



**EDUCATION QUALITY
ASSURANCE UNIT**
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

Inspection Report

May 2013

**First Baptist Christian School
Wee Care Centre**

Preface

The inspection of the educational aspects of Early Childhood Care and Education Centres and Reception classes is now the remit of the Education Quality Assurance Unit. These inspections will be carried out on a two year cycle, with a progress check approximately six months after the inspection.

The main aspects that will be reported on are:

- Leadership and management, including how effectively leaders and managers:
 - ensure the welfare, health and safety of the children
 - lead the direction for development and learning
 - manage the centre and staff and link with parents and external agencies

- The effectiveness of provision, including teaching, and its impact on children's learning and development, including the development of the following four key focus areas of the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework:
 - Well-being
 - Respect
 - Communication
 - Exploration

The criteria for inspection have been circulated to all centres and primary schools, and these include some indicators of good practice. Centres have also been asked to complete a self-evaluation form which will be taken into account as part of the evidence gathering for the inspection.

Inspectors use the following grading scale to describe aspects of the work of the centre / reception class:

Grade		Description
1	Very good	Good in nearly all aspects and exemplary in some significant areas
2	Good	Good in most respects. Weaknesses are minor and not in significant areas
3	Adequate	No significant weaknesses, but no major strengths. Improvement needed
4	Unsatisfactory	Some significant weaknesses (might be only one or two) that have a negative impact on children's learning and progress. Cause for concern

Reports will be published on the Ministry's website www.education.gov.ky.

They will provide the centres, parents, the community and the Ministry of Education with an external and impartial inspection of the work of the centres.

The Education Quality Assurance Unit expects that this inspection report will prove helpful and will contribute in a positive way to improvement.

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Education Quality Assurance Unit

Background

The foundation a child receives in the early years of life is an indicator of future development and success. The provision of services at Early Childhood Care and Education Centres (ECCEC) has a large impact on the future of the child academically, socially and cognitively. It is important that quality interactions with adults and peers, as well as opportunities for exploration, problem solving and reflection occur consistently.

Early Childhood Care and Education is provided by both private and government sectors. In 2012, the Ministry of Education, Financial Services and Employment added seven new Reception classes in primary schools in Grand Cayman, which cater for children aged between four and five years old. However, the great majority of provision for young children is in private centres. Around forty private centres are currently in operation, providing an important service to families. Around 1,700 babies and children up to the age of five are being cared for and educated.

Building “a world-class early childhood care and education system” (Strategic Goal 2, Cayman Islands Strategic Plan for Education 2012-2017) will help ensure that children have the best opportunities to develop as life-long learners who are able to contribute positively to their community. Along with other stakeholders the Ministry of Education’s Early Childhood Care and Education Unit is working to “provide access to high quality early childhood care and education to all children, regardless of income, background, special or additional education need” (Cayman Islands Strategic Plan for Education 2012-2017).

In an effort to improve the quality of provision, private early childhood care and education centres benefit from professional advice, support and training by the Ministry’s team and the Education Quality Assurance Unit identified areas for improvement.

The report for this inspection will be used as a basis for discussion and will be published on the Ministry’s website. The centre is expected to take careful note of the recommendations at the end of the report and to prepare an action plan to address these. There will be subsequent visits by Ministry personnel from the Early Childhood Care and Education Unit to provide support.

General Information about the Centre

Address	920 Crewe Road P.O. Box 10275 Grand Cayman KY 1-1003 Cayman Islands
Telephone numbers	949-0691
Email address	<u>weecare@fbcs.edu.ky</u>
Name of owner	First Baptist Christian Church
Manager / lead teacher	Ms Beverley Chin-Sinn
Age range	4 months – 4 years
Number on roll	125 boys and girls Birth - 1 year olds - 5 1 year olds- 15 2 year olds- 28 3 year olds - 40 4 year olds - 37

- First Baptist Christian School WEE Care Centre is a private centre owned by the First Baptist Church. It has been operating for the past 20 years.
- The centre is located in a building which it shares with the First Baptist elementary school. The WEE Care Centre has its own principal and administrative staff. The mission statement of the centre is 'educational excellence centred on Jesus Christ'.
- There are 32 members of staff, most of who are full-time.
- The centre was inspected in May 2011 and the leadership and management were judged to be good and other aspects were adequate. A number of recommendations for improvement were identified in the report.

Inspection Judgements

Leadership and management

Inspectors consider the extent to which the impact of leadership of learning improves outcomes for children and the efficiency of day-to-day management.

Ensuring the welfare, health and safety of the children

- The principal who has been at the centre for three years has established a well-organised, warm and caring ethos that permeates every classroom and this is much appreciated by parents. The children are well supervised at all times in a safe and secure environment inside and outside. The rooms are clean and well maintained. The school has adopted a wellness policy and encourages parents to bring in healthy lunches and snacks for their children. Good attention is paid to hygiene in the babies' room.
- Appropriate police checks have been carried out on staff and these are kept in individual staff folders. All staff have had first aid training. The principal organises very regular fire drills and has found ways to minimise the distress they caused some children, which was commented upon in the 2011 inspection report.
- Children's personal folders contain a range of information including contact details and useful records of any incidents that happen during the day. Children with special educational needs receive effective and sensitive support from centre staff as well as one-to-one sessions from the Early Intervention Programme (EIP).

Leading the direction for development and learning

- The principal is determined to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the centre and is aware of where the strengths and weaknesses are. She monitors what goes on through regular learning walks and observations. Where necessary, she has supported staff who need to improve. She responded positively to the last inspection by holding training days for all staff and has introduced a regular in-service-training day for all staff in February. In addition, there are regular briefing meetings for staff.
- The school participated in a pilot project to assess children's achievements using age-appropriate standards and has started to carry out pre and post assessments of the older children. Staff are not yet consistently assessing and recording children's achievements and progress, although a few staff are doing so.
- Staff have attended training organised by the Early Childhood Care and Education Unit (ECCEU), but are relying on their own curriculum, the WEE Learn curriculum, which they believe is well aligned to the new Cayman Islands Early Years curriculum. However, the practice seen in a number of classrooms does not reflect the Early Years Curriculum, including the need for a predominately play-based programme (see the next section). Practice is better in classes taught by staff with recognised qualifications in early childhood education.

Management of the centre and staff

- The centre operates in an orderly fashion and routines are well established. Classrooms are well resourced, although this was not always evident during the inspection.
- There is no system for formally appraising the performance of staff although they are observed and receive feedback. The principal is accountable to the First Baptist School Board and feels supported and suitably challenged by them.
- Each class is supported by three adults comprising the teacher and two assistants (or aides). The teaching assistants are not effectively deployed in some of the classrooms as they have little to do during whole class sessions led by the teacher. In other cases, assistants did not engage children in discussion.
- All staff in the babies' room are very usefully occupied and appear to be a strong and coherent team. They play with children, feed and change them calmly and sensitively. These very young children are thriving in this atmosphere.

Links with parents and external agencies

- Parents spoken to during the inspection were very positive about the centre and feel that communication is good. They appreciate the opportunities to talk to staff about their children at drop-off and pick-up times. They are not given a written report on their children's progress.
- The school keeps regular contact with parents using email and through the website. There are open days where parents can speak to staff and the Family Fun days provide opportunities to involve parents and the community.
- The school quickly identifies children with possible special educational needs and has good links with the Early Intervention Programme (EIP). Staff from the EIP provide regular support for a number of children at the centre.

The leadership and management of the centre are good. The centre is organised well and staff care for the children. Communication with parents is good. In order to be very good, the leaders need to review the deployment of teaching assistants, implement performance management and review the way that children are taught and assessed.

Effectiveness of provision, including teaching and its impact on children's learning and development

Well-being

Inspectors consider the extent to which each setting provides a safe environment that actively promotes a well-balanced and healthy lifestyle that enriches social and emotional development, and encourages resilience and self-confidence.

- The centre provides a safe, caring and nurturing environment for its young protégées. Children appear happy and smile when they are dropped off. There is a good ratio of adults to children and well within Education Council guidelines for Early Childhood Centres.
- Children are encouraged to eat healthy meals and they demonstrate good table manners when eating their lunch. Most children are able to feed themselves independently.
- Children are learning to take turns and socialise with others and have many opportunities to engage in physical activities.

Respect

Inspectors consider the extent to which each setting provides an environment that lends itself to both guided and spontaneous interactions that enable children to develop an appreciation of themselves and the world around them.

- There is a calm ethos throughout the school which reflects the Christian mission statement. Adults are good role models for children and encourage them to be polite, to take turns and share and to practise good manners such as saying 'please' and 'thank you'. Children are respectful of each other and of their staff. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare.
- Children learn about other cultures through, for example, an International Day where they parade in national costumes and carry flags.
- Children pray respectfully and they are read Bible stories. They enjoy singing songs of praise. Older children show respect for their environment, for example, by using their recycling unit.

Communication

Inspectors consider the extent to which each setting provides a safe and supportive environment which will foster and enrich children's ability to listen and respond to others and to clearly express their own ideas, thoughts and feelings.

- Some staff make good use of questioning and encourage children to share their thoughts and predict what will happen next or suggest why something happened. Children are developing good listening skills in most classes and many older children are articulate and respond well to questions.
- Sometimes adults miss opportunities to talk with children, such as when they are playing in the toy cars or jumping from hoop to hoop in the concourse.
- Children are provided with opportunities to develop their emergent writing skills but too often this entailed copying or writing over script and not enough scope for them to write freely. Good practice exists in one classroom where the teacher displays children's 'stories' with the teacher's interpretation underneath. In general, children of all ages would benefit from more opportunities to mark-make and to explore using different media and writing materials.

- Staff read to children and tell stories. Most children listen attentively and respond to questions. Staff are not, though, taking advantage of the school's supply of 'big books' to read to children. Some staff are reading from worksheets or books that are too small for children to see the pictures.
- Phonics is taught through the 'A Beka' scheme. A number of sessions were seen when phonics was not well taught and children could not recall the letter sounds although they know their names. Children do not have ready access to a wide range of age-appropriate reading books in the younger classes.

Exploration

Inspectors consider the extent to which teachers' planning and delivery of learning activities and the way in which they organise and manage their environments lead to effective learning for all children. In particular how does the curriculum and teaching enable children to develop in the key focus areas?

- Children are provided with a number of opportunities each day to engage in physical activities. The one-year-olds explore getting in and out, or on and off, various cars and toys on the concourse. The centre benefits from being able to use the very good gymnasium which it shares with the elementary school. Children take great delight in the wide space here where they can spread out and explore different ways to use a hula hoop and to throw and catch small balls. The outside area, which was not used during the inspection because of the inclement weather, is adequate and includes some large play equipment and sand.
- All classrooms had areas for role play but these are not very imaginatively planned and do not reflect the current theme. These were not seen in use during the inspection,
- Some of the classrooms for the younger children are stark and lack stimuli and access to a range of resources for children to engage in purposeful play such as sand and water trays, building blocks, puzzles, construction kits, playdough and paint.
- There is an over-use of whole class, teacher-directed activities which have a place but do not allow children, especially those younger than four, to explore for themselves at their own pace and level.
- In the babies' room, the children explore freely and safely on the padded surface with the toys and puzzles. The baby-walkers provide added activity for infants to explore and strengthen their leg muscles.
- There was good integration of mathematical development during a Spanish lesson. Children were engaged in identifying shapes and colours. The concepts of biggest and smallest were taught in the context of a story and children counted to ten in Spanish.

The effectiveness of provision, including teaching and its impact on children's learning and development, is adequate. There is some good practice. Children's well-being is looked after effectively and they are respectful. Children are given opportunities to participate in physical activity in the large hall. There is much to improve, including the need for a greater variety of resources in classrooms and more opportunities for children to explore for themselves and to choose activities.

Recommendations (These are the priority areas for development)

In order to improve further, the owner and principal need to:

1. Ensure that staff assess children's achievements regularly and record these systematically and age-appropriately.
2. Improve the learning environment in some of the classrooms with a wider range of resources available for children and more stimulating displays.
3. Improve the teaching and learning by:
 - a. Sharing the good practice more widely across the centre
 - b. Reducing the time for whole class instruction and providing more opportunities for children to choose activities and engage in purposeful play
 - c. Ensuring that other adults are deployed more effectively in lessons
4. Improve the teaching of communication by:
 - a. Ensure that phonics is taught consistently
 - b. Encouraging the use of big books when adults read to small children
 - c. Encouraging children to explore writing freely using a range of materials

Action Plan

The centre is expected to develop an action plan to address the areas for improvement identified above. The action plan must be sent to the Education Quality Assurance Unit within 40 working days of receiving the inspection report. The centre is required to provide parents with an update on the progress being made in addressing the areas identified as needing to improve.

The action plan is due on December 6th, 2013.