



Cayman Academy

INSPECTION REPORT

JANUARY 2006

LEAD INSPECTOR: HELENA MCVEIGH



Cayman Islands Schools' Inspectorate

Working in partnership for high quality education for all students

Foreword

The aim of the Schools' Inspectorate is to contribute to continuous school improvement in the Cayman Islands, through rigorous external evaluations of schools and by providing high quality policy advice and training.

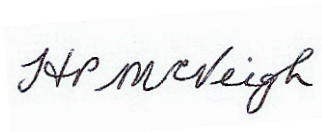
Each school receives an inspection every four to six years. The inspection identifies the school's strengths and the areas that need to be improved. Between inspections, schools are visited regularly by a link inspector to check on the progress that has been made in tackling the priority areas and to support the school in its own self-evaluation.

Inspectors are guided by the criteria in the Cayman Islands *Handbook for the Self-Evaluation and Inspection of Schools*.

Inspections provide schools, parents and the community, the Education Department and the Ministry of Education, Training, Employment, Youth, Sports and Culture 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, inspection contributes to accountability, transparency and openness within the education system.

Self-evaluation by schools is considered to be an important part of the Cayman Islands school evaluation model. Together with inspections, self-evaluation provides a balanced system of internal and external accountability for schools.

The Inspectorate hopes that this inspection will contribute in a positive way to helping Cayman Academy become a more effective school.



Helena McVeigh
Chief Inspector of Schools

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL AND THE INSPECTION TEAM	4
INTRODUCTION	5
INSPECTION FINDINGS	
• How effective is the school overall?	7
• What the school does well	7
• What needs to improve	7
• How high are standards at the school?	8
• How effective is the teaching and what impact does it have on students' learning?	9
• How effective is the curriculum and the way that students are assessed?	11
• How well is the school led and managed?	12
• How effective are other aspects of the school's work?	13
• What is the quality of teaching and learning in the early years (pre-K and K classes)?	16
• What is the quality of teaching and learning in language arts, mathematics, science and ICT?	
• Language arts and literacy across the curriculum	18
• Mathematics and numeracy across the curriculum	20
• Science	21
• ICT across the curriculum	22

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL AND THE INSPECTION TEAM

THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Private
Age range of students:	3 years – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	243
School address:	209 Walkers Road, George Town, Grand Cayman
Telephone number:	949- 7190
Fax number:	945 - 5909
Email address:	edmerad@candw.ky
The Principal:	Mr Lambert Forrest
President of the Board	Dr Jeffrey Thompson

THE INSPECTION TEAM

Lead inspector:	Helena McVeigh	Cayman Islands Schools' Inspectorate
Team inspectors:	Pachent Smythe Mary Bowerman Caroline Dawes Kate Marnoch	Cayman Islands Schools' Inspectorate Cayman Islands Schools' Inspectorate Cayman Islands Schools' Inspectorate Cayman Islands Schools' Inspectorate

INTRODUCTION

Information about the school

Cayman Academy is an Adventist educational institution for students from three to sixteen years of age. The school, which was formerly known as Edmer Adventist School, is managed by a board of directors of the Cayman Islands Conference of Seventh Day Adventists. The Board has responsibility for overseeing and supporting most aspects of the school, including the development of policies and plans, the management of the budget and the hiring of staff.

The Board is accountable to and supported by the Education Department of the West Indies Union of Seventh Day Adventists, which undertakes regular evaluations of the school. The most recent evaluation took place in March 2005, resulting in a report that recommended that the school be accredited for a further five years.

The school's recently revised mission statement is:

- To provide the environment necessary for the delivery of the highest standard of social, spiritual, physical and mental training to all students
- To provide teachers with the necessary resources required to achieve the highest quality Christian education
- To ensure that all teachers, students, parents and guardians receive maximum satisfaction from their contribution
- To provide the Cayman Islands economy with the best quality human resources needed for the continued development of the society.

The mission statement is accompanied by the following statement of the school's vision:

- To provide the necessary physical, economical and academic structures to sustain the continued development of Cayman Academy so as to provide the best quality human resources to satisfy the various needs of the Cayman Islands and the wider Caribbean.

There are three divisions in the school, namely:

- Early years: Pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) and Kindergarten (K) for three to five year olds, on average
- Primary: Grades 1 to 6 for four to twelve year-olds, on average
- Middle School: Grades 7 to 9 for 11 to 16 year-olds

New students are allocated to classes according to how well they perform in the school's entrance tests, rather than based on their age. As a result, most grades include one or two students who are several years older than their peers.

The number of students on roll now stands at 243, of whom 74 per cent are Adventist. There are roughly equal numbers of girls and boys, although there are a few classes with many more boys than girls (for example, Grades 1, 2 and 3). The balance is reversed in the middle school, where there are more girls than boys in each class.

The number on roll increased rapidly following the devastation of Grand Cayman by Hurricane Ivan in September 2004. The school opened at the end of August 2004 with 115 students; by January 2005, this number had increased to 170. Grade 7 and 8 classes were added to accommodate an influx of students from other schools,

particularly George Hicks School which suffered extensive damage and did not re-open until the end of November 2004. Most of the students remained with Cayman Academy, and in September 2005 the school had its first Grade 9 class.

Information about the inspection

The inspection took place from Monday through Wednesday, 16th to 18th January 2006, involving a team of five inspectors, plus a trainee local occasional inspector. The following aspects of the school's work were looked at:

- Standards achieved by students in: language arts and mathematics throughout the school; and science in Grades 7-9
- 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

The team also evaluated how well teachers were helping students to use and develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across all of their school work.

The inspection team gathered evidence in the following ways:

- Forty-seven lessons or parts of lessons were observed, mainly in language arts, mathematics and science, but also in bible studies, religious education, ICT, social studies, art, physical education and music.
- School documents, including teachers' planning, registers, minutes of meetings, students' records were looked at.
- A sample of students' work in language arts, mathematics and science was scrutinised.
- Inspectors spoke with students- individuals and groups- and analysed their responses to the questionnaires.
- Discussions with teachers, other members of staff and the Chair of the Board took place, and comments from the teachers' questionnaires were considered.
- Comments from parents at the meeting before the inspection and from the questionnaires were followed up.
- Information obtained through the regular link inspector visits was also taken into account.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

How effective is the school overall?

Cayman Academy has gone through a number of significant changes in recent years. The school roll has tripled in size since 2002 and high school grades have been added. These changes have not been matched by corresponding improvements in the way that the school is led and managed. The lack of effective coordination, leadership and systems at all levels of the school is hindering progress and undermining students' learning and achievements.

The school is supported by a strong Seventh Day Adventist Conference network. Parents are extremely positive about most aspects of the school. The Board has provided increasing financial support for the school and, together with the principal and Home School Association (HSA), has brought about significant improvements to the school buildings, grounds and teaching resources. However, there has been far less focus on students' achievements or on securing systems that would help to ensure consistent practice and high quality teaching and learning. Too much of the teaching is not satisfactory and mathematics is weak in most of the school. There are, though, some strengths in the teaching, for example, in the Kindergarten class and in English and science in Grades 7 to 9.

A great deal needs to be done to bring about the improvements outlined in this report. The school is fortunate in having supportive parents, teachers who are keen to improve, as well as students who are responsive, compliant and eager to learn. This combination bodes well for the school's future, but it will still need considerable support to bring about the changes that are needed.

What the school does well

- The school has established a strong Christian ethos and it promotes students' spiritual development well
- The staff are committed to the school and caring towards the students; relationships are generally good
- The parents are very positive advocates for the school and there is a strong and supportive HSA
- Students are given a good foundation in the pre-K and K class where there is some very good teaching

What needs to improve

- The way that the school is led and managed: there are no effective systems or structures to help ensure consistent, high quality practice throughout the school
- The involvement of the Board in the life and work of the school
- The quality of teaching, as too much of it is unsatisfactory
- The way that the school identifies and provides for students' individual needs
- The curriculum, which is neither balanced, well planned nor monitored effectively
- The way that students are assessed and their progress tracked, which is not consistent or systematic

The areas for improvement listed above will form the basis of the school's action plan, which should be sent to the Education Department and Schools' Inspectorate within 40 working days of receipt of the final report. The school is required to provide parents with an annual update on the progress that is being made in addressing these areas for improvement.

How high are standards at the school?

Children start school in the **pre-K or K** classes¹ with social and language skills that are generally in line with what would be expected for their age. Children make good progress in these classes and by the time they reach K, their achievements are at least satisfactory and sometimes better than average. Most children can, for example, write their names, count to 50, and add and subtract simple numbers. They listen well and speak aloud with confidence. Most are developing good fine motor skills and can, for example, hold a crayon correctly and tie their own shoe laces.

This good start in the early years is not built on well enough in **Grades 1 through 6**², where students' standards of achievement are often too low.

In some aspects of their work, students are performing well and at least in line with what would be expected. Students often remember what they have learned. For example, some of their responses in a Grade 6 science lesson showed a good recall of processes such as respiration, condensation and evaporation. Grade 5 students remembered the different types of plant roots and leaves in their science lesson. Grade 3 students remembered the term 'data' and were able to interpret a simple bar chart correctly in mathematics.

Although students' recall is often satisfactory, their understanding is far less secure. In mathematics, for example, students cannot link what they are learning to what they have previously studied or apply it to novel situations. Most Grade 1 to 6 students read fluently and accurately, but their listening, speaking and writing skills are not well developed and standards in these areas are below expectations.

In the past, Grade 6 students have sat the Cayman Islands national tests in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Results for 2003 and 2004 have been above the Cayman average in all subjects. However, the Cayman Academy students were older than the government schools' Year 6 students. For example, the 14 Cayman Academy students who sat the tests in 2004 ranged from 10 years 3 months to 12 years 4 months, with an average age of 11 years 3 months, which is approximately one year older than Year 6 students in government schools.

By the **middle school**³, students' achievements in all aspects of English are generally satisfactory and on a par with expected levels for the year group. Their standards in mathematics are, though, below average. Students make good progress in science, because of the effective teaching, but their practical skills are below standard because of their lack of prior experience. Their scientific knowledge and understanding are developing well, though are still slightly lower than average for their age.

Up to now, students have had very little experience of using computers or other ICT resources in school. As a result, their skills are well below what would be expected. They used computers for research in some classes (for example, Grade 9 science), but little else was seen. The situation should improve now that the school has a fully equipped computer room, but students will need to be given opportunities outside of the ICT lessons if they are going to catch up with their peers elsewhere.

¹ Referred to as the 'early years' in this report

² Sometimes referred to as primary years/ school

³ Grades 7, 8 and 9

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

At Cayman Academy, teachers show a strong commitment to the school and to the students. They are caring and want the children to do well. This is demonstrated in the good relationships between teachers and students in and out of the classroom. Most students show a positive attitude to learning and enjoy coming to school.

The quality of teaching varies widely across the school, but too much of it is unsatisfactory. Students make good progress in the early years and in English and science in Grades 7 to 9. They make less progress in the primary division of the school. While there is some very good practice, there is too much inconsistency within and between classes and subjects.

Teaching in the **pre-K and K classes** is good. Teachers explain new ideas well and reinforce previous learning. They also provide interesting practical, hands-on activities for children to be involved in. Teachers usually make good connections with other subject areas, for example, linking stories to what they are teaching in social studies. They include lively, interesting starts to lessons and provide a variety of activities, which are delivered in small units of time to match the attention spans of the children. For example, in one mathematics lesson, the teacher used a song, an 'I Spy' game, play dough and counters to help children understand the concepts of 'less' and 'more'.

The early years' teachers know their students well and provide a good learning environment for them. They give students a very good start to the next phase of their learning. The way that they involve the students helps them to behave well and to stay on task.

Teachers in the K and pre-K classes make very good use of the teachers' aides in their classes. They help to give individual attention to the students and also with the preparation of work.

There are examples of good practice throughout the **primary classes**, but here too much of the teaching is unsatisfactory. In the few good lessons, teachers engage students in their learning, manage behaviour well, plan and provide activities that involve most learners and set work that is appropriate for different abilities. In general, though, teachers rarely plan for the different ability levels in their classes. Sometimes, the effective strategies that they use in one subject are not carried over to another. Their subject knowledge is weak in some cases, particularly in mathematics, and this results in an over-reliance on textbooks, and teacher-directed activities. Teachers use a narrow range of methods to help students learn, which do not involve or engage students well. In such lessons, students tend to lose interest, which can lead to inappropriate behaviour, fidgeting, lack of motivation and cooperation with the teacher and each other. Teachers tend to talk a lot, reprimand and scold students in order to get them to behave and to be more attentive. This just slows the pace of the lesson and limits student's learning.

Some teaching in the **middle school** is very good, but much is still unsatisfactory. Some teachers have secure subject knowledge, which enables them to enrich and extend students' learning. They incorporate various teaching styles in their lessons and work is geared to the needs of most students. Some teachers plan well, particularly in English and science. In English, the teacher assigns specific tasks for different groups to carry out. Teachers use questioning effectively to elicit information from students, set them thinking and making valuable contributions to their lessons. In some lessons,

students are able to make good links with prior knowledge and are actively involved in learning new concepts and skills. The paired work in one science lesson got students to focus quickly and progress well.

Across the school, there are classes where lessons start promptly and effectively. Students know what is expected of them because these teachers give clear explanations, and guidance from the start. In middle school science, for example, the teacher sets clear expectations for behaviour at the start of each lesson and students respond well.

A few teachers share the objectives or aims of the lessons with the students and write these on the chalkboard, which is helpful. This good practice is not consistent across the school and teachers rarely refer to the objectives at the end of the lesson, to review how much has been learned or to plan the next steps.

In general, lessons involve a limited range of teaching strategies. Too much of the time, teachers do most of the talking and students are passive. Students respond well when they are asked to get more involved. For example, students were very motivated by a Grade 2 religious education lesson, where they role-played the story of the plagues in Egypt. The 'role-players' spoke with good diction and expression and got into their roles extremely well. They gained the attention of others in the class and all students had a good understanding of what was being taught in the lesson.

Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for students to undertake research, carry out investigations, make predictions, solve problems, and share what they have found out with the class. In many lessons, students complete worksheets or workbook exercises or copy from the board. There were many missed opportunities for students to compose their own sentences or questions. Students are not encouraged to take the initiative or to be independent or creative. For example, in a lesson on 'creation', students were asked to copy a poster about what God created on the first day. There was no opportunity for them to use their imagination, develop their own ideas or to draw. Students have grown to rely on teachers for the simplest of tasks and waste time waiting for instructions. Even in 'creative' subjects, such as art, students are not always expected to use their initiative or to be creative. For example, in an art lesson, primary children were given some paper, a single crayon and told to colour in a drawing of a frog.

Teachers sometimes question students very effectively. They ask questions at the start of lessons to find out what students recall from previous sessions and then later on to probe students' thinking. One good example was seen in a Grade 5 comprehension lesson where students read about a cat that was fearful. Two students read the passage aloud, and all had to decide why "puss" kept moving around the river. They had to think and answer questions such as, 'please explain a bit more', and 'but why did that happen?' Students discussed in groups what they would do if they were the cat. The teacher tried to ensure that all students participated and allowed them to share some experiences, which added to their understanding of the passages. Some students were able, with help, to explain words from the passage such as 'camouflage' and 'ford'. The teacher and students made good links to what they had learned in a previous science lesson.

What is the quality of the curriculum and how effective are the arrangements for assessing students?

The curriculum for children in **the early years** is satisfactory. They receive a good start to their education, with lots of practice in skills that will prepare them for the more formal setting of the primary years. There is, though, relatively little time allocated to outdoor play and physical education (PE), which children at this age need. The children spend a great deal of each afternoon resting or sleeping and this time could be spent more profitably.

In the **primary grades**, the curriculum is not well planned, monitored or evaluated. There is too wide a range of text books being used, which leads to a certain amount of discontinuity between grade levels. There is not enough time allocated to PE, nor for students to develop and use their ICT skills. Most other subjects have been allocated enough time in a week, but in practice, students often receive less than that on the timetables, as teachers do not always stick to these times. This leads to some imbalance, which affects the standards students achieve. It is also a real problem when teachers do not adhere to the timetable in the middle school, where students are taught by different teachers. On several occasions, lessons over-ran by 15 minutes which ate into the next subject's time and disrupted that teacher's plans.

The timetables for the **middle school** suggest that the curriculum is broad and reasonably balanced. In reality, however, it is neither of these. For example, although French is shown on the timetables, it is not being taught at present, and Spanish is taught only every now and then. Students are not always given something to do during the sessions when these subjects are timetabled but not taught. Life Skills is only offered to Grades 7 and 8. There is now a specialist teacher for ICT, but there is not yet enough planning to make this subject effective. Computers are rarely used in other subjects, and this is hampering students' learning in ICT. The time allocation for science in Grades 7 to 9 is low and students will be disadvantaged when compared to their peers in government schools, where there is a more generous allocation of time. There is not enough time allocated during the day to PE. Parents also expressed concern about the limited amount of PE and few opportunities for their children to participate in sports and team games.

Most teachers mark students' work regularly. However, there is no school policy on assessment or marking, and practice varies widely. Some teachers give marks, whilst others award grades or give a written comment. Teachers do not have a systematic way of tracking students' progress and students do not really know how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers record grades and marks, but they are not using them to help identify strengths and weaknesses of individual students in order to plan lessons that will meet their needs.

How well is the school led and managed?

The principal has been in post for almost two years. In this time he has overseen many improvements to the school site and buildings, and under his leadership the school population has increased substantially. He has added classes and employed more teachers to cater for this surge in popularity. He is committed to the school and has maintained its strong Christian ethos. However, the management structure and organisation of the school have not developed in line with the increase in roll and age range of the students and are unsatisfactory. There is a vice principal, but she has a full-time teaching commitment and there are no other teachers with identified management responsibilities, for example, to coordinate subjects.

The school is accountable to the Cayman Islands Conference of Seventh Day Adventists and in turn to the West Indies Union of Seventh Day Adventists. The Conference, which acts as the Board, has produced a strategic plan for the school with clear objectives, but the plan has yet to be formally monitored or evaluated. The Chair of the Board is very supportive of the school and liaises with the principal. The Board has secured improvements to the buildings and increased staffing. However, it needs to be more closely involved with what is going on in the school, particularly given the rapid changes that are taking place. The West Indies Union guidelines set out clear expectations for the role of the Board and principal, many of which do not seem to be followed. For example, the principal needs help with the preparation of policies, which is the responsibility of the Board. The school does not seem to be taking advantage of the useful guidance provided by the Union or of the extensive network of Seventh Day Adventist schools around the world.

The principal has developed revised mission and vision statements for the school, with the involvement of staff; this is a positive development. These statements set out the overall priorities of the school, but they are not focused clearly on students and their learning. This lack of focus on students' achievements is also reflected in the Board's strategic plan for education and is a weakness.

There are no systems in place to monitor effectively the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The principal and deputy look at teachers' lesson plans on a regular basis, but this does not lead to improvements in planning. The quality of teaching is not monitored and there is no systematic performance management system in place although teachers are evaluated each year. The lack of subject leadership, particularly in the primary department, means that there is not enough consistency in the teaching of key subjects. Information about the performance and progress of students is not collected in a systematic way, which means that it is difficult to tell how much progress students are making from one year to the next.

The number of teaching and support staff has increased significantly from 12 in September 2004, before Ivan, to the present number of 18, which includes teachers' aides and a volunteer who teaches PE. The methods of communication that were previously relied upon within the school are no longer effective. Despite the systems that the principal has put in place to communicate with staff, such as the notice board, memos and staff meetings, several teachers indicated through their questionnaires that they were not happy with communication in the school. It was also clear during the inspection that information was not getting to teachers. There were, for example, misunderstandings about the timetables and about who would be involved in morning worship. There is too much reliance on 'going through the principal', even for mundane items such as chalk and paper, which takes up his valuable time and is frustrating for staff. Clear systems are needed to ensure that all staff not only receive, but also read and respond to information and agreed policies.

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

Students' personal development

The way that the school helps students' to develop an insight into their own values and beliefs is a strength. The school has a strong Christian ethos and provides a wide range of opportunities for students to express and explore their faith. Students participate well in the daily worship and most join in the singing with enthusiasm and obvious pleasure. They also readily take on responsibility for worship, by, for example, requesting songs in class devotions, or by leading the prayers at the start of lessons.

Students are given some useful opportunities to embrace responsibility around the school. The head boy, head girl and prefects, who are appointed from Grades 8 and 9, are allowed to hand out lines to students who are seen breaking school rules. Other grades have monitors who are selected by their peers. The roles of the prefects and monitors are, though, not very clear and there is scope to increase their responsibilities, particularly in assisting with the supervision of younger students.

Through their responses to the inspection questionnaires and in interviews with them, students came across as articulate, well informed and keen for the chance to voice their opinions. A good example was seen where Grade 8 students engaged in a productive dialogue with their teacher about plans for next Friday's sports activities. A student council would provide a formal opportunity for the students to have their say.

In general, students do not often engage in activities where they are expected to cooperate with others. Some effective group work was seen in several middle school science and English lessons, but this occurred far less often in the primary classes. Students need to be given more responsibility for their learning and more opportunities to work cooperatively with others.

Students are developing an appropriate awareness of moral principles and know when they are doing something wrong. Most staff generally manage students' behaviour well in lessons and promote a strong moral code. A good example was seen in a Grade 2 lesson where a student who was reminded of the need for Christian forgiveness, responded very graciously. Even though students are well behaved in most classes, this sometimes breaks down when they are not being supervised or in lessons with teachers who do not command their respect or attention.

Students are gaining a good knowledge of Caymanian culture, which is a strong component of the social studies programme. Visitors are also invited into the school to talk about life in Cayman. For example, a local resident spoke to the Grade 5 students about what it was like to live on the island in the past. Local culture is appreciated and is celebrated during the morning worship. The school also regularly takes part in local cultural events, such as the National Children's Festival of the Arts. There are some opportunities for students to learn about other cultures through special events, such as the day where international foods and traditions are celebrated. These opportunities are rare and are not planned for systematically.

Students' attendance and punctuality

Student attendance is generally satisfactory, but levels of unexplained absence appear relatively high. The school does not currently have an effective procedure for recording and monitoring absence. Registers are kept by individual class teachers, rather than being returned to the office. Teachers are not given any guidelines about how to complete the registers and practice is slack and inconsistent. For example, some teachers do not complete the register each day.

The school has plans to improve its procedures for attendance, but at the moment it would be very difficult to find out which students are present at any one time. It is also unclear who has responsibility for following up authorisation for absence. Teachers complete quarterly returns on attendance, which are sent to the office, but these are not completed consistently and some show omissions and errors; for example, the return for the last quarter showed that attendance totals had been added incorrectly in some cases.

Overall, students' punctuality is unsatisfactory. A significant number of students arrive after the start of school each morning and some are regularly late for lessons. For example, in one class only 11 out of the 21 students were present at the beginning of the first session of the day. The school does not have any systems for recording lateness and no sanctions are given to students who are consistently late. Sometimes teachers are not good role models for punctuality, as several of them often arrive late for lessons.

Links with parents and the community

The school has strong links with parents and the church. Many parents are alumni of Cayman Academy and they are pleased that their children are attending the school. Parents are strong advocates for the school and are satisfied with most aspects of it. They feel confident that their children are getting the same Christian messages at school that they get from home and church.

Parents are kept well informed through a weekly newsletter 'The Little Informer', which describes what is happening at the school. They are given regular information about their child's progress, through termly reports and meetings, which they value and appreciate.

There is a strong HSA that meets once a month and is well supported by parents. The HSA chair has a good working relationship with the principal and they meet frequently to discuss issues or concerns. The HSA suggested some improvements to the school site and buildings which the principal and the school Board acted on. The HSA provides the breakfast programme and also helps pay for the fees of some needy students.

Parents are very supportive of the school and many are eager to help with their students' learning. Those who attended the pre-inspection meeting for parents described the lengths they went to in order to help their children with homework, for example. It is clear that this home support is very beneficial, not only in helping with students' attitudes to learning, but also with the progress that they are making in school.

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

The school provides well for some aspects of students' welfare, but, there is much that needs improving.

The school looks after students' health effectively. Healthy meals and snacks are provided for students and all classrooms are equipped with water coolers with easy access to water when needed. The school nurse and the dental nurse visit regularly to check on students and to give them special talks and guidance.

The school keeps records of all the students and these are updated as soon as new information is received. Teachers have access to them with the principal's permission. The records are not very comprehensive, but include medical records, registration and admission information, report cards and a cumulative record of grades. Some files

contain past school reports, but there is very limited information on assessment, which could be used to track students' progress and plan future work.

The school receives some good support from outside agencies. The Children and Family Services Department supports a few students, but at the time of the inspection, the school was not able to say how many. The school participates in the Drug Awareness and Resistance Education programme (DARE) that is run by the police department. There have been very good links with the Education Department in getting support from the educational psychologist, early intervention programme and the speech therapist. The students also participate in the National Children's Festival of the Arts and the annual Spelling Bee activities. Personnel from the private sector sometimes talk to students about careers.

The school does not provide well for students who have learning difficulties or other special educational needs. There is no coordination of the provision for these students and no systems to identify, monitor and support them. The school makes some use of students' records to identify those who need help in their learning and effective contact has sometimes been made with external agencies. Students are given an entrance test on admission and are placed in classes according to ability regardless of their ages. After this, students who are performing well below age level are not given any particular support, although teachers are sensitive to their situations. This practice needs to be reviewed, as the inspection team judged that it is not effective and that the emotional, social and personal needs of teenage students, particularly, are not well catered for when they are in classes with much younger peers.

Most of the classrooms in the main building are far too small for the number of students in them. The size of the rooms and the style of chairs and desks severely restrict the teaching and learning styles that can be used; in particular, it is hard for students to work in small groups and difficult for the teacher to circulate around the room to help individuals. In some cases, the furniture is too small for the students. Several teachers commented on how the rooms inhibited the way that they were able to teach. They also felt that they were unable to arrange and display work or set up interest areas and libraries in their rooms to support and stimulate students' learning.

Parents expressed concerns about the way that students are supervised around the school grounds. This concern was endorsed by the inspection team and is a matter that requires urgent attention. Students are not properly supervised before or after school, or during break and lunch times. They wander around the site and sometimes play in the restricted areas, such as the car park.

What is the quality of teaching and learning in the early years (pre-K and K classes)?

Children get a good start to their education in both early years' classes. When they start school, most children are working at the expected level for their age and they make good progress in Pre-K and K. Children are taught the alphabet and know letter names and sounds, both of which are important in helping them begin to read and write. They can recognise shapes such as circle, square and triangle and name numerals from one to ten in pre-K and one to twenty in K. In both classes, children are involved in lots of singing, which they enjoy and join in with enthusiasm. They sing action songs, number rhymes and bible songs, which help them to develop a sense of rhythm and pattern. When they sing, the children are learning to pay attention, explore new words and develop their memory.

Both early years' teachers use songs as a good strategy to keep children on task. When the children are becoming a bit restless, the teachers will sing an action song to get the children back together as a group. When children are writing or colouring, the teachers sing a song about 'work time', which reminds the children to stay focussed on their work.

In pre-K, the staff— teacher and aide — help children settle into school well, sometimes also offering support to the parents. They plan activities that are at an appropriate level for children, reinforcing what they already know and introducing new concepts. The staff set clear expectations for children's behaviour, which they reinforce throughout the day. Children behave well and settle quickly to their work. They talk readily about what they are doing and what they are learning. There is, though, a shortage of good practical resources for children in the pre-K classroom, which hinders opportunities for creative play, construction activities and group work.

The K class teacher and teacher's aide work very effectively together to ensure that the children continue to build on their knowledge of letters, numbers and shapes. Children in this class are beginning to do simple additions and subtractions, using practical equipment, for example, to help them understand the concepts of 'more than' and 'less than'. Children made little balls from play dough and counted them. They then made some more 'balls' and counted these as well, before putting them into two piles and adding up the total.

During lessons, the teacher uses a good range of teaching strategies such as practical work, individual and group work. This motivates the children and helps most to make good progress. The staff help children to develop good listening skills, fine motor control and a sense of pride in their achievements. Children are keen to answer questions and join in class discussions. The children are confident and show good levels of independence; they can go to the bathroom quietly and sensibly, and some of them can tie their own shoe laces.

In both classes, the staff are very caring and hard working. They make sure that the children have enough to eat and drink. For example, they check whether children have had breakfast before coming to school and provide it for those who have missed out. This helps to ensure that children will be able to sit and concentrate during the morning sessions. Sometimes, though, the children are expected to sit for too long before they can move on to practical activities.

Both teachers have a secure knowledge of child development and how young children learn. As a result, they plan lessons and activities that will interest and motivate the children. Most of the lessons, in both classes, reinforce children's previous learning

before moving on to new concepts. Children show high levels of concentration when they are working. The staff give children clear explanations and practical activities that are pitched at the right level for the child's age and stage of development. They use lots of praise and encouragement, which help children develop positive attitudes to learning and to feel good about themselves and their classmates.

The ratio of students to adults is too high, so that children are not getting enough individual attention. Neither pre-K nor K classes meets the Education Council's recommendations for staffing levels, which are:

- One adult to 10 children aged three to four years old
- One adult to 12 children aged four to five years old.

The K class currently has 34 children on roll and pre-K has 27. Both classes would benefit greatly from an additional member of staff.

What is the quality of teaching and learning in language arts, mathematics, science and ICT?

Language Arts (English)

Students' progress in language arts varies across the school and is very dependent on the teaching they receive. In the early years, children receive a good start, and have a solid foundation on which to build. This is because the teachers have a firm understanding of how children learn and concepts are reinforced through songs and a variety of activities. Teaching strategies are broad and varied, and ensure that students make progress.

In the primary grades, students are learning the basic skills of language arts, such as grammar and comprehension, and there are some opportunities for them to write. The range of activities is limited, and the work tends to be too formal and over-reliant on the text book. Teachers do not always make good use of time and the pace of lessons is often slow. Many teachers have low expectations of what can be accomplished in a lesson and students become restless and much time is wasted.

In Grades 7 to 9, students have more opportunity to be creative, to carry out some research on their own and to work in groups where they discuss issues and present their findings to the class. Students make the best progress in lessons where they enjoy learning and practising new skills in situations that are interesting and relevant to them. A good example of this was seen in Grade 9 where students were asked to analyse the motives of various characters in a story. This was followed with a useful homework assignment that asked them to think through, from a moral and spiritual point of view, why it is important to understand people's motives for the way they act. There was a clear link between what they were learning in class and how this could be applied in real life.

Most students read fluently and accurately, but not enough of them do so on their own for enjoyment or for information. Teachers rarely read to students or encourage reading other than from literature texts in Grades 7 to 9. Progression in reading is being hampered by a lack of opportunities for students to develop their comprehension skills through reading and discussing a variety of genres; comprehension questions on a short passage are no substitute for this.

Writing skills are not as well developed as they could be. Students in all classes complete grammatical exercises, but are seldom asked to write for a range of purposes and audiences. They need more experience so that they can grow in confidence and competence in formal and impersonal writing, especially in the primary grades.

More opportunities are needed for students to develop their listening and speaking skills in a systematic way during lessons. There were some examples in Grades 7 to 9 of students listening to their peers, and taking turns to build on what had already been said. Opportunities for working in groups or pairs provide useful times for developing these skills, but this is not done very often in the primary grades. Not all teachers are modeling correct Standard English when they speak to students, and thus do not insist that students speak correctly.

The present curriculum is not meeting the needs of all students. There is a wide range of ages and abilities in most classes, and students are all expected to do the same work at the same level. There is no one to oversee language arts and to monitor the teaching and learning. Consequently, the curriculum in the primary grades is not being planned to ensure that there are no gaps or overlaps in what is being taught or that each year

students are building on what they have learnt before. Most teachers have not planned clearly enough what students should know, understand and be able to do by the end of each year. There is no consistent system in place for tracking students' progress to ensure that those who need extra help are getting it, and that the more able are being suitably challenged.

Teachers collect marks for homework, class work and tests throughout the year. These are not used by teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses of students so that they can set individual targets or plan lessons that would meet their particular needs. Marking is inconsistent and, at times, inaccurate, and there are few comments that would help students to understand why they received a particular mark and what they need to do to improve.

Literacy across the curriculum

Some teachers are helping students to develop their literacy skills in lessons in other subjects by, for example, emphasising specialist vocabulary. In science, teachers emphasise new words and encourage students to use them correctly. In kindergarten, students understand terms such as 'greater', 'larger', and 'few'. In some language arts classes, spelling words are drawn from other subjects, such as social studies. Older students also have opportunities for extended writing, for example, in science, where they can use the vocabulary they are learning.

There are more opportunities in Grades 7 to 9 for students to develop their speaking and listening skills. Students discuss issues with their peers and describe, explain or report to the whole class. This helps to develop their confidence and fluency in speaking. This does not happen often enough in the primary grades.

Students read aloud from textbooks or bibles, and most do so accurately and fluently. There are books in classrooms, but there is not a wide enough selection to spark students' interest. The library is not in use and this restricts students' access to books for pleasure or information.

Mathematics

Students are given a good start to their mathematical development in the early years, because of the good teaching they receive there. Overall, the picture for mathematics is far less positive higher up the school.

Most older primary students are proficient in carrying out addition and subtraction of numbers and decimals, up to four digits, when these are set out in vertical columns. Many are also confident with short division and some can do long division. However, students do not understand the concepts and they do not know how to apply what they have learned. For example, students working on changing improper fractions (such as $\frac{7}{2}$) into mixed numbers ($3\frac{1}{2}$) could not relate this to diagrams of fractions covered earlier. Teachers focus on teaching mathematics by rote and using tricks and short cuts rather than developing students' understanding. Not enough resources such as counters, cubes, hundred squares, number lines or calculators are available to support the development of mathematical ideas.

Students are rarely asked to apply their mathematics to real-world contexts and problems. Teachers do not ask students to explain their answers or suggest different ways of working something out. Students' reasoning skills are therefore very poor and the level at which they are working is often too low. Students do not remember their mathematics from one year to the next, mainly because they do not properly understand the concepts that they have covered. This means that teachers have to re-teach many topics each year, which severely restricts the progress that students make.

Except in the early years, teachers' planning is poor and lessons are often unsatisfactory. Teachers do not plan in outline what will be covered each year, to ensure that the curriculum is adequately covered. They also do not plan lessons to ensure that students of all abilities make good progress. Too often, students make little progress in lessons as the work is too easy for them and the pace too slow. Although teachers assess students' work during lessons, they do not use this to alter what the students are expected to do. For example, students who have clearly grasped an idea are not encouraged to move on nor are less able students given additional support by the teacher. In most lessons, the class is kept together working on the same task at the same pace. This severely limits the progress that most students, but especially the more able, can make. When students are given work to do at their own pace (as happened in a Grade 9 lesson where students were calculating angles in triangles), they make better progress.

Activities are generally limited to short, unimaginative, written tasks with few visual or practical aids. One exception to this occurred in a Grade 3 class where students used a game on the Internet to reinforce their earlier work on bar graphs.

The subject lacks clear leadership, particularly for the primary years where several teachers are teaching mathematics. There is no coordination of the curriculum to ensure that it is balanced or progresses well from one grade to the next. Teachers' subject knowledge is insecure and there is a need for training in how to teach mathematics.

Numeracy across the curriculum

There are few opportunities for students to use mathematics in other subjects. When students were expected to use their mathematics in other lessons, they had great difficulty. For example, older students struggled when asked to convert pounds to kilogrammes or to multiply by 10 or 100 in a science lesson.

Science in the middle school

The way that science is taught in the middle school has several strengths, with relatively few areas for improvement.

Students are making good progress in learning science. They show positive attitudes to the subject and work hard in lessons. The different methods used by the teacher enable them to take responsibility for their learning and to work well with others in small groups. Students are encouraged to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses after lessons in order to help them improve. For example, Grade 9 students were seen completing a review of their previous lesson and writing about what had gone well, or what they could have done better.

Practical work has not been a regular feature of science at the school. Students have not had opportunities to plan and carry out investigations. A laboratory has just been completed and is in the process of being equipped, which will enable more experiments and investigations to be carried out. Practical work was observed in Grade 9 where forcemeters were being used to measure the weight of different objects. Students were measuring accurately and recording results carefully in tables. They could make predictions based on the results and, when prompted, suggest a pattern in the relationship between force and mass. However, although they were making good progress, their practical skills were below the standard expected for their age, due to their lack of prior experience.

The teaching of science is good. The teacher is enthusiastic, with secure subject knowledge. She has established a very good ethos where students are well behaved and motivated to learn. Lessons are well planned and a good variety of approaches are used. For example, Grade 7 students worked in pairs to discuss and identify the similarities and differences between animal and plant cells (that were not named as such) in a 'spot the difference' activity. Students are given responsibility for their learning and encouraged to work in groups. This worked well in Grade 8 where students helped each other find answers to questions about energy and different types of fuel. The students concentrated well and had a good recall of the scientific meanings of energy and work, and how fuels store and convert energy into other 'forms'. Whilst the students were working in groups the teacher was very effectively involved in circulating to assist, challenge and assess students' understanding. As a result she identified where there were misunderstandings and planned to go over the salient points during the next lesson.

The teacher does not often plan different work for the most and least able students. Whilst students are allowed to work at their own pace, which is a strength, sometimes the most able students could be given a more challenging task or asked searching questions. For example, some of the more able Grade 9 students could have been asked to draw a line graph from their results in the lesson.

Science accounts for approximately eight per cent of total taught time in Grades 7 to 9. This is well below the time needed to do justice to the curriculum for this age group.

Students are being helped to develop their beliefs and cultural understanding in science. Lessons always start and end with a prayer. Numeracy is also developed well through science. For example, in the Grade 9 class, students were asked to make conversions from mass to weight, in both imperial and metric units. Some used calculators appropriately for this activity. Very little graph work or data analysis was observed and these need to be included on a more regular basis. Literacy is a strong feature in lessons, where opportunities for extended writing are evident. For example, Year 8

students completed a project that involved research and a written presentation about yeast.

There is no formal position of science co-coordinator in the primary division, and this hinders continuity between the primary and secondary phases. The teacher assesses students well in an informal way, and carries out some testing of students' knowledge. There are no formal assessments of students' understanding or record of how this is progressing.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

Although the school suffered major damage to its computers during Hurricane Ivan, the computer suite is now open with 20 working computers in it. All classes are timetabled to use the computer room, but not many primary grade teachers are taking advantage of their allotted sessions. The school has very limited software at the moment and staff are using the Internet to find appropriate programs for the students to use.

The newly appointed ICT teacher who teaches computer skills to Grades 7, 8 and 9 is enthusiastic about the subject. He also runs a popular computer club after school. Many staff at the school are not confident users of ICT and the teacher plans to run seminars for them, to update their skills and knowledge.

The school does not have any assessment procedures for monitoring students' progress in ICT skills or knowledge. All students do the same work even though some of them have computers at home and are familiar with word processing, Internet searches and using different programs.

Students have very few opportunities to develop or use their ICT skills in other subjects. They have undertaken some research projects in science, but little otherwise. Students' ICT skills and knowledge are well below expected levels in all grades.