progress is related to the quality of teaching they receive and their own commitment and perseverance, as seen in lessons and in discussions with them. In lessons, pupils work hard and give of their best. Most concentrate very well, particularly when the teaching is motivating and inspirational. Their written work is generally well presented, although the standard of this could be improved in some classes. Pupils enjoy the subjects that they study and the activities which they take part in. In addition, they apply themselves 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 of their education.

### **3. The curriculum**

- 3.1 The school offers a good curriculum following the 'Creative Curriculum' model, which provides an appropriate balance to the curriculum. Consequently the school achieves its aims of delivering a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum in order to maximise academic, individual achievement, delivered through a variety of techniques that also provide support to pupils of different abilities. This helps the pupils to achieve the good standards that they do. Since the time of the last inspection, the school has made good progress in extending the curriculum and developing its quality. Subject co-ordinators are in place and their role has developed during the past year, but there is room to give them more responsibility for monitoring the curriculum and ensuring that best practice is being followed. The school's senior management team also effectively monitors the curriculum and there are excellent systems in place for planning and communicating curriculum content to the parents.
- 3.2 The curriculum is well planned and clearly identifies good progression in the acquisition of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across all the subjects. ICT is taught as a discrete subject, although the use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning in other subjects is limited and in need of further development. The school is regularly reviewing the curriculum offered to the pupils, for example 'Big Writing' has been successfully introduced along with the associated ideas of VCOP (vocabulary, connectives, openings and punctuation). In addition, a trialling of a new library system is being carried out, which should go part way to achieving the school's intention of making the library a centre for learning.
- 3.3 Pupils of all abilities are provided with experiences in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human, social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. The school rightly places an emphasis on pupils acquiring the skills of literacy and numeracy. However, pupils do study all English National Curriculum subjects and these are enhanced by the provision of French, religious education, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and Kiswahili.
- 3.4 The curriculum is also greatly enhanced by special curriculum days such as 'Respect Day', 'World Language Day' and book days. The core subjects of mathematics, English and science hold a themed day once a year in order to reinforce pupils' learning in these subjects. Such experiences contribute effectively to the pupils' academic performance and their personal development.
- 3.5 Pupils with SEN receive support that enables them to benefit from the curriculum. They are given appropriate individual plans which are well known to the staff, who include suitable provision for these pupils within their regular planning. In class, support is given by the SEN staff as well as one to one tuition. On occasions, in some classes, the more gifted and talented pupils could be better catered for. The

lack of challenging extension work means that such pupils do not have the opportunity to extend their skills and knowledge base at a sufficiently rapid pace.

- 3.6 The school, whilst following the English National Curriculum, tries to incorporate Kenyan culture and knowledge, drawing parallels where appropriate. This was seen in Year 2 where the pupils were studying “Islands” and, as well as looking at Katie Morag’s island, they also looked at Mombasa Island identifying any similarities and differences. The school also invites local speakers in to talk to the pupils. These have included the local dentist, a cartoon workshop by a parent, a visitor from the Watamu snake farm and Henry Wanjoike, a triple gold medal winner at the paralympics. All of this excellent practice makes a significant contribution to the pupils’ development through the curriculum.

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

- 4.1 For a school of its size, an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities is provided which give pupils the chance to further extend their personal development. Clubs include a range of physical activities such as rounders, athletics, swimming training, cricket and karate. A good range of other pursuits such as gardening, board games and clay work are also included. All such activities are of a high quality and the pupils benefit greatly from the time spent doing them. In the gardening club for example, the teacher not only provided enjoyment but also supplemented the pupils’ learning with exciting, open-ended questioning. Excellent opportunities for drama, music and other arts based activities are also in place. Such activities rotate termly and are greatly appreciated by the pupils and parents. However, at present the school does not keep a record of clubs attended or of how well this provision is carried out.
- 4.2 Opportunities to enhance the taught curriculum by the use of high quality educational visits are used regularly. Pupils commented most favourably on their trips and visits which included a Dhow trip, a visit to a local bakery, the butterfly park, Mombasa port, visit to a local market, Mosque and Temple visits and a Year 6 residential visit to Watamu. This excellent array of extra-curricular activities greatly enriches the taught curriculum.

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

- 5.1 Good and on occasions excellent teaching enables pupils to achieve well. Teaching is the major contributing factor which helps pupils to achieve success as learners. This is well in line with the aims of the school. Since the last inspection in 2007, good progress has been made in raising the quality of teaching, which at that time was judged to be sound overall. Such good quality teaching is variable, being stronger in some classes than in others. Of particular note is the teaching of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although there are many examples of areas of outstanding teaching right across the school and in specific subject areas. In

addition, specialist teachers further enhance the pupils' learning particularly in subjects in the upper part of the school.

- 5.2 Good opportunities are offered to pupils to enable them to discuss their work in subjects such as English and in the school's creative curriculum. This has a significant impact on improving pupils' oral communication and self-confidence. Across the school, basic skills are emphasised and enable the pupils to attain the standards that they do, particularly in English, by the time they leave the school. Good teaching also helps to promote pupils' creative skills, notably in subjects such as art and music.
- 5.3 Teachers' subject knowledge and lesson planning are good and they make good use of the resources that they have to help pupils with their learning, even though some of these are beginning to look a little tired. In the best lessons, lively and enthusiastic teaching, which includes effective questioning techniques, enables pupils to achieve well. On most occasions in such lessons, the tasks set for the pupils are varied and appropriately matched to pupils' abilities. Praise and encouragement are well used. On those occasions when teaching does not reach such high standards there is a slower pace to the lesson and lessons are over-directed by the teacher. In addition the work set is not always precisely matched to pupils' differing ability levels. Consequently, they have limited opportunities to think for themselves and take on some responsibility for their learning.
- 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. Similarly, pupils with English as an additional language are given good support to enable their learning to progress. Classrooms contain adequate resources with a few having inter-active whiteboards that are appropriately used to support pupils' learning. Such resources help to produce good, stimulating lessons, maintain pupils' level of interest and encourage them to want to learn. Overall, ICT is soundly used to support pupils' learning but there is a need to extend the application of its use to other subject areas.
- 5.5 The marking of pupils' work is of sound quality. In the best practice it contains helpful comments, with suggestions for improvement and targets for pupils to work to. However, this is not always the case and in some areas pupils' work is cursorily marked with few comments. Pupils, however, say that on occasions they are given verbal feedback, so that they know what they have to do to continue to improve. Assessment data is compiled well to check on pupils' progress and the system enables the school to use the analysis it gives to plan future work for the pupils to do, particularly in English and mathematics. The school is well aware of the need to extend the good practice found in these areas to all subjects of the curriculum.



## **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 with some outstanding features. The school has done well in ensuring effective systems are in place. These raise the awareness of all involved with the pupils in these areas.
- 6.2 Since the previous inspection the high quality of pastoral care has been maintained. Class teachers are responsible for the welfare of the pupils in their class and the pupils speak highly of the relationships that exist between them and the staff. Particularly good academic and pastoral records are kept, so that teachers have a good overview of individual pupils' progress and development. Further tracking of pupils is seen by the school as being necessary. The recent introduction of standardised tests in the areas of spatial, non-verbal and verbal reasoning is assisting considerably. Teachers use registration time, PSHE lessons and any other available time to address any welfare issues that arise. The head teacher's accessibility ensures that parents and pupils can express any concern or worries they have. In addition, pupils have access to the "Worry Box" which they can use for any expressions of concern. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and, during an interview with them, Year 6 pupils were most clear that there were adults to whom they could turn if they had worries. Pupils relate well to one another and show concern for each others' welfare and well-being. Pupils also say that there is now very little bullying, if any, and that it has improved greatly since the arrival of the new head teacher. It is certainly not an area of concern among the pupils. They have confidence in their teachers to deal with any personal or other issues that might occur.
- 6.3 The school has drawn up a range of effective policies concerned with pupils' welfare. A formal health and safety committee is in place and meets regularly. The school has appropriate risk assessments in place for areas of concern such as trips and the swimming pool, but as yet there are no risk assessments completed for any of the indoor teaching areas.
- 6.4 The school's anti-bullying policy is appropriate and well-written although it does not include such areas as cyber bullying or mobile phone abuse. It is effectively carried out, as pupils report that no bullying exists. In addition there are several successful strategies in place to reward good work and helpful behaviour. The new 'peer mentor' programme is designed to aid further the process and embed a culture of anti-bullying. Sanctions are rarely used but when necessary there is a clear procedure. In discussions, pupils indicated that the rewards and sanctions systems are fair. There have been exclusions but no serious sanctions book exists.
- 6.5 The school's child protection policy contains all the necessary elements and is well supported and signed by all staff. The head teacher is the designated child protection officer and he has received training which he has cascaded down to the staff. The policy is readily available for all parents. The safer recruitment of staff is given high

priority and the senior management team are most vigilant and robust in carrying this out. Procedures for checking all staff are also robust and accurate.

- 6.6 Fire precautions receive appropriate attention and fire practices are held regularly. Health and safety matters in this area are supervised effectively. The school offers a range of foods but pupils are correct in describing the food as lacking in variety. Opportunities for pupils to have physical exercise are excellent and healthy lifestyles are encouraged. Medical facilities for pupils who become ill are good, but they are a fair distance from the school on the secondary school site. The medical staff are also well qualified. The attendance registers are satisfactorily maintained, although they lack consistency in the way they are completed and the school is insufficiently robust in dealing with any unexplained absences.

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

- 7.1 The school is very well led and managed by those in the most senior positions. They are most efficient and approachable. The head teacher and his senior management team are highly effective in furthering the school's aim of ensuring that all learners achieve success. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in this area with the development of the senior management team, better management of the curriculum and the development of the role of subject coordinators, although the school is well aware that some work remains to be done in this latter area. Relationships with the senior school continue to be good.
- 7.2 The success of the leadership and management of the school is most apparent in the very good levels of pupils' personal development and in their good levels of achievement. The school has a high quality over-arching three year school development plan with an appropriate number of objectives targeted. It is well supported by very good development plans for each subject, which cover the same period of time. Priorities for improvement are well thought through with appropriate personnel identified, time targets set, success criteria indicated and resource implications noted. Other practices for overseeing the work of the school are also in place. These include senior managers monitoring and observing teaching and pupils' performance both within their books and in external tests and examinations. The school is well aware that some of this responsibility needs to be further developed through subject co-ordinators in the fulfilment of their role.
- 7.3 The school takes particular care in the selection of high quality staff. A good system of induction for all new staff is in place. The school recognises that such staff need to understand the running of the school and the role they play in it. Professional development is well organised both within the school and through the use of external expertise in areas deemed as essential and of high priority.
- 7.4 Good quality policies and procedures have been produced 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, the most notable being that related to the marking of pupils' work.

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

## **8. Boarding**

8.1 Overall, the boarding experience pupils receive is satisfactory. It plays an adequate part in the pupils' education and goes some way to support the school in its aim to provide high quality pastoral care based on the core values of responsibility, enjoyment of learning, respect and cultural sensitivity. Boarding is described as helping the boarders to be better people and this is the ethos that underlies the boarding provision. The provision promotes pupils' personal development and helps them to become self-reliant. It also provides them with opportunities to gain from the experience of living in a close community.

8.2 While boarders are asked to be involved with common decisions, the primary boarders felt that the older children got their own way most of the time. Meals, another area of concern expressed by the boarders, are of an insufficiently high quality, even though there have been recent improvements.

8.3 Boarding pupils said they enjoyed being in the boarding house and felt that it offered them a fun element as well as the opportunity to do their homework with help from the house staff and also to be with friends. Pupils spoke positively of their relationships with the boarding house staff, and they felt confident there was an adult to talk to if they needed one. Boarding pupils are well able to contact their families and they all go home or to guardians at the weekends. The extra-curricular activities, which are of a satisfactory quality, are appreciated by the boarding pupils.

8.4 The boarding staff are supported by house staff and two gap year students who are particularly helpful with the activities. Relationships between the house staff and the boarders are good and the boarders value the support they receive. The boarders' behaviour is good, although they spoke of bullying and some unfair treatment at the hands of the older boys. Pupils listen to each other and are courteous. They feel able to express their views when necessary. The sanctions of early bed, time out and the ultimate sanction of being sent to the head teacher, were considered to be fair. Weekly meetings in the boarding house encourage boarding pupils to express their views openly. Of concern is the lack of a boarding policy with appropriate handbooks for boarders and parents alike as well as written strategies for a variety of instances and circumstances.

8.5 The boarding accommodation is satisfactory and the house parents are making the best of what is available to them. The houses are decorated adequately with pupils' art work also being displayed throughout. The swimming pools in each house and the outdoor space is good and appreciated by the pupils. The outdoor balcony in the girls' house is secured but the key left in the lock. They have occasional dinners out

there as a treat. The girls are housed in rooms of two girls of similar ages but the boys are housed in two with a younger boarder placed with an older boarder. The age range spread is not appreciated by all the boarders as they have different bed times and different needs. The pupils all have display boards in their rooms which they can personalise as they wish. They all have personal storage space and easy access to bathrooms. The decoration is basic in most areas of both houses with the bathrooms being no more than adequate.

- 8.6 Good arrangements for sick boarders are in place and the nurse visits once a week but is available whenever required. If a pupil is ill, parents are informed and consent is always obtained should hospitalisation be needed.

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

- 9.1 Braeburn Mombasa International Primary School is a very effective school with several outstanding features. It provides a high quality education for its pupils. The standards produced by pupils at the school are good and they make significant progress in their learning. This applies to all groups of pupils including, in most cases, those who are very able as well as those with EAL or SEN. This reflects the school's effectiveness in reaching its aim of ensuring that all learners achieve success. Pupils' achievements are largely the result of good and, on occasions, outstanding teaching and the pupils' own enthusiasm, good behaviour, high quality relationships and good, positive attitudes. The main strengths of the teaching are the teacher's own subject knowledge, effective lesson planning and the particularly good use made of resources in order to enable pupils to understand what is asked of them. However, on occasions such high quality teaching is not reached as the pace of the lesson is too slow, insufficient work is completed in the time and the work set is not sufficiently well matched to the pupils' ability levels. The assessment of pupils' progress is good in subjects such as English and mathematics, although such systems are not so evident in other subjects. The marking of pupils' work is variable ranging from some excellent practice to other practice which is not so good
- 9.2 Since the last inspection in 2007 good progress has been made in addressing the weaknesses identified at that time, notably in the development of a senior management team, the appointment of subject coordinators, the provision of quality in-service training and an appraisal system, enhancing the role of Year 6 pupils in terms of them taking on additional responsibilities, and the development of many school policies.
- 9.3 Throughout the school the curriculum includes all the necessary educational experiences. The curriculum is broad, balanced and very well planned. It is very well supported by the outstanding quality of the extra-curricular experiences on offer in a comparatively small school.
- 9.4 Pupils' personal development is very good. They respect each other, are confident and have extremely good attitudes to school. Pupils' personal qualities are well supported by good levels of care as well as good quality safeguarding, welfare, and

health and safety procedures. Pupils work together well, enjoying particularly good relationships with staff and between themselves. They know the adults they can turn to for support should they need it. Boarding provision is satisfactory and the school is well aware of the improvements that are required.

- 9.5 Leadership and management, notably at the most senior level, are particularly good. The head teacher and his senior managers work most effectively as a team and lead the school very well. With regard to subject coordinators, the school is well aware of the need to extend their role in terms of monitoring the development of their subject right across the school. 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 policy, which is not always closely adhered to by all staff. The school improvement plan is a first rate document and appropriate to the on-going development of the school. Parents, in the pre-visit questionnaire, indicated that they are exceptionally happy with their children's education and the pupils, in discussions with them, showed that they are also most happy and love coming to their school

### **Recommendations**

1. Develop the role of subject coordinators in order to enable them to have a better oversight of the development of their subject.; and in addition, to monitor the quality of teaching in that subject as well as the standards pupils achieve and the amount of progress they make.
2. Seek ways to further develop the role and use of ICT in other subject areas.
3. Extend the very good practice in the marking of pupils' work found in some classes to all classes and subjects.
4. Develop the boarding provision further in terms of the accommodation, policy and practice.

## **10. Evidence Summary**

- 10.1 The visit was carried out from the 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> October 2011. In advance of the review, school documents were scrutinised. Other documentation was considered during the course of the review. In addition a sample of pupils' work from each year group was scrutinised. 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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Lead Inspector  
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