



Education Standards and Assessment Unit

Truth for Youth School

Evaluation Report

May 2012

Lead Evaluator: Favourita Blanchard



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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL AND THE INSPECTION TEAM

THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Private primary school
Age range of students:	3 years 9 months to 11 years 9 months
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	130
School address:	84 Walkers Road George Town Grand Cayman
Telephone number:	949-2620 / 949-7041
Fax number:	945-4617
Email address:	truthfys@candw.ky
Name of Principal:	Ms Edna L. Guiwa

THE INSPECTION TEAM

Lead inspector:	Favourita Blanchard	Education Standards and Assessment Unit
Team inspectors:	Helena McVeigh Natasha Chopra Kevin Roberts	Overseas Inspector Local Occasional Inspector Local Occasional Inspector

Introduction

The aim of the Cayman Islands' Education Standards and Assessment Unit (ESAU) is to promote the raising of standards of achievement in schools and early childhood care and education centres in the Cayman Islands through rigorous and independent inspections and by provision of sound professional advice to the Ministry of Education and the Department of Education Services.

Each school receives an external inspection approximately every four years, and six months after an inspection, a progress check against its action plan. The inspection identifies the school's strengths and the areas that need to be improved. External inspections are guided by the criteria in the ESAU *Handbook for Inspection and Self-Evaluation*.

Inspections provide schools, parents and the community, the Department of Education Services and the Ministry of Education, Training and Employment with an external and impartial evaluation of the quality of a school's work and its impact on students' learning and the standards they achieve. Through the publication of reports, external inspections contribute to accountability, transparency and openness within the education system.

The Education Standards and Assessment Unit hopes that this inspection report will prove helpful to Truth for Youth School and will contribute in a positive way to the improvement of the school.

Information about the inspection

The external inspection of Truth for Youth School took place from 7th to 9th May 2012 and involved a team of four inspectors. The following aspects of the school's work were looked at:

- Standards achieved and progress made by students in language arts and mathematics
- The effectiveness of teaching and how well students learn
- The quality of students' personal development
- Students' attendance and punctuality
- The quality of the curriculum and how students are assessed
- How well the school is led and managed
- The quality of the support and guidance offered to students, and the level of care for their welfare
- The effectiveness of links with parents and the community
- How well teachers help students to learn and use their literacy, numeracy and information technology skills across all of their school work

The inspection team gathered evidence in the following ways:

- 32 lessons or parts of lessons were observed, mainly language arts and mathematics, but including a sample of other subjects.
- School documents, including teachers' planning, curriculum statements and guidelines, were looked at.
- Students' work was scrutinised.

- Inspectors spoke with students and took their views that were recorded in the questionnaires into account.
- Inspectors heard students read.
- Discussions took place with teachers, the principal, Chairman of the Board of Directors and representatives from the Parent Teachers Association and 'Helping Hands'.
- Comments from the teachers and parents at the meetings before the inspection and from questionnaires were taken into account.

The evaluators used the following grading scale to describe aspects of the school's work:

Grade		Description
1	'Very good'	Good in nearly all respects 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 negative impact on learning and standards. Cause for concern

Where these terms are shown in this form in the body of the report, they indicate the grade for that section. Recommendations for improvement are included at the end of the report.

Favourita Blanchard

Senior Evaluator

Education Standards and Assessment Unit

Executive summary of the report

Background

Truth for Youth School is owned and operated by the Church of God (Universal). It was established in order to provide education with a strong Christian emphasis for its students. It caters to students from ages three years nine months to 11 years nine months. Classes range from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 6. There are 130 students on roll, 59 boys and 71 girls. Eighty-three students are Caymanian. There is considerable variation between class sizes, ranging from 24 in Kindergarten to 11 in Grade 5.

The school operates an American System of Education, and relies heavily upon the textbooks of Houghton Mifflin Publishers for its core courses. This is taught within the framework of the United States Grade system. This means that children are a year older than the corresponding groups in other Cayman Islands schools. Grade 6 at Truth for Youth has children who would be in Year 7 in government schools in Cayman.

The school has not identified any students as having special educational needs (SEN), but inspectors observed some students in different classes that would benefit from being assessed so that their needs may be planned for more effectively.

The school site is just south of the business district of George Town. There is a school field, classrooms for each grade, dining hall, kitchen, auditorium, computer room, science lab, library and administrative facilities which include a newly added principal's office.

Truth for Youth was last inspected in 2005 with a review inspection in 2007. This inspection was carried out during the week beginning 7th May 2012, by a team of four inspectors, including one from overseas.

This inspection did not focus on the provision for Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten because an earlier inspection was carried out for these groups in March 2011 and a report produced. However, a progress check of the early years was done to find out what progress the school has made against its action plan for this group. The progress check report will be sent to the Early Childhood and Education Unit (ECCEU) and to the school. The ECCEU will follow up with support that is needed.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

How effective is the school overall?

Truth for Youth School continues to provide a very caring environment with a strong Christian ethos for its students. Students' personal development is good and relationships between students and staff are also good. Although the attitudes and behaviour of the majority of students are good, there is a minority who display challenging behaviour in lessons.

The traffic in and out of the car park is cause for concern, but most students know how to stay safe in that environment.

Parents are satisfied with the school and are proud of the Christian ethos that permeates throughout. They are supportive and volunteer their services for various activities in and out of school. Each class has a parent representative who helps to acquire resources for the class. Some parents have voiced concerns about the limited range of after-school clubs, and the dangers posed by not having a gate at the entrance to the school.

Teachers are readily available to speak with parents about their children's progress and some of them remain after school to offer help to students in various subjects.

Students' standards of achievement are broadly in line with expectations for students' ages. The results of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) show that progress has been made in reading, language and mathematics over the past few years. However, the school has not identified students with learning difficulties so that they can plan specifically for their needs, and the most able students are often not challenged enough in lessons.

In most aspects of its provision the school provides an adequate education for its students, but overall its effectiveness is unsatisfactory because the curriculum, and leadership and management, which are two crucial areas of its provision, are unsatisfactory. Since taking up office in 2009, the principal has focused efforts on getting policy documents, curriculum and new equipment in place; however, there is no shared direction, for the school. Inspectors noted that in the 2007 review of progress report, the school had made satisfactory progress in the areas identified for improvement in its 2005 inspection. This current inspection shows that not enough progress has been made since then and areas that needed to be improved in 2005 are again areas that are identified for improvement in 2012. Students' attendance and punctuality are not closely monitored and the Board of Directors is not actively involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school.

The school will need external support to address the issues for improvement and establish a clear direction for its future development.

What the school does well

- There is a strong, caring Christian ethos
- Students' personal development is good
- The school has developed strong links with parents and the community

What needs to improve

- The leadership and management, which have not provided a clear way forward for the school
- The curriculum and use of assessment
- The provision for students who are more able, less able and those who possibly have special educational needs
- Safety procedures in the school's car park

Note:

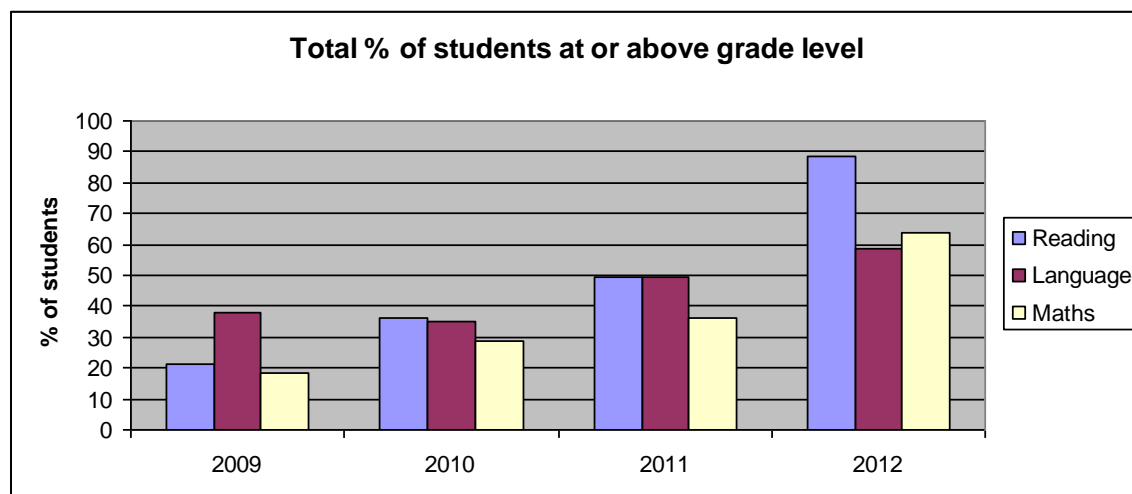
*The school is expected to modify its existing improvement plan or to prepare a supplementary action plan to address the areas for improvement identified above. The amended plan or supplement should be sent to the Education Standards and Assessment Unit **within 40 working days of hearing the draft report.** The school is required to provide parents with an annual update on the progress that is being made in addressing the areas identified as needing to improve.*

How well do students achieve and make progress?

Students start in Grade 1 with standards that are broadly in line with those expected for their age, although there is a range of abilities in all grades with many able students.

The school's Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) results since 2009 show improving proportions of students attaining or exceeding the grade level standard in reading, language and mathematics. The rate of improvement is less good in the language component of the tests which are concerned with spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, grammar, usage and expression. Results in mathematics have improved each year but are below those for reading.

The chart below shows the combined proportions of students who performed at, or above, the expected level in the ITBS since 2009.



The ITBS papers do not assess all aspects of English and mathematics and the inspection team found that there were weaknesses in certain aspects of these subjects. For example, standards in students' writing are low, because students are given too few opportunities to write at length for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Overall, most students make adequate progress in subjects as they move up through the grades. Progress is erratic across the different classes, but was most significant in Grade 6 this year in all subjects. Students do not always make enough progress during lessons, particularly in mathematics, and the most able students could make more progress as work is sometimes too easy for them.

This is a better picture than was found at the 2005 inspection but with room for much further improvement.

Students' personal development

The quality of students' personal development is good. The school creates a caring environment in which students are encouraged to express themselves. The spiritual development of the students is good and visitors to the school are warmly welcomed. Teachers have established positive relationships with students and treat them with respect. Teachers know their students well and their relationships with them support the strong Christian ethos of the school very effectively. Parents and teachers consider that the spiritual and moral development of students is a strength of the school.

Teachers and students meet daily to worship with morning devotions which provide a good start to the day. Students learn the stories of the Bible and understand how to apply them to their daily lives. Teachers reinforce these concepts in lessons with readings from scripture verses. The students enjoy singing hymns. They know the words, and, even without musical accompaniment, they sing in tune and with great enthusiasm. Students regularly volunteer to help lead in singing or prayer, both in their class devotions and in whole-school assemblies. They recite the school pledge with confidence and pride.

Students generally behave well in class and when opportunities are given, work collaboratively with one another. In a few lessons, some students do not behave well. This usually occurs when students are not actively engaged in their own learning or when lessons do not meet their individual needs. Most teachers deal quickly and effectively with students' misbehaviour.

Provision for students' social development is good. Most of the Grade 5 and 6 students act as prefects and have responsibility for helping the younger students. For example, they sit with the younger students in devotions to help them keep settled. Also, prefects lead devotions with well-thought out prayers. There is a Head Boy and Head Girl who are chosen to represent the school in events in the local community.

Students are taken on field trips to local places of interest, connected to what they are studying in social studies. There have been visits to Cayman Brac, The Turtle Farm, Botanic Park and many of the districts. In many classrooms, teachers have displayed photographs and students' writing of their experiences. When questioned, students talk confidently and knowledgeably about their trips. In one class a display of the students work showed they had been learning about how the silver thatch palm has been used through history. There were examples of thatched roofs and a broom made from thatch. The students talked quite confidently about what they had learned and this gives students a strong sense of their culture and heritage. The National Song is sung regularly and confidently by students.

Students also learn about other Caribbean islands through class projects on the countries of the Commonwealth. Students talk proudly of their work and were often observed reading and finding out new information. From time to time, teachers encourage some of the Spanish-speaking students to use their own language in class.

Students in Grade 5 and 6 have the opportunity to learn about health. Students have the opportunity to engage in a range of physical activities and eagerly await PE lessons. The canteen provides healthy options for snack and lunch and the school encourages those students who bring in their own lunches to eat healthily. The school provides a healthy breakfast of, for example, porridge and fruit for students before school starts.

How effective is the teaching and what impact does it have on students' learning?

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection in 2005 and is adequate overall. There is still much room for improvement to increase the number of lessons that are good or very good and to eliminate the small but significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching.

A clear improvement is the use of learning objectives. Teachers now consistently identify clear and generally appropriate learning objectives for each lesson. Objectives are shared with students and sometimes revisited at the end of the lesson to establish whether they have been achieved.

Teachers have good relationships with their students and maintain good order and discipline in most cases. Students' positive attitudes to learning contribute to the generally calm and productive learning ethos in classrooms. Occasionally students' learning is interrupted by the exuberance and undisciplined behaviour of a few students. In most instances teachers handle such behaviour appropriately.

The pace of lessons is often too slow and tasks are not modified for students of different abilities. Students are generally all given the same work with the result that the most able students are not challenged enough by the tasks. Teachers' expectations of what these students can achieve could be higher. Sometimes the less able students struggle with the work and are not given support or simplified tasks. Slow writers in one class were seen spending over 30 minutes copying a few math questions from the board without learning any mathematics.

The inspection team observed a number of good and very good lessons in which students made good progress. In these lessons, students were all involved and engaged in relevant and enjoyable tasks. For example, in a 'free talk' session students spoke confidently about recent activities they had been involved in. They listened respectfully to each other and asked questions of the speaker. One class responded well to a practical and relevant mathematics task of identifying angles in the school grounds. The teacher's good questioning in a social studies lesson encouraged students to think deeply about the importance of the sea to the Cayman Islands. Students enjoyed the arts and craft lessons where they worked safely and creatively and cooperated well in groups. The well-structured PE lessons ensured that students made very good progress as they practised skills and incorporated them into a game. A useful review at the end of a PE lesson provided students with an opportunity to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in their own and others' performance.

The principal observes lessons using a checklist, but this does not focus enough on students' learning and progress. The monitoring does not record suggestions for how teaching can improve further.

Students are sometimes expected to evaluate their own confidence and achievements in subjects, but this is very general and no examples were seen of them assessing their learning in lessons against given success criteria. Most teachers regularly check students' work in exercise books, but rarely provide any constructive feedback that shows students how to improve. In a few cases, teachers' marking is inaccurate as they give checks to work that is incorrect. In lessons, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to adapt the lesson in response to students' apparent misconceptions.

Teachers keep portfolios of individual students and these include records of students' targets in language arts and mathematics. The assessments are infrequent and sometimes not dated so it is difficult for teachers and school leaders to monitor students' progress.

What is the quality of the curriculum and assessment?

There have been some minor improvements to the curriculum since the 2005 inspection, but it remains unsatisfactory overall.

Students now experience information and communication technology (ICT) lessons in the ICT suite, which was not the case in 2005. There is also now a science laboratory which enables more practical science to be experienced by students (although none was seen during the inspection). The curriculum is also enhanced by a number of well-attended after-school clubs in sports such as netball, basketball and soccer, and students also benefit from educational trips and visits.

Students experience a reasonable range of subjects including well taught physical education (PE), but there is limited time for creative subjects such as art, music and drama. Provision for music is unsatisfactory, although students' singing is a strength, and they take advantages of any opportunity to sing with gusto, for example in daily devotion. The teaching of phonics is a weakness and it is poorly timetabled at the end of the day for Grade 1 when students are not at their most receptive for learning this important skill.

There is an unsatisfactory variation in the class timetables in terms of time allotted to different subjects (as was found in 2005 inspection) and even in the subjects taught. For example, students learn Spanish in three grades only. This variation in timetables across the school indicates that teachers are not given clear enough direction by the leadership.

The amount of time allocated to mathematics is low with less than five hours per week on average and some overly long sessions of between 80 and 90 minutes, which are not used effectively. The low amount of time dedicated to mathematics may contribute to the fact that progress in this subject is not as good as it could be.

Planning of subjects is unsatisfactory and exacerbated by the lack of subject coordinators, although there are plans for teachers to coordinate English and mathematics next year. Teachers rely too heavily on following the textbooks, especially in English and mathematics rather than planning based on their assessments of what students know, understand and can do. This reliance on the textbooks results in some undemanding work and repetition, for example in mathematics where the same topic was seen in an upper grade and lower grade, the work was not challenging enough for most of the upper grade students. Some of the textbook material is uninspiring as well as irrelevant to children living in the Cayman Islands.

The curriculum and students' learning are inhibited by the small size of some of the classrooms, some unsuitable furniture and lack of resources; for example, books that encourage a wider range of reading. There are practical resources for mathematics, but these were not used during the inspection. Teachers are, though, attempting to make good use of the limited space and there are some attractive displays of children's work. ICT resources have improved considerably, and teachers could make greater use of ICT if there were computers in each classroom.

Assessment

The school is not making use of assessment data to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. The data is not analysed well – for example, by being used to identify students or groups of students who are not making enough progress or who possibly have special needs. Data presented to the team relating to the 2011 Iowa tests was inaccurate and presented a misleadingly positive picture of the results.

Teachers know broadly how well children are doing, but they are not drawing on this enough to plan work for students that matches their stage of learning or particular needs. Students who struggle in lessons are not often given the individual support they need or provided with a different task from their peers with greater support and structure to help them to achieve. Students who are more able are rarely given more challenging work and are generally expected to work at the same rate as their peers. This slows down their progress.

Most teachers regularly check students' work in books and give them oral feedback, but they do not provide constructive written comments that indicate how students can improve nor set them individual targets for improvement. Students do not have individual written targets that identify what they need to do to move to the next level in subjects.

How well is the school led and managed?

The leadership and management of Truth for Youth School are unsatisfactory. The leadership team consists of the principal and Board of Directors. The Chairman of the Board works closely with the principal and the Board is responsible mainly for the finances while the principal takes responsibility for the academic aspects of the school. The principal has been in post since 2009 and was a class teacher during the 2005 evaluation. No one monitors the work of the principal. There is no deputy principal or subject leaders and responsibilities are not shared to enable teachers to develop leadership skills.

Communication between leadership and staff is not good, and teachers are unsure of leadership's vision for the school. However, communication among teachers and between teachers and parents is good. Most teachers have an 'open door' policy and parents find that they can easily reach them to find out about their children's progress.

The school has no effective arrangements for the identification and formal assessment of students with English as an additional language (EAL) and special educational needs (SEN). As such it has stated in its 2011/12 School Data Form that there are no students with SEN or with EAL. Inspectors found that there are some students who would benefit from an assessment so that individual educational plans (IEPs) could be developed for them in order that their needs could be suitably addressed.

Even though the school has made some improvement in standards of achievement in reading, language and mathematics, it is not enough since 2005.

The 2005 inspection identified the following key issues for improvement:

- Standards of achievement, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress that students make, particularly those who need extra help and those who are capable of high achievement
- Teaching in some classes, where it is not effective enough in helping students to understand their work and become more independent in their learning.
- The provision for children in pre-K and K classes, which is currently inadequate.
- Systems to measure and improve the school's performance, which are not effective enough.

Seven years later, some of these issues have reemerged. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not as effective as it could be. Teachers are not given helpful comments that would enable them to improve their practice. Teaching was good or very good in less than half of the lessons seen. An increase in the proportion of good and very good lessons is likely to have a greater impact on the rise in standards of achievement.

In its school improvement plan (SIP) the school indicated that there is a need for a gate to the front to ensure students' safety as the school's entrance/exit faces the main road. This has not been addressed and remains an issue of great concern for parents, teachers and students. As a matter of priority the school needs to rectify this problem immediately to ensure that all students are safe and secure.

How effective are other aspects of the school's work?

The support and guidance offered to students and level of care for their welfare

The school's arrangements for caring for students and promoting their health and safety are adequate.

Teachers know the students well and show great concern for their general well-being, but this concern is not focused enough on their progress as learners. The school has not identified any students as having special needs. There are students in most classes who are in need of extra support. For some, this is because there is a learning difficulty and for others, because English is not their first language. Some teachers work hard to support students with English as an additional language. Other teachers spend additional time after school providing these students with extra tutoring.

Students' personal files are well-organized and accessible. They contain registration forms, medical cards and registration documents. Report cards are kept by the principal and grades are recorded quarterly. There is room for a brief comment by teacher and parent. Each teacher keeps a portfolio for each child. The portfolios include self-assessment by students of their performance at school. Students also include samples of their work to show what they can do. There are assessment sheets with objectives that are checked off quarterly when students achieve these. As this is a new initiative, it is unclear how effective the use of these portfolios is to track and monitor students' progress.

Teachers encourage good behaviour and the school has a policy on discipline set out by the Board of Directors. The guidelines in the teachers' handbook are clear and define consequences for their behaviour. Many teachers display classroom rules and there are incentive sticker charts to encourage good behaviour. This was used effectively in one class where the teacher rewarded students at the end of the lesson with stickers. Students felt a great sense of accomplishment.

Resources within the school are limited. The library is spacious but much of the reading material is unsuitable for students of this age. Books are old and there is not enough choice of reading material to promote research or an enjoyment of reading. Reading corners in classrooms are cosy and teachers have worked hard to make them appealing but with limited reading resources students are left with few books to choose from.

Teachers supervise the students well in the canteen at breakfast, snack and lunchtime and on the playground. Teachers walk around the schoolyard to ensure all areas are monitored. However, there is much concern over the lack of a gate at the front of the school property that faces onto a busy main road. Parents and teachers aired concerns for the safety of the students. In addition, the car park is very small and there is limited space for parents to park their cars. This makes drop-off and pick-up times hazardous. Students are very aware of the danger and sensibly wait in designated areas for their parents, but this is a major safety issue that needs immediate attention.

Provision for students' health is adequate. The school provides a breakfast option for students who arrive early to school. There is a good selection of food choices from fruit plates to pancakes. The school also provides students with healthy meals and snacks. Students have regular PE lessons each week. Grades 5 and 6 students learn about health in lessons and the school nurse visits regularly to check on students. Students expressed concern that there were not enough extra-curricular activities other than sports to engage in after school, and would like to have more options.

Student's attendance and punctuality

The school does not have effective procedures in place for monitoring students' attendance and punctuality. Teachers keep neat records of students' day-to-day attendance and mark registers in the mornings. It is unclear how attendance is monitored in the afternoon. Registers are not returned to the office after roll call so it is difficult for the leadership to know how many students are on campus on any given day. Parents are expected to provide a doctor's note when a student is absent and many do. There is no one person who has an overall picture of attendances who can identify patterns in repeated absences. The data from the registers is not analysed so there is no way to know what the average attendance is like at the school.

There are a number of students who arrive late in the mornings and this causes disruption for all students in the class. Some teachers mark the students late in the register and are expected to follow-up repeated lateness with calls to parents. There is no way to monitor how effective this is and whether all teachers consistently follow this procedure.

Links with parents and the community

Links with parents and the community are good, which is an improvement from the last inspection.

Parents are very supportive of the school and have been participating in a variety of activities. The formation of a Parent Teachers Association (PTA) since the last inspection has increased the opportunities for this involvement. Parents help with sports days, national competitions, purchasing of uniforms, graduation exercises and field trips. They have also expressed a willingness to further support the school in its fundraising activities and in other areas of its development.

Effective links have also been established with a range of groups in the community. The school participates in a variety of activities such as Cancer Society walks, Red Cross fundraising event, inter-primary sports competition, National Spelling Bee and the National Children's Festival of the Arts (NCFA). Students participate in field trips, for example, they have been on educational visits to Cayman Brac and the Queen Elizabeth Botanic Park. The school also receives very good support from the Helping Hands group which is a group of past students.

Parents receive students' progress reports quarterly. These provide useful information on attendance, achievement in different subject areas and general comments on behaviour. They also provide opportunities for parents to make comments, but do not provide specific information on what students can do and what they need to do to improve.

What is the quality of teaching and learning in subjects?

Language arts

Since 2005, standards achieved by students in language arts have improved and are now just in line with what is expected for their age. The school has made some progress, but many students could still be achieving much better results. In writing, students' work indicates they are performing below the expected level for their age. Standards are better in speaking as the ethos established by the school encourages students to speak confidently in lessons. Overall the quality of provision for language arts is adequate.

During lessons, teachers use a range of methods to develop skills in speaking and listening. Many students are confident speakers and have good listening skills. In one class the teachers' enthusiasm brought the lesson alive and she skillfully used searching questions to encourage students to explain their experiences in more detail and with clarity. For example, a visit to the dentist that one of the students had chosen to talk about.

By the end of Grade 6 many students express themselves in full, grammatically correct sentences. They confidently interact with each other and talk about what they do in school. They ask and answer a range of questions and enjoy leading assemblies and class devotions. They show an awareness of different audiences when speaking and are encouraged to give oral presentations on things they have learned about in class.

The school has made progress in reading since the last evaluation. Younger students engage readily in discussions about books. They answer literal questions about texts they have read

well. Some students find reading challenging and are hesitant readers. They use pictures to help them decipher unfamiliar words. However, they rely too heavily on teacher and peer support, as they do not have the skills to decode new words. The use of phonics to help students read new words is not taught well enough. Quite often students are told the word without being encouraged to sound it out. They have few strategies for making sense of the text. Older students talk confidently about the types of books they like to read. One student expressed a love of fairy tales whilst another child enjoys reading fantasy novels. Students are not exposed to different types of books and know few authors as resources are poor. More able students show an understanding of the text but overall students lack the skills to read between the lines to make deductions and inferences. They are unclear about the features of an information text such as a contents page and index. There is little evidence that students are given the opportunity to read for enjoyment, although a few students were seen reading books from home and when questioned, talked with great enthusiasm about the plot and characters.

Handwriting is generally of a high standard because many teachers model this skill well. In composition activities, students write about things that are familiar to them. For example, younger students enjoy writing about their weekend news and keep journals in class. They express themselves in a simple manner. Students spell common words accurately but are not making more interesting word choices. By the time students reach grade three, they are fairly confident to use capital letters and full stops to punctuate sentences. They are beginning to write longer sentences using words like 'and' to join shorter sentences. However, too few opportunities are given for students to write for different purposes. Almost all of the writing seen was written in the first person and there were few examples of students developing their ideas for story writing. Little guidance is given to students on how to plan, develop characters and plot or how to edit and redraft a piece of work. There were some examples of students developing skills in writing rhyming poetry and in these instances students do well. They show that they have the ability to produce work of a good standard when given the opportunity, but this is not happening often enough on a regular basis.

Work is marked fairly regularly but there are not enough comments to help students improve their work. Teachers often make corrections in spelling and punctuation for students so this does not help them learn from their mistakes.

In classes where teaching is good, students are motivated and behave well. Teachers maintain a lively pace and give students clear time frames. This encourages students to make progress and they are able to show what they could do. In a number of lessons too much time was spent introducing the activities and students did not have much opportunity to work independently and thus be moved on in their learning. Some teachers use their expertise and subject knowledge to make lessons more interesting, rather than relying too heavily on textbooks. As a consequence, students are enthusiastic about their work. In classes where students are not suitably challenged they become restless and bored. Students with English as an additional language often struggle, as work is not altered to meet their needs. However, in one lesson the teacher encouraged a Spanish-speaking student to demonstrate the correct pronunciation of a Spanish word the class had come across in a text on 'Don Quixote'. The student showed the class how to say the word correctly and the students took much enjoyment out of trying to copy this. This helped boost this child's self-esteem. The teacher went on to support the student in his independent work with a differentiated activity. In this way the student made good progress in the lesson because he was supported in his learning. Generally, more able students make limited progress, as they are not suitably challenged. This is the same for students with learning difficulties, as they are not clearly identified and thus are not supported in their learning.

Literacy across the curriculum

There are opportunities for students to broaden their skills in literacy. Although the school does not have any specific planning in place for the teaching of literacy in other subject areas, many lessons promote literacy. In lessons students ask and answer questions and are encouraged to speak with clarity. Teachers use this opportunity to remind students how to speak in full sentences and to use expression when speaking out loud.

In devotions, students practise their skills in reading through reading passages from the Bible. Students develop their research skills in social studies. For example, a recent project of the school was to present projects on the countries of the Commonwealth. This helped students learn how to speak to an audience and show confidence.

In classrooms writing can be seen displayed on the walls celebrating recent field trips that students have attended. In one class students wrote recounts of their visit to Cayman Brac. This helped them develop their skills in writing and encouraged them to take pride in the presentation of their work. In classrooms teachers display key words for science, as well as words that are used often in everyday writing.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement in Mathematics are generally in line with what is expected for students' age, but lower than standards in reading. Although students make progress over time, it is not as good as it could be particularly for the most able students. From an analysis of data from the Iowa tests, students' computation skills appear generally weaker than their math concepts and problem solving. These weaknesses were also evident from observations in some lessons.

Teachers share objectives with students at the start of lessons. Students have good attitudes to learning, participate well in lessons and cooperate with each other. Teachers use questioning to encourage students to respond, but the questions are not always well developed or effective enough to deepen or check their understanding. For example, in a lesson on measurement, students were asked to state the units to be used for the dimensions of a shape. The correct response was given, but the teacher did not question the student further, to find out how he/she arrived at the answer or to deepen their understanding.

Students do not receive many opportunities for problem solving and are rarely engaged in hands-on activities. Teachers spend too much time talking especially in the first half of lessons. When students get the opportunity to work on their own or in groups, they make better progress. This also provides opportunities for the teacher to differentiate and assess students' understanding. For example, in one lesson, students worked together in groups to determine the perimeter and area of composite shapes while the teacher supported a student who had difficulties understanding the concept of perimeter. The student received a different worksheet at a lower level. In this lesson, progress was better than in others seen.

Teachers rarely provide opportunities for assessing students' understanding of the lesson objectives. In one lesson observed, there were missed opportunities to clarify students' misconceptions. Marking is inconsistent across the school and teachers' comments do not

provide specific information on what students can do to improve their work. There are few opportunities for students to reflect on their achievement in the subject and to set targets for improvement.

There is little use of mental mathematics in solving problems. The teaching is concentrated too much on process rather than on understanding of concepts. Opportunities to link the mathematics with the real world are limited. In one lesson however, the teacher was able to make connections between finding perimeter and dress-making. This practice needs to be more widespread to help students make meaningful and relevant connections to enhance their interest and understanding of mathematics.

There is a lack of planning for progression and continuity across the school. This creates repetition of the teaching of concepts at the same level and slows the progress that students make. It is further influenced by an overreliance on the use of textbooks. For example, in one lesson, students clearly indicated to the teacher that the concept was already covered in previous years and they knew how to do it. This information was not used to modify the teaching and help students to progress further.

Overall, the quality of provision for mathematics is 'unsatisfactory'.

Numeracy across the curriculum

The school has not made adequate progress in the application of numeracy across the curriculum. As with the last inspection, there is rarely any use of numbers in other subject areas. This needs to be addressed in order to help raise standards of achievement in mathematics, particularly in improving students' weak computation skills. Currently, there is no planning or coordination of numeracy across the school. As a result, there are many missed opportunities to apply the skills and develop understanding of mathematical concepts. The development of a whole school numeracy policy could have a far-reaching impact on the improvement of students' numeracy skills.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) across the curriculum

The school is now adequately resourced for ICT and has made progress in its use across the curriculum since the last inspection. There is now an ICT specialist teacher who teaches ICT skills to students across the school. All students are taught ICT skills once per week and are occasionally exposed to its use in other lessons. The computer lab is equipped with 14 computers, 10 of which are networked with access to the Internet. Additionally students and teachers have access to three printers and a scanner and the recent acquisition of two Smart Boards. However, there are no computers in the classrooms for students to use.

Professional development opportunities in the use of ICT are infrequent. Although the school has organized a workshop on the use of the smart boards, teachers need more support in order to maximize their use and increase the benefits to students. Continued professional development in the use of the boards and other aspects of ICT integration, will be necessary to improve teachers' understanding and increase students' access to learning in other subject areas.

There is some planned integration of ICT in other subjects such as science and language arts, but it is not extensive enough. For example, students in Grades 5 and 6, use PowerPoint to create 'fact flippers' on atoms and on parts of speech. In Grades 1 to 3, students are also exposed to the use of web-based resources for reading and mathematics. The planning for ICT use across other subjects needs to be more extensive and should be done across all subjects in all grades. The range of skills also needs to be widened to include other aspects of ICT such as modelling with spreadsheets, video recording and editing and developing problem solving skills through the use of measurement and control tools.

Recommendations

The following are some suggested ways that the school could try to overcome the weaknesses in the 'What needs to improve' section on page 7 of this report. They are not intended to be mandatory.

1. In order to improve the leadership and management which have not provided a clear way forward, the school should:

- Share responsibilities with members of staff and establish well defined roles for them
- Involve the Board of Directors more directly in the strategic management of the school
- Allocate responsibility for the coordination of subjects and for students with special educational needs
- Provide more developmental feedback to teachers following classroom observations, to help teachers improve their practice
- Monitor attendance and punctuality more closely and follow up lateness more promptly

2. In order to improve safety procedures in the school's car park, the school should:

- Implement plans to ensure that students are kept safe in and around the school's car park, as a matter of urgency

3. In order to improve the curriculum and the use of assessment, the school should:

- Plan the curriculum for each subject more carefully to ensure that the content and methods are increasingly demanding and relevant to students' ages and not so reliant on following the order and content of the text
- Ensure that there is more consistency in the way that teachers organize their timetables and that subjects such as mathematics are given a greater allocation of time across the week
- Analyse the results of assessment data correctly to identify aspects of the curriculum or teaching that require improving and to identify students that appear to be underachieving
- Improve the way that teachers mark students' work and provide feedback that shows them how to improve
- Provide targets for individual students, particularly in language arts and mathematics, to show them what they need to do to improve

4. In order to improve the provision for students who are more able, less able and those who possibly have special educational needs, the school should:

- Ensure that lessons are suitably differentiated to allow more able students to progress at a faster pace than others, when necessary, and less able and those with special needs to receive the support they need in order for them to make progress