

Amazing Grace School – Report February 2025



Amazing Grace Pre and Primary School located in Kisoro Uganda has recently celebrated 14 years since its foundation in February 2011. It has come along way over those years (see photo below) when there were 156 children being taught by 10 staff on rented land, in mostly wooden classrooms.



Today there are 527 children registered at the school aged 3-13 years with 304 day-scholars and 223 boarders. These are taught by 23 teachers and an additional 12 support staff including matrons who stay overnight with the borders, cooks and guards.

The ethos at the school, however, has remained unchanged since its foundation, with a commitment to reaching out to the poorest in society to provide quality education. Although a fee-paying school for those who can afford it, Amazing Grace provides subsidised fees (mostly in full) to approximately 20% of the children who attend, many of whom are orphans who stay full-time at the school.

Land Acquisition and Infrastructure Development

Over the last year a number of infrastructure projects have been completed including:

- 1) The completion of a new brick-built classroom and dormitory for boys.
- 2) The clearing of new land which is now used as a playground for the preschool.
- 3) The construction of an incinerator for rubbish produced at the school.
- 4) The construction of several vegetable growing beds.

New classroom and boys' dormitory



Incinerator



Vegetable beds



New playground for preschool



In addition, the school land has finally been registered with the Ugandan land registry so providing land security and Dr Stuart Creed has been legally appointed as director of Amazing Grace Advocacy and Support for the Vulnerable, the charity which owns the school.

Despite these improvements there remain considerable infra-structure requirements at the school. In October 2024 Ugandan education authority inspectors attended the school. Although the school was highly praised for several reasons including the quality of pastoral support and educational atmosphere, the school was found to be wanting in two principal areas. First the girls' and boys' accommodation blocks were deemed to close to each other and second there is a need to accommodate all borders in double rather than triple bunks.

Video

For a 10.5 minute video of the school taken in January 2025 please visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Epf-yqRM6L8>

Examination Results

At the end of primary 7 (typically aged 12) children in Uganda take the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE). Four subjects are taken (Maths, English, Science and Humanities) and children are graded in each subject with 1 being the highest score and 6 the lowest. This produces an aggregate score with 4 being the very highest. The overall aggregate scores are then grouped into divisions from 1 to 4 with 1 being the highest (Aggregate 4-12 gives an overall 1, aggregate 13-24 gives a 2 etc.).

Amazing Grace has continued to perform extremely well. Indeed, for the past 5 years it has been in the top 5 schools for the whole district of 157 primary schools. An excerpt from the latest results report is shown below.

PRIMARY LEAVING EXAMINATION 2024 RESULTS

SUMMARY

DIV 1= 37 DIV II= 06 TOTAL NO OF CANDIDATES= 43.

Congratulations Congratulations Congratulations Amazing Grace Headteacher, Teachers, Support staff, Parents, School Management Committee, PTA Committee for meeting the standards.

Other than three small highly selective schools, Amazing Grace was the best achieving school in the district – a wonderful achievement.

Financial Position

Excluding international donations and infrastructure developments, in 2024 the school made a small operational profit (after loan repayment) of £871. This comprised £22,292 of income and £21,421 of expenditure with the main expenditure items being wages £6,458, food (including firewood) £12,056 and utilities £1,076, meetings, licence and supervision £967, repairs and maintenance £864.

The school continues to repay its 25-year loan (costing £2,500 p.a.) taken out in 2013 for the original land purchase. The school has no other debts.

Looking ahead, the school remains vulnerable to food price variations and loss of teaching staff owing to the national shortage of qualified primary school teachers.

To address this, teachers' wages at the school need to be increased, but there is little scope to raise school fees with many parents already struggling to pay fees - indeed £1,500 of income was lost in 2024 from the non-payment of school fees. This will be addressed in 2025 with the requirement for school fees to always be paid upfront. With the examination results being so good and with improved infrastructure, (particularly in accommodation) it is expected that some wealthier families may look to Amazing Grace as a place to send their children, so allowing an increase in salaries.

Infrastructure Needs

Looking ahead three urgent priorities have been identified, two of which are needed for compliance with the recent school inspection carried out in 2024.

1) A new girls' dormitory.

In the inspection the current dormitories for girls were deemed to be located too close to the boys' accommodation. To resolve this, new land which is for sale has been identified beyond the pre-school play area with an estimated cost of £12,000- £14,000. We are grateful to donors at Visa.com who have donated funds to cover this need.

Once purchased a further estimated £15,000 will be needed to construct the new dormitory block with adjacent toilets and washrooms.

2) A move to double bunks in all dormitories.

Another legal requirement identified by the school inspection is for accommodation throughout the school to be in double, rather than triple bunk beds. The construction of the new dormitory block for girls will allow sufficient space for this, but there will then remain the need to purchase sufficient metallic double bunks (metallic lowers the fire risk) for all those accommodated at the school. This is estimated at £11,500 with an additional £5,000 needed for new mattresses and £1,500 for pillows and mosquito nets.

3) Fencing of the pre-school playground.

To ensure the safety of the youngest pupils at the school the new play area requires urgent fencing. It is estimated that the cost will be £600. The school is very grateful to Heritage School UK for kindly raising these funds so that the fencing can go ahead.

Finally, a number of less immediately urgent needs have been identified:

Improved toilets for both boys and girls.

Improved washroom facilities for boys (note that with the new dormitory for girls, washroom facilities will also be built).

Better benches for the pre-school, many of which are in a poor state of repairs.

Conversion of the temporary classrooms to permanent structures.

Appreciation

The Directors of the school wish to convey our sincere thanks to all our supporters, both in Uganda and around the world. Your partnership is of such immense value to us and has enabled the school to go from strength to strength, bringing hope and education to some of the most needed children in Uganda. Thank you!