



**EDUCATION QUALITY
ASSURANCE UNIT**
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

Inspection Report

June 2013

The Achievement 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	Judgement	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	197 Shamrock Road Red Bay Grand Cayman
Telephone numbers	947-5050
Email address	achieve4u@hotmail.com
Name of owner	Mr Kent Rankine
Manager / lead teacher	Ms Virginia Dela Cruz
Age range	1 – 4 years
Number on roll	Total = 107 1 year old - 13 2 year olds - 32 3 year olds - 35 4 year olds – 27

- The school has seven classes and 18 staff, all of whom are full time staff. Other members of staff include a cook and a cleaner.
- In June 2012, a new principal was identified and took up office in November 2012.
- The centre was inspected in January 2011 and a progress check visit was made later to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in the original report and also to identify the support that the school would need from the Early Childhood Care and Education Unit (ECCEU).

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

- Bathrooms are clean and have adequate toilet and washing facilities. However, children spend too long waiting in line because they can only use the toilet at set times.
- The school provides a nutritious breakfast and healthy lunches, and has introduced hygienic procedures in the kitchen. Some safety concerns raised by the Department of Environmental Health are being addressed. Parents provide snacks for their children, though these are not always well balanced, often consisting mainly of chips, and the school sends out monthly menus.
- There is a good supply of drinking water and children also bring their own. Staff encourage children to drink water throughout the day.
- Fire-extinguishers and smoke detectors are located throughout the building and a fire alarm system is in place. No record of fire drills was available during the inspection although the school conducts fire drills twice a year. The Fire Department has not been involved. The emergency evacuation plan is displayed in the office and a few classrooms. Staff know the exit route for their classes, but the assembly point is not easily accessible.
- The school uses an appropriate accident report form to record incidents and staff are versed in following the routine of contacting parents after any accidents. A few members of staff have completed CPR and first aid training but have not had regular updates. Some exposed rocks and roots in the playground are trip hazards.
- Security is maintained well. For example, several security video cameras are strategically placed so that the principal can monitor children throughout the building. Visitors cannot enter without being identified beforehand.

Leading the direction for development and learning

- The staff handbook, which contains general information and policies, has been circulated to all stakeholders. Staff follow the procedures closely and there is consistency of practice across the school.
- Staff files contain copies of police clearance and medical certificates and records of participation in training. A generic job description is also in each file, but it does not describe the appropriate roles and responsibilities for each staff member.
- The principal checks lesson plans regularly. Some use is made of the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework in planning, but staff are not planning to meet children's different needs.
- At the beginning of the year, the principal reviewed how classes were being set up by observing lessons, but no other aspects of teaching and learning have been monitored yet.
- All staff attended the ECCEU training on how to use the new curriculum. However, staff do not plan together to share ideas.

Management of the centre and staff

- The school is orderly and runs smoothly each day. Appropriate policies are in place and are shared with staff and parents. Staff receive updates from the principal at a weekly assembly.
- The school ensures that children are well supervised at all times. There are two adults allocated to each class and staff supervise their students closely when they are on the playground. The school's behaviour management system is applied consistently by staff.
- Medication is stored and dispensed safely, following parents' authorisation.

Links with parents and external agencies

- The school communicates well with parents through emails, notes and daily conversations. Parents receive progress reports about their children's development in the four key focus areas of the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework, but these do not include targets and do not help parents to understand how they can best support their child at home.
- PTA meetings afford opportunities for parents and teachers to establish good relationships, and for the dissemination of information about school events. Parents and staff greet one another pleasantly and share any important information when children are dropped off each morning. This helps to develop good relationships between home and school and helps to settle those children who find it difficult to part from their parents.
- Children visit places such as a local farm, and members of the community have visited the school. Parents often take the opportunity to become involved in the work of the school.
- Six children currently receive support from the Early Intervention Programme (EIP). However, not enough information or guidance is given by the EIP team to the school so staff can continue to support the children between their visits.

The leadership and management of the centre are adequate. There are some aspects of the centre that are working well. Policies are in place, and the school is a safe and hygienic site. However, activities are not planned well enough to promote children's good progress. Performance management procedures are not rigorous enough and job descriptions are too generic.

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.

- There is a positive climate for learning in most classrooms. Staff show care and concern for children and treat them with respect.
- Children have too few opportunities to engage in independent activities. Most staff are too controlling and do too much for children, who are therefore passive for too long. The long 'wait time' for some children, who have nothing to do until everyone else has finished an activity unnecessarily causes them to become restless and fidgety.
- Children all engage in the same activities regardless of ability: some complete the activities easily while others struggle. Some activities are not well structured. For example, one class spent too long watching a video of little value to their development.

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 encourages children to show respect for God through assembly and prayers before meals, but this is sometimes undermined when devotions go on too long and are not planned to suit the needs of all children. The youngest children do not follow instructions and can be seen chatting during the singing of the National Song.
- The school is aware of children's different religions. Children who are not of the Christian faith are supervised elsewhere during devotions.

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 do not talk enough with children or provide them with many opportunities to speak at length to develop their language skills. Questions are usually closed, demanding only one-word answers.
- Staff interact and play with young children but they do not engage them regularly in simple conversations about what they are doing.
- Some children have not yet developed good listening skills. Often, they are not settled or paying attention when staff are speaking. Many children talk while adults are giving instructions so they do not know what to do next.

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?

- Some children have opportunities to identify or order numbers, count to 10, or distinguish between first and last, but the activities are poorly structured so that children cannot show what they know and can do. All children have the same activity regardless of ability or readiness.
- There are not enough resources so children spend too long waiting for their turn. In addition, resources that are available are not used effectively, for example, some staff manipulate the resources for the children rather than letting them do it themselves.
- In some classrooms, books are stored on shelves that are out of reach of the children so children are not encouraged to browse through or choose books to read.

The effectiveness of provision, including teaching and its impact on children's learning and development, is unsatisfactory. Children do not have enough opportunities to work independently and try things out for themselves. Language skills are not developed quickly as staff do not engage children regularly in conversations. Long waiting times and activities of inappropriate difficulty do not adequately support children's good behaviour.

Recommendations (These are the priority areas for development)

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

1. Carry out more frequent fire drills and consult with the Fire Department for advice about finding a better assembly point.
2. Cover or eradicate the exposed rocks and roots in the playground to eliminate potential hazards.
3. Develop appropriate job descriptions for all staff so that they know what is expected of them and introduce a rigorous performance management system.
4. Monitor staff's planning and delivery closely so that class activities are suitably challenging and meet the learning needs of all children. Ensure staff give enough opportunities for children to work independently.
5. Provide more guidance for staff on how to promote children's language skills through skilful questioning and engaging the children in conversation.

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.