



EDUCATION QUALITY  
ASSURANCE UNIT  
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

# Inspection Report

May 2013

**St. George's Pre-school**

## 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	Judgement	Description
1	<b>Very good</b>	Good in nearly all aspects and exemplary in some significant areas
2	<b>Good</b>	Good in most respects. Weaknesses are minor and not in significant areas
3	<b>Adequate</b>	No significant weaknesses, but no major strengths. Improvement needed
4	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	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](http://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.

*Favourita Blanchard*

**Senior Evaluator**

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

<b>Address</b>	<b>P.O. Box 1633 Courts Road Grand Cayman KY1-1109</b>
<b>Telephone numbers</b>	<b>945-0441</b>
<b>Email address</b>	<b><a href="mailto:eggfydes@yahoo.com">eggfydes@yahoo.com</a></b>
<b>Name of owner</b>	<b>St. George's Anglican Church</b>
<b>Manager / lead teacher</b>	<b>Mrs Magdalena Fernandes</b>
<b>Age range</b>	<b>6 months – 4 years</b>
<b>Number on roll</b>	<b>Total = 97 (61 boys and 36 girls) 6 months - 0 1 year olds - 10 2 years old - 20 3 years old - 37 4 years old – 30</b>

- St. George's Pre-school has been in operation since 1999. It is owned by the St. George's Anglican Church, and managed by the principal, Mrs Magdalena Fernandes. There are 13 full time members of staff including the principal. At the time of the inspection, two staff members were absent.
- Six children are currently receiving special needs support by the Early Intervention Programme, and three have English as a second language. The majority of children (77) are Caymanian.
- St. George's Pre-school was inspected in January 2011 and recommendations were made for improvement. A follow-up progress check was made in July 2011 to determine what progress the school had made towards meeting the recommendations for improvement.

### 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 has a warm and caring manner, and has established a calm atmosphere at the school. She has established clear policies and guidelines for the welfare, health and safety of children.
- The school promotes healthy eating. It provides a well-balanced, nutritious hot lunch, with options to suit children's preferences. Although the school does not provide snacks, there are guidelines for parents regarding suitable foods to include in children's snack bags.
- Staff maintain good levels of hygiene. Hand sanitizers and soap are readily available. The school nurse is easy to contact. Good records are maintained of children's medical conditions and any treatments given, and parents are kept fully informed.
- The fire service has often visited the school to give presentations on fire safety, and staff have received training in the use of fire extinguishers and in first aid.
- There is adequate playground equipment and other resources for children to interact with and explore, though few wheeled vehicles are available to help children develop coordination and gross motor skills. The school has not planned suitable alternative activities for when the outside playground cannot be used, for example, when it is not clean.
- Children have adequate rest time when they sleep on mats. However, mats could be better positioned to separate sleepers, and stored more hygienically when not in use.

### Leading the direction for development and learning

- Staff have not had enough guidance on how to use the new Cayman Islands' Early Years' Curriculum Framework as it is not being used consistently by all staff.
- Some staff use the curriculum to help them plan their lessons but often omit a clear description of the resources that will be required. Activities are not always well matched to the expected learning outcomes.
- While the school does track children's progress and development, this information is not used well enough in planning for the next steps in children' learning. 'Learning stories' are not built up adequately to show children's achievements and report them to parents.

### Management of the centre and staff

- The school has successfully addressed the areas for improvement in the last inspection and progress check reports. The self-evaluation report that the school submitted was a very helpful document, and the Inspectors agree with most of the findings.
- The school runs smoothly on a daily basis because the appropriate procedures are in place, understood and followed. Parents sign their children in and out each day and staff always complete the daily attendance registers

- Fire drills do not happen often enough. However, all staff have received fire extinguisher training from the Fire Department, and the Department of Environmental Health checks the quality of the water frequently. Although the principal receives verbal feedback, there is no documented report of these visits.
- The principal regularly checks the quality of staff's work and gives some support to staff. Staff's appraisals and performance management are carried out twice a year, and members of the School Board check that the school is operating smoothly. Job descriptions are in place, and during staff orientation, teachers' roles and responsibilities are clarified.
- The principal has a good knowledge of what is happening in the school, and keeps good records of all meetings with staff and observations from classroom visits. Staff have the opportunity to raise matters of concern.

### **Links with parents and external agencies**

- The school has established good links with parents and the community. Parents like the school and are very supportive. For instance, they raise funds and help organise sports day.
- Parent and Teachers' Meetings are held monthly, and the principal meets new parents in the 'New Parents Orientation' sessions. The Parent Handbook provides a wealth of information. The school regularly contacts parents through emails, text messages, notes sent home and phone calls.
- The principal conducts workshops for parents in collaboration with members of the Early Childhood Unit, for example to explain the role of homework in children's learning.
- Staff successfully encourage parents to read with their children. Parents regularly visit school and describe their work, such as how doctors and nurses use medical instruments. Children often make use of such experiences in role play activities.
- The school maintains good links with the Early Intervention Programme (EIP). Currently, six children receive support in the school each week. Other agencies, such as the Department of Environmental Health and local businesses, also support the work of the school.

**The leadership and management of the school are good. Staff are caring and look after children well. The children are polite and most get along well with each other. Systems for monitoring the work of the school are in place and children's progress is tracked. Information about children's learning and development is not used well enough to plan their next steps in learning or to report to parents.**

## 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.*

- Children participate well in whole-school devotions. They pay attention as they join in with singing and other activities. Staff model polite and respectful behaviour and consequently children tend to be well behaved during devotions.
- Although staff remind children about the need to behave well, they sometimes expect children to sit and concentrate for too long, resulting in declining behaviour. Despite knowing how they should behave, some children misbehave when out of the teacher's eye. Some staff give children the chance to stretch their legs and move about, which helps to refresh them and improves their attention.
- The use of display to celebrate children's work is not consistent. Children's pictures and their work are displayed in some classrooms but not in others.
- Teaching assistants provide good support and they are actively involved in the lessons. They help children maintain their focus on the activities and give them good guidance.

### 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.*

- The school has established routines and procedures that children understand and try to follow. Most children are respectful and care about each other.
- The way that staff deal with challenging behaviour is not consistent and not always effective. Some staff use positive reinforcement of expected behaviour, others remove the child from the situation, which sometimes leaves the issue unresolved.

### 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.*

- Staff interact well with the children. They ask the children questions about what they are doing and their environment. For example, some children were asked to share what they did on the weekend. Most children are articulate and make valuable contribution to the discussions. Their use of language is appropriate and some staff model the correct pronunciation.
- During Circle time, children spend a lot of time singing songs that include numbers and letters of the alphabet but not enough time on reading stories and listening. Children have too few opportunities to reflect on stories and explain what they think is happening.

## 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 have suitable opportunities to explore things around them, role play, communicate, solve problems and make their own choices. However, activities are not always planned well enough to match children's learning needs.
- 'Learning stories' are used to record student's disposition, learning needs and achievement. A few targets are outlined but lack detail on how they are to be implemented or monitored.
- The layout of the classrooms provides adequate space for children to move around. There are centres for books, a play kitchen and free play, but they are not clearly labelled or structured to help children be more independent.
- Most classes have schedules that are followed by staff, which helps in organising the day's activities and lets children see what comes next in their daily routine.
- When children arrive in the morning, they have good opportunities to socialize with each other and adults as they engage in free play with toys and manipulatives. The range and variety of activities is limited and could be enhanced by a range of books, table top or floor puzzles.

**The effectiveness of provision, including teaching and its impact on children's learning and development, is adequate. Staff generally interact well with children but are not planning well enough for their learning. Behaviour management is not consistently applied across the school. While the majority of the children show respect and behave well, a few behave poorly at times, adversely affecting their learning experience.**



## **Recommendations** (These are the priority areas for development)

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

1. As a matter of urgency:
  - clean the playground and spray against mosquitoes. Ensure that the playground is kept in a good condition, so that children can always have access to it
  - ensure that children's sleeping mats are labelled with their names, kept separate when in use and stored hygienically.
2. Strengthen the system of monitoring teaching and learning to ensure that all staff use the Cayman Islands Early Childhood Curriculum Framework appropriately in their planning.
3. Review the system for tracking and reporting of children's progress so that parents can be fully informed about children's progress and staff can plan effectively for the next steps in children's learning.

## **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 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013.**