

FOLLOW THROUGH INSPECTION REPORT

OFFICE OF EDUCATION
STANDARDS
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

January 2021



Quality Child Care Pre-School

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
School Information	5
Recommendations	7
Recommendation 1	7
Recommendation 2	8
Recommendation 3	9
Recommendation 4	10
Recommendation 5	11
Overall Evaluation	12
Survey Results	12
Next Steps	15
About the Office of Education Standards	16



INTRODUCTION

FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTIONS OF SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND EARLY YEARS CENTRES IN THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

In academic year 2019-20, the Office of Education Standards conducted inspections of schools and early years centres across the Cayman Islands. Where the overall performance of a school or setting was evaluated as weak, then a further inspection was arranged six months following the publication of the initial report.

Views of stakeholders

As part of the Follow-Through Inspection, parents and staff were invited to comment upon the work of the preschool by completing an on-line survey. The results from the survey are included within this report. The Inspectorate gathered evidence through lesson observations and discussions with staff and parents. School documents and children's progress and achievement information were also reviewed.

During the follow-through visit, Inspectors focused upon the recommendations that had been made at the time of the previous inspection. They evaluated whether the preschool had made sufficient progress in addressing the areas requiring improvement. Inspectors used a four-point scale to comment on progress, with evaluations ranging between excellent, good, satisfactory or weak.

Follow-Through Inspection

The Follow-Through Inspection of Quality Child Care Preschool took place from **19th to 21st January 2021**. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Follow-Through Inspection that was scheduled in 2020 was delayed by several months.

During the Follow-Through Inspection of Quality Child Care, the Inspectors evaluated the progress that had been made by the management of the preschool in addressing the six recommendations from the previous Full Inspection report of September 2019.

The preschool had made satisfactory progress in addressing three of the six recommendations.

The Inspectors judged that there had been weak progress overall.



INTRODUCTION

Consistency in quantitative terminology








Inspectors use quantitative terms in reports, as follow:

All	The whole – as used when referring to quantity, extent, or duration	100%
Almost all	90% and more	90% to 99%
Most	Three quarters or more but less than 90%	75% to 89%
Majority	Half or more but less than three quarters	50% to 74%
Significant Minority	A quarter or more but less than a half	25% to 49%
Minority	15% or more but less than a quarter	15% to 24%
Few	Up to 15%	0% to 14%









SCHOOL INFORMATION

General information





	School name	Quality Child Care Pre-School
	Address	247 Powell Smith Road, West Bay, Grand Cayman
	Telephone number	(345) 949-2415
	Website	None
	Name of Centre Manager	Mrs. Sandra Duncan-Roach
	Date of this inspection	January 19-21, 2021
	Date of the last inspection	September 24 to 25, 2019

Students




	Number of students on roll	28
	Age range of the students	15 months - 4 years
	Grades or year groups	As above
	Number of Caymanian students	28
	Number of Students with special educational needs	3
	Largest nationality group of students	Caymanian

SCHOOL INFORMATION


Staff

	Number of teachers	3
	Number of teaching assistants	2
	Teacher-student ratio	1 to 6
	Teacher turnover	20%

Curriculum

	Main curriculum	Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum
	External tests and assessments	None
	Accreditation	None

School inspection overall performance history

Cycle 1 Inspection	September 24 to 25, 2019	 Weak
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RECOMMENDATION 1

Improve children's knowledge, skills and understanding in the four areas of learning, as identified in this report.

The centre had made **weak** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Subsequent to the full inspection conducted in September 2019, the Centre Manager and staff at Quality Child Care Preschool had facilitated post-inspection review meetings; developed an action plan and devised a number of strategies to address the Office of Education Standards' recommendations. However, during this Follow-Through Inspection, Inspectors found that several of these initiatives were still in an early phase of development. Staff had benefited from training on how to use the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum as a guide to plan appropriate learning activities to meet children's learning needs. Also staff from the preschool had visited another school to observe good practice. Moreover, staff from the Early Childhood Care and Education Unit had observed lessons in the preschool and provided guidance to the teachers regarding classroom organisation, lesson planning and curriculum planning. The combined effect of these initiatives had led to improvement in aspects of teachers' practice, although Inspectors noted variability in the quality of teaching across the preschool. Nonetheless, the reorganised learning environment and improvements to the curriculum were beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of children's learning experiences across the setting. As a consequence, Inspectors observed that a majority of children were making satisfactory progress in some aspects of the four key areas of the Cayman Island Early Years Curriculum.

A majority of children were making satisfactory progress in their sensory exploration and creative expression.

Almost all children engaged in a range of multisensory experiences throughout the day. For example, the children in the Thatch class used brushes, paint, sponges and mini-easels to recreate Van Gogh's famous Sunflower painting. Similarly, the children in the Parrots class experimented with colours and textures during a water play activity outdoors. All children demonstrated high levels of engagement and enjoyment in the range of activities. Across the setting, there were increased opportunities for children to express themselves freely through music, movement, dance, roleplay, art and song.

Teachers also structured meaningful opportunities to promote children's early scientific understanding. For example, children had learned about the lifecycle of the chicken. Displays with caterpillars in two classes promoted children's observation and investigative skills as they learned about the life cycle of the butterfly. However, there was scope for more purposeful planning to strengthen children's skills in thinking critically and for them to make simple representations of scientific information.

Across the centre, children experimented with a range of technological tools, materials and equipment throughout the day to promote their exploration and creative expression. They manipulated simple equipment like scissors, cash registers, toy phones and interacted with open-ended materials such as blocks, play dough, and sand to make sense of their world.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Regarding their mathematical learning, a majority of children were beginning to transfer rote counting skills to counting items or sets of items, and were learning about shapes and colours. However, children were not sufficiently exposed to a breadth of mathematical activities. There was scope for teachers to better integrate mathematics with other activities and to ensure that the curriculum and teaching practices strengthened children's problem-solving as well as how to communicate and connect their mathematical learning.

Inspectors observed improvement in aspects of children's early communication skills. All children participated in shared reading activities throughout the school day. As a consequence, a majority were developing age-appropriate book handling skills and print awareness. However, in a significant minority of lessons, children's off task behaviour affected the quality of their listening experiences during story time and other activities. In the Thatch class, children were developing their language skills in play based opportunities as they pretended to be shoppers ordering items from a grocery store. When children roleplayed scenes from the story "Jack and the Beanstalk", the teacher successfully incorporated learning about pitch and tone; and used questions and discussions effectively to extend children's learning. Additionally, mark making opportunities both indoors and out promoted children's emergent writing. For example, during a table top activity, the toddlers in the Parrots class used chunky crayons to make a variety of markings on large sheets of construction paper. However, mark making opportunities outdoors were under utilised. Staff needed to further structure meaningful opportunities for children to practise their emerging literacy and numeracy skills in real life contexts and also outdoors.

Children were also developing their environmental awareness. For example, the children had planted carrots and tomatoes in their vegetable garden and had made predictions about how long it would take for tomatoes to appear on the mature tomato plants. A majority of the older children knew that plants needed sunlight and water to grow. Also, the older children were developing age-appropriate understanding of recycling, re-use and preservation. They saved their fruit and vegetable scraps for the compost bin and placed their plastic bottles in the recycle bin. Children also cared for the rabbits in the outdoor play area. Furthermore, through planned experiences such as cultural displays and opportunities for the promotion of cultural awareness in music lessons, most children were developing age appropriate awareness of local and international cultures. In instances too, teachers structured opportunities for children to make connections with prior learning and to reflect on their learning experiences.

However, children's sense of self and their understanding of how their roles and the roles of others impacted their community required further review. Furthermore, a significant minority of children in the Orchids class required support to understand and manage their emotions. Children's emotional development was weak because most teachers did not manage the learning environment well or reinforce clear behavioural expectations. As a consequence, children's off task behaviour in lessons was not managed appropriately and this adversely affected the pace of learning and children's progress. Most teachers required further support in the effective use behaviour management strategies to manage children's behaviour and better promote children's learning.



RECOMMENDATION 2

Improve the quality of teaching through the introduction of: more effective and age-appropriate classroom management strategies; a better balance between teacher-led and child-initiated learning experiences.

The centre had made **weak** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Since the last inspection, the Centre Manager had taken steps to improve the capacity of staff at the preschool. As a consequence, teachers had benefited from internal and external professional development opportunities to improve their practice. However, during the Follow-Through Inspection at Quality Child Care, Inspectors noted variability in the quality of teaching across the preschool. The Centre Manager who held an additional role as the Lead Teacher, assisted with the vetting of lesson plans and lesson observations; and there was therefore an improved focus upon planning appropriate activities to meet the varied needs of children. However, Inspectors noted inconsistency in the quality of lesson plans. A review of lesson plans showed that while a minority was well written with a suitable range of learning activities to promote children's learning in the four early learning goals; others lacked detail or a coherent structure to support children's learning in a sequential manner. As a consequence, a majority of observed lessons were either underdeveloped or lacked a sufficient range of integrated activities to successfully promote children's learning in the key focus areas of the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum. In addition, all teachers did not regularly assess children's learning. Hence, teachers did not always use assessment data to plan lessons to meet children's needs or plan their next steps in learning.

Of note, the establishment of learning centres and the revision of class schedules afforded children a better balance between teacher-led and child-initiated learning experiences. All children had easy access to a range of resources in the different learning centres which successfully promoted choice and autonomy in their learning. However, over the course of the Follow-Through Inspection, Inspectors observed that most teachers did not adhere to set times for activities and this impacted the quality of children's learning experiences. Furthermore, the slow pace of a minority of lessons hampered children's engagement and learning outcomes. Inspectors noted, for example, that centre rotation was not always effectively executed, as inefficient time management limited the support given to groups of children. Inspectors also observed that lengthy delays between activities and ineffective transitions often led to off task behaviours by a significant minority of children, especially those in the Orchids and Parrots classes. For example, during toileting activities in the Orchids class, children were often required to wait in long lines which caused noticeable frustration for children. Furthermore, not all teachers demonstrated competence in the use of effective classroom management strategies to respond to the range of off task behaviours displayed by the children.



RECOMMENDATION 2

With the exception of the class with the oldest children, where behavioural expectations were regularly referenced, teachers seldom utilised behavioural charts or class rules, even though these were prominently displayed in the classes. Teachers' inability to respond effectively to incidence of minor misbehaviour often resulted in underdeveloped lessons and in instances, abrupt ending to planned activities. This was particularly evident in the Orchids class where children's frequent display of off task behaviour often interrupted the flow of lessons and impacted the pace and quality of their learning. A significant minority of children required support in developing social competence and an understanding of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.



RECOMMENDATION 3

Review class timetables and the delivery of the curriculum to maximise opportunities for children's practical and active learning

The centre had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Since the start of the new school year, the Centre Manager had reviewed and modified the class timetables to ensure a greater focus upon promoting children's development in the core areas of exploration, communication, respect and well-being. As a consequence, children participated in an increased range of opportunities to promote their sensory exploration, creative expression and fine and gross motor skills. Additionally, there were set times on the schedule to promote the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills. Inspectors noted that the times allotted for the activities on the schedule were appropriate for the developmental stage and age of the children in the preschool. Additionally, older children were not required to nap and teachers used this time to promote child-initiated learning and to reinforce lesson concepts.

In addition to the revision of the class schedules, staff had also improved the curriculum provision. Over the course of the Follow-Through Inspection, Inspectors noted that almost all children participated in a range of indoor and outdoor activities to promote their learning in key areas of the early learning goals. In addition, external specialists facilitated lessons in music and dance and the addition of these activities provided children with rich sensory experiences. All children participated enthusiastically in the weekly music sessions and at times staff incorporated opportunities to integrate cultural awareness into music activities. For example, all children in the Thatch class participated in the singing of an African Christian song and most knew the lyrics.

In addition, staff planned activities to promote children's cultural awareness and all classes had a cultural display. Teachers also regularly referenced cultural symbols in lessons. Dance classes were a recent addition to the preschool's programme and this effectively supported the children's stimulation and increased movement opportunities.

The preschool had also taken steps to further promote children's environmental awareness. Children were learning to take care of the pet rabbits and had planted vegetables in the preschool's garden that they watered regularly. Additionally, teachers facilitated simple discussions that enhanced children's knowledge about animals and plants. In a minority of lessons, teachers also promoted children awareness of their environment through investigation of different foods and their seeds.



RECOMMENDATION 4

Meet the regulatory requirements of the Cayman Islands Fire Service and the Department of Environmental Health and improve arrangements to secure the health and safety of staff and children at the centre.

The centre had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Since the last inspection, the Centre Manager had developed effective policies and procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of the children at the preschool. For example, there was a written policy and procedure for emergency drills. Fire and earthquake drill were practised regularly and records of these, including response times, were kept. In addition, the Centre Manager had developed a maintenance schedule and routine checks were carried out regularly of the equipment and premises for matters that may be hazardous to children. Staff had also completed training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), food hygiene and child protection and these were up to date. The Centre Manager had developed a policy that was aligned with the Children's Law, 2012, for the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect. Injury and illness logs were developed and filed appropriately. There were mechanisms in place to identify children who required additional support with their learning. However, the planning of targets to meet the children's needs was not always specific enough.

During the Follow-Through Inspection, Inspectors noted that the provisions for health and safety were satisfactory. The door to the preschool was kept locked and a buzzer system alerted staff to the presence of visitors. Parents signed in children on arrival and departure times were also recorded. Staff followed stringent protocols such as taking temperature checks of children and visitors on arrival and requiring all children and visitors to sanitise footwear before entering the preschool. The premises were clean and hygienic. There were adequate exits from the building and all exit signs were illuminated. Inspectors observed that documentary practices at the preschool had improved and key regulatory and administrative files were in place. Importantly, all regulatory requirements relating to public health, fire and environmental health were met.



RECOMMENDATION 5

Introduce more robust and comprehensive arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning including, for example, more regular reviews of staff performance.

The centre had made **weak** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Even though there were incremental gains noted in the preschool's self-evaluation and school improvement planning processes, this aspect of the preschool's programme remained weak. Following the last inspection, the Centre Manager and staff had conducted an assessment of the preschool's strengths and weaknesses and had developed a self-evaluation document. However the self-evaluation was limited in scope and was not fully aligned to the Successful Schools and Achieving Students Framework. The document had, however, highlighted some known weaknesses of the preschool, but the assessment was not sufficiently robust to clearly communicate the preschool's strengths and weaknesses in all six performance standards. As a consequence, the priority areas were not sufficiently detailed to deliberately target all the areas requiring improvement. The Centre Manager and staff had developed an action plan which outlined specific areas for improvement. These were linked to the recommendations from the previous inspection in 2019. However, this too lacked detail and was void of measurable strategies to achieve the identified targets as well as clearly defined success criteria. Although the preschool staff had begun addressing the recommendations in the previous inspection report, they had not yet undertaken a formal review of the action plan, even though the plan was in its second year.

This had reduced the staff's awareness of the effectiveness of current initiatives on the preschool's performance. As a consequence, those areas which required immediate attention were not sufficiently addressed. For example, there were no clear strategies developed to address the deficit in teachers' classroom management practices. Over the course of the inspection, Inspectors observed that instances of low level disruption impeded learning for a significant minority of children.

The Centre Manager had developed appropriate systems for monitoring staff performance. For example, staff appraisals were completed regularly, and an integrated lesson planning template and lesson observation instrument had been developed. The Centre Manager conducted lesson observations each month, but lesson plans were not always vetted to provide the required guidance which teachers needed to improve their practice. Additionally, the lack of standardisation in assessment documentation across classes as well as obvious gaps in assessment records hindered teachers' ability to appropriately cater to children's learning needs or track their progress effectively. Teachers needed to refine assessment practices and use assessment information to set appropriate targets and plan next steps in the children's learning. Overall, the preschool's self evaluation and school improvement planning processes required review in order to bring about further improvement in the quality of provision and the outcomes for children.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Address the current staffing shortfall to ensure that all classes have appointed suitably qualified, knowledgeable and experienced staff, as required by the Cayman Islands Education Council.

The centre had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Following the last inspection, preschool leaders had taken appropriate steps to ensure that the preschool was compliant with the Education Council's guidelines regarding adult to child ratios. As a consequence, additional staff was hired and changes were made to staff deployment. For example, the Centre Manager who was a qualified teacher and who previously had a non-teaching role now served as Lead Teacher for the Thatch Class. All assistant teachers had completed certification in early childhood development. Also, job descriptions were available for all staff. At the time of this Follow-Through Inspection, staffing levels were sufficient to provide for frequent, personal contact and to offer immediate attention to children. The Centre Manager had also advised that plans were underway to recruit another qualified teacher for the next school term.



SURVEY RESULTS

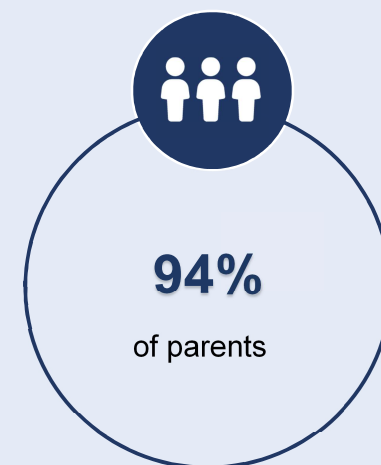
Parents	18	Staff	6
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Parents

Survey: “I am satisfied with the quality of education provided at this preschool.”

Almost all parents judged that the preschool provided a satisfactory quality of education. Almost all indicated that their children were making good progress in early communication. A majority believed that their children were making good progress in their mathematical understanding, but only a minority agreed that their children were making good progress in early scientific understanding. All parents were of the view that the preschool was effective in developing children’s personal and social skills. Almost all agreed that children were being helped to take turns and share fairly. Also, most indicated that children were supported in developing their environmental understanding. All stated that the teaching quality at the preschool was good. Almost all felt that children enjoyed lessons and were inspired to learn. A majority expressed that a range of play opportunities were provided for children’s learning.

Almost all parents felt that their children were safe and cared for at the preschool. All expressed that children were treated fairly. All agreed that preschool helped children to choose healthy lifestyles. A majority agreed that the preschool dealt effectively with instances of poor behaviour and that children with special education needs were well supported. Also, all parents agreed that the preschool was well led and that communication was effective and timely. Almost all agreed that their concerns were satisfactorily addressed and that reports were regular and informative. Most indicated that parent meetings were helpful. Almost all agreed that the preschool maintained appropriate links with the local community.



Strongly Agree and Agree

6%

Decrease since the last inspection

SURVEY RESULTS

Staff

Survey: "This preschool provides a good quality of education."

All staff felt that the educational provision of the preschool was good. All agreed that children's behaviour was good. All stated that the preschool supported children's personal and social development and children were being taught to care for their environment. All believed that the preschool provided a positive learning environment and offered good opportunities for children's active exploration and choice in learning. All staff agreed that the preschool provided a safe and caring environment for children. Additionally, all staff felt that the preschool promoted children's healthy lifestyle. All shared that children were treated fairly and that episodes of poor behaviour were effectively managed. All staff felt that children with additional needs were well supported.

All staff agreed that the preschool was well led. Most staff explained that they were involved in the self-evaluation processes of the preschool. All staff agreed that they participated in professional development opportunities. All stated that parent meetings were held regularly and that parents were effectively involved in the work of the preschool. All expressed that the preschool maintained good links with the community. All also agreed that they were provided with sufficient resources of good quality to support their work. All staff gave positive feedback about the work of the preschool.



100%

of staff

Strongly Agree and Agree

14%

Increase since the last inspection



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The preschool has been asked to prepare an action plan within four weeks of the publication of this inspection report.

This should address:

- The recommendations identified within this report;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the preschool.

WHEN WILL THIS SCHOOL BE INSPECTED AGAIN?

As Inspectors judged the preschool's progress towards addressing the previous recommendations overall as weak, there will be a Follow-Through Inspection of Quality Child Care within six months of the publication of this report. The preschool will continue to be inspected on a regular basis until all aspects of performance are judged to be at least satisfactory.



WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE DO?

The Office of Education Standards is part of the Portfolio of Civil Service within the Cayman Islands Government. Our function is to inspect early childhood care and education centres, public and private schools and report upon standards in all educational institutions in the Cayman Islands.

How to contact us

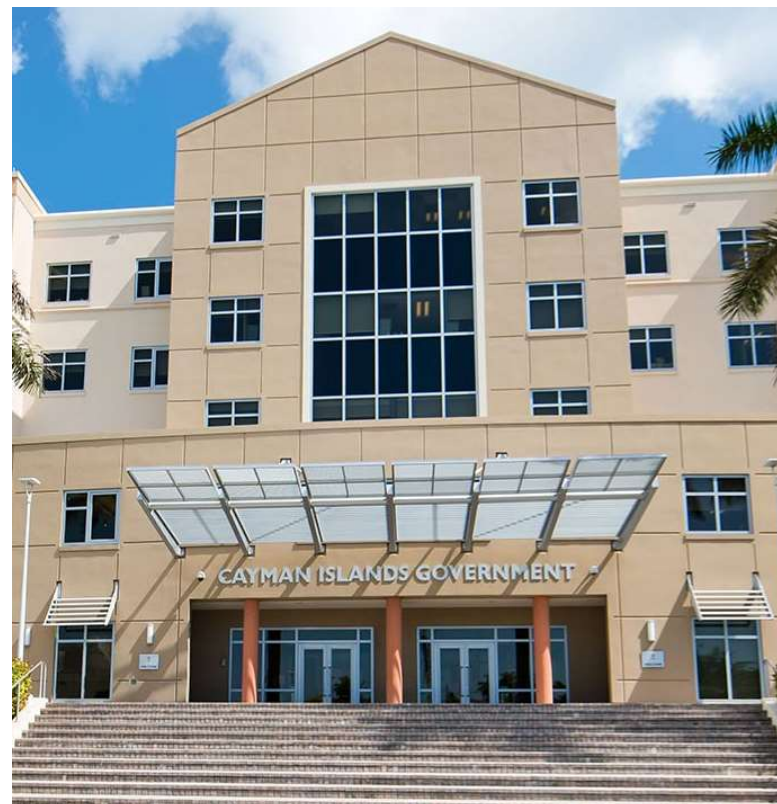
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Where to read our reports

Our reports are published regularly and are currently available on the Cayman Islands Government website. Please use the following link to read our latest publications.

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