



**EDUCATION QUALITY  
ASSURANCE UNIT**  
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

# **Inspection Report**

**June 2013**

**Montessori Del Sol**

## 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 (EQUA). 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 areas of the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework (CIEYCF):
  - 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 (ECCEU) to provide support.

## General Information about the Centre

<b>Address</b>	<b>11 Hinds Way, P.O. Box 11887 Grand Cayman, KY1-1010</b>
<b>Telephone numbers</b>	<b>949-3222</b>
<b>Email address</b>	<b><a href="mailto:montessori@candw.ky">montessori@candw.ky</a></b>
<b>Owner / Manager</b>	<b>Amy Lipton</b>
<b>Age range</b>	<b>1 – 4 years</b>
<b>Number on roll</b>	<b>Total 60 1 year olds - 1 2 years olds - 11 3 years olds - 26 4 years olds – 22</b>

- Montessori Del Sol is a three-classroom school, located off Walker's Road, George Town. The school is registered for a maximum of 65 children but currently there are 60 children on roll.
- The school employs three full-time staff (including the manager) and seven part-time staff, each of whom work five half days per week.

## Inspection Judgements

### Leadership and management

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

### Ensuring the welfare, health and safety of the children

- Children's welfare, health and safety needs are well taken care of at Montessori Del Sol. Staff are dedicated and ensure that appropriate healthy procedures are always followed, for example, when washing hands or changing shoes.
- The school provides healthy snacks and children learn to help themselves to the right sized serving of fruits and vegetables. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy packed lunches. Drinking water is available at all times.
- The Department of Environmental Health (DEH) inspected the school on 9 January, 2013 and found it to be 'satisfactory.' The DEH conducts unannounced inspections throughout the school year.
- Staff are alert to potential health hazards and any problems identified are dealt with quickly. The school has developed a health, safety and emergency policy, which is shared with staff and parents. The policy outlines procedures to be followed in the case of accidents or medical emergencies.
- Children arrive at school wearing sun block, which the school replenishes as needed, and all children wear hats for outdoor play.

### Leading the direction for development and learning

- Two heads of departments share responsibility for day to day operations. Routines are well established, helping to ensure children's personal well-being and promoting good learning.
- Senior leaders carry out performance management annually and identify staff's professional development needs. Staff attend Montessori conferences each year, taking part in refresher workshops and learning new ways to use the Montessori materials.
- Five children receive support from the Early Intervention Programme (EIP), which gives verbal feedback on children's progress to the school. However, no written guidance about how staff should support children between the EIP team's visits is provided. Some children receive off-site support for language or speech therapy.
- Staff verbally report children's progress to parents each day and also provide annual written reports, which are discussed with parents at the annual reporting session. Reports consist of a checklist identifying what children can do and this helps staff to plan for each child's 'next steps' in learning.

### Management of the centre and staff

- The school conducts a termly fire drill, but does not involve the Fire Service. Fire extinguishers and detectors have been checked by a private company and, in January 2013, the school received a pass certificate following inspection by the Cayman Islands Fire Service.
- Staff files are well maintained and up-to-date. All members of staff have police clearance certificates and appropriate job descriptions.

- Children are well supervised indoors and outdoors. The daily schedule allows children to make choices and to engage in independent activities.

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

- The school has established strong links with the community and parents. Regular contact with parents is maintained through emails, monthly calendars and termly newsletters from each class. Parents can easily email the class teacher or the school manager, and there is an informative school website.
- The school works well with the EIP team to support children, who make good progress. Parents can also visit the EIP independently with their children.

**The leadership and management of the centre are very good. Senior managers have a clear vision for the school, shared by staff and parents. They ensure the school operates smoothly each day. Strong policies are in place and implemented very well. Health and safety are promoted and monitored well.**

## **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 know the class routines well and move around the school in an orderly fashion. For example, they help to arrange place settings so that snack time runs efficiently.
- Children have daily opportunities to play outdoors and have ample resources for developing their gross motor skills. Drinking water is provided and all children wear hats to protect themselves from the sun. They are well supervised by adults.

### **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.*

- Staff have a pleasant, caring manner with children, who in return develop similar behaviour.
- Children have a high level of respect for their surroundings and take care of the property of others. For example, they share each other's toys happily and play board games fairly. Children follow the school's routines closely so there is order at all times.
- Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour towards one another. Children have been taught to respect each other's work and to listen to their peer's closely. Children handle their property carefully, and politely and confidently ask for help from either their teacher or their peers.

### **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 model the behaviours they expect of children in speech and manner. They use correct English and make sure children speak appropriately. Activities are well planned to promote children's attentive listening and full engagement.
- Children can clearly explain the instructions for games they have brought to school so that play runs smoothly.
- Staff and children speak in soft voices, which helps to maintain a calm atmosphere. Staff choose appropriate songs with actions that children enjoy and can readily join in. Children quickly learn the songs because they contain repeated lines that appeal to them.
- Children in Casa are beginning to identify their own names in print. For example, they choose their own name label and place it in a container to indicate when they have taken their snack.

## **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 many opportunities to explore the world around them. For example, they plant seeds and take care of plants in their 'grow box,' which sparks their curiosity about growing foods, as well as encouraging them to be responsible. They learn about traffic signs and investigate sounds and the effects of muffling instruments.
- Children show great curiosity and interest when they confidently explore the playground. They dig in the sand, talk eagerly about what they find and build sand castles of varying designs.

**The effectiveness of provision, including teaching and its impact on children's learning and development, is very good. Resources are good and stimulate children's curiosity and imagination well. Staff have high expectations of children and model expected behaviours clearly. Children quickly develop independence and respect for each other and their surroundings.**

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

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

1. Prepare a map of escape routes in the event of fire, at strategic points around the school and in every classroom.
2. Invite the Fire Service to future fire drills to get their professional advice about the exercise.

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