

## St Andrew's School

St Andrew's School was founded in 1963 in Asuncion, the capital city of Paraguay. The school began as a kindergarten in the church vestry.



The purpose of founding the school was with the aim of having “*an outreach for the Gospel to our nearest Paraguayan neighbours, for whom we hoped an English education might prove attractive and to help short stay members of the British Community.*”

By the grace of God the work grew so that on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1967 the building was officially inaugurated. The school had a full primary programme which was recognised by the Ministry of Education. The prayer was that God through the school would touch the elite of Paraguayan Society and so bring change from the top down. In 1975 on the same site as the Primary School, a Secondary School began. Presently the College has three stages of school education: **PRESCHOOL**, **PRIMARY** and **SECONDARY**.

## School Life

### Preschool

The children usually start at three years old with three quarters of the pupils being the younger brothers and sisters of children who are already at the school and the remainder the children of ex-pupils.

The Preschool has three classes for 3, 4, and 5 year olds. Within the preschool the Paraguayan teachers and helpers are all ex-students of the school. Many of the former students say that one of the reasons why they want their children in the school is because of the Christian element.

### Primary

The Primary School has six year groups with around 25 children per class. Each class has two teachers - a Paraguayan teacher who teaches the national programme in Spanish for 4 hours each day and an English speaking teacher who teaches a wide range of subjects for 2½ – 3 hours per day. Both Spanish and English lessons begin with a time of Bible study and prayer. On entering the primary level, the children are given a Spanish Bible to be used in school and then an English Bible in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Through their school life, they will study the whole Bible. They can take their Bibles home at the end of their education.

## Secondary School

In secondary school there are six year groups, and class sizes range between 20 - 25. The Paraguayan programme is taught



by a variety of secondary teachers, teaching distinct subjects. The pupils also continue to study English for 2 hours per day. At this level they study English grammar and literature. In mid to upper secondary, pupils are prepared for external exams - Cambridge First Certificate and Proficiency and also IGCSE's. As with primary level, each English lesson begins with a Bible Study and prayer time. A full-time secondary English teacher would take two classes each day.

## The Pupils

As part of the teaching programme, there are meetings with the parents to see how the children are progressing and to discuss

their development. There are also meetings for the parents which deal with issues facing parents today, e.g. the occult, discipline, etc.. These meetings always have a Biblical input.



The children have many difficulties to contend with. Their parents work long hours and with such a busy lifestyle inevitably children are brought up by servants. For many families their biggest worry is their children's safety. In the past children have been kidnapped and it is common to see security guards outside the school.

Many pupils of St Andrew's belong to some of the most influential families in Paraguayan society. It is these children who will be the future leaders within Paraguay. St Andrew's is ensuring that this next generation receives a Christian education.

### The Future

Paraguay is one of the poorest nations in South America. Recent statistics show that:

Only 25% have access to clean drinking water

Only 31% have toilet facilities.

For the Teachers of St Andrew's, one of the most frightening statistics is that at national level only 27% of primary teachers have received any formal training. St Andrew's College hopes that this will change in the future since well trained teachers are crucial to the country's future. The College and the Diocese have set up Paraguay's first **Christian** teacher training college which began to take in students in February 2000. The emphasis is on both higher academic and professional standards, and a Christian orientation in the subject taught.

If you would like to contribute to the work of the school or to become one of the members of staff, contact the address below for further details.

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# INTRODUCTION TO ST ANDREW'S COLLEGE ASUNCION

