



**EDUCATION QUALITY
ASSURANCE UNIT**
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

Inspection Report

June 2013

Just for Kids Pre-school

Preface

The inspection of the educational aspects of Early Childhood Care and Education Centres and Reception classes is now the remit of the Education Quality Assurance Unit (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 focus 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		Description
1	Very good	Good in nearly all aspects and exemplary in some significant areas
2	Good	Good in most respects. Weaknesses are minor and not in significant areas
3	Adequate	No significant weaknesses, but no major strengths. Improvement needed
4	Unsatisfactory	Some significant weaknesses (might be only one or two) that have a negative impact on children's learning and progress. Cause for concern

Reports will be published on the Ministry's website www.education.gov.ky.

They will provide the centres, parents, the community and the Ministry of Education with an external and impartial inspection of the work of the centres.

The Education Quality Assurance Unit expects that this inspection report will prove helpful and will contribute in a positive way to improvement.

Favourita Blanchard

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Education Quality Assurance Unit

Background

The foundation a child receives in the early years of life is an indicator of future development and success. The provision of services at Early Childhood Care and Education Centres (ECCEC) has a large impact on the future of the child academically, socially and cognitively. It is important that quality interactions with adults and peers, as well as opportunities for exploration, problem solving and reflection occur consistently.

Early Childhood Care and Education is provided by both private and government sectors. In 2012, the Ministry of Education, Financial Services and Employment added seven new Reception classes in primary schools in Grand Cayman, which cater for children aged between four and five years old. However, the great majority of provision for young children is in private centres. Around forty private centres are currently in operation, providing an important service to families. Around 1,700 babies and children up to the age of five are being cared for and educated.

Building “a world-class early childhood care and education system” (Strategic Goal 2, Cayman Islands Strategic Plan for Education 2012-2017) will help ensure that children have the best opportunities to develop as life-long learners who are able to contribute positively to their community. Along with other stakeholders the Ministry of Education’s Early Childhood Care and Education Unit is working to “provide access to high quality early childhood care and education to all children, regardless of income, background, special or additional education need” (Cayman Islands Strategic Plan for Education 2012-2017).

In an effort to improve the quality of provision, private early childhood care and education centres benefit from professional advice, support and training by the Ministry’s team and the Education Quality Assurance Unit identified areas for improvement.

The report for this inspection will be used as a basis for discussion and will be published on the Ministry’s website. The centre is expected to take careful note of the recommendations at the end of the report and to prepare an action plan to address these. There will be subsequent visits by Ministry personnel from the Early Childhood Care and Education Unit (ECCEU) to provide support.

General Information about the Centre

Address	Orange Drive, P.O. Box 356, KY1 - 1502
Telephone numbers	947- 4543
Email address	Just4kidspreschool@hotmail.com
Name of owner	Ms Evelyn Rockett
Manager / lead teacher	Ms Margaret Leslie
Age range	6 Months - 4 years
Number on roll	160 boys and girls 6 months to 1 year: 3 1 year olds - 5 2 year olds - 42 3 year olds - 54 4 year olds - 56

- Just for Kids Pre-school is a privately owned centre located in a purpose-built facility in Prospect. It has been operating in this location for the past nine years.
- The centre was inspected in November 2010, with a focus on provision for four year-olds, when all aspects were judged to be good. The inspection report identified four recommendations. The centre was revisited in June 2011 to undertake a progress check. The owner considers that good progress had been made but no documents were given to the inspection team to support this claim.
- There are currently four children who have special educational needs and are supported through the Early Intervention Programme (EIP) and two children learning English as an additional language.

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

- The facility provides a generally secure and safe environment for the children. Access to the building is restricted and the playground is surrounded by a fence. There is, however, no fence between a neighbour's garden and part of the school grounds that is sometimes used by the staff and children.
- Lunches are prepared hygienically in the spacious kitchen and parents provide healthy snacks for the morning break.
- Not all staff have had the necessary first aid training and the owner also recognises that her own accreditation is not up-to-date.
- All staff have had police checks.
- There have not been regular fire drills yet, though there have been some class evacuation practices. The school has invited in a fire officer with a fire truck to talk to the children about safety. The extra floor that has been built upstairs for use as a computer suite and break-out room for the Early Intervention Programme (EIP) team to work with individual children, has only one easy exit route for young children, which is an inadequate safety precaution.
- There are sometimes 14 infants in the babies' room and they are adequately supervised. Two babies were sleeping in cots on pillows provided by parents. Such pillows could present a safety hazard and should not be used in cots.

Leading the direction for development and learning

- The staff completed the school's self-evaluation together and provided some useful evidence to support the judgements made, although these were over-generous. There are job descriptions in existence for staff but they are not stored in the staff files and staff have not been given written copies.
- The owner has prepared a staff handbook that includes a number of policies, some of which are shared with parents. There are regular meetings for staff where they discuss matters such as the progress report card. The school holds an annual professional development day and staff retreat.
- The principal helps to ensure that the centre runs smoothly each day and is well organised. She monitors practice in the classrooms but has not attended the training organised by the Early Childhood Care and Education Centre, which would provide her with a better understanding of the new early years curriculum expectations.

Management of the centre and staff

- Although the staff prepare weekly plans that are linked to the new CIEYCF, they are too general and lack enough specificity to guide their practice adequately. The owner does look at staff's plans, and there is little evidence that improvements are made to them or suggested.
- Performance management has not been introduced and, although the owner discusses observations with staff, there are no written records of classroom observations or discussions.

Links with parents and external agencies

- Links with parents are good. There are opportunities for parents to talk to staff when they drop off or pick up their children. Parents are sent newsletters via emails and are also sent a progress report on their children.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection were positive about the pre-school and happy with the information they receive and how well their children were doing.
- The parents' association is very supportive of the school and has raised funds to supplement school fees.
- The school has established useful links with the Fire Department and Environmental Health.

The leadership and management of the centre are unsatisfactory. The site is secure, apart from there being no fence to separate it from a neighbour's garden. However, there are several safety issues still to be addressed. Staff are appropriately vetted. Staff's first-aid training is inadequate. Fire and safety precautions are not fully in place. Performance management strategies are not rigorous enough. The school has established good relationships with parents and operates smoothly from day to day.

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 are generally happy in school and staff show concern for their charges' well-being. Children are given healthy snacks and lunches and usually sit and eat responsibly in their rooms.
- Children enjoy playing outside with the wide range of outdoor equipment. They learn about their bodies and how to be safe.
- There are too few opportunities for children to develop resilience and independence because adults do too much for them and they do not have to try hard enough to do things for themselves.

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.

- Adults care for children and treat them kindly. They want to do their best for the children.
- Children pray respectfully before their snack in the morning. Some children listen to their staff attentively when she is telling a story. Children respond well to questions when asked.
- In some classrooms children are less respectful of each other and some scuffles between children were seen during the inspection. However, they played well together when outside.
- The noise level in most classrooms is unacceptably high and is distracting for children and adults.

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.

- Children enjoy singing and staff encourage this regularly in all classes. Staff do not give children enough opportunities to give more than one-word answers to the questions asked. Consequently, children are not developing their speaking skills as well as they could. They are expected to always listen to the staff but often children find the activities too easy, which sometimes results in their misbehaviour.
- Staff miss opportunities to talk with children and engage them in discussion, for example, during snack time and when they are working on a task.
- Staff give children the same task to do regardless of their ability. For example, all were expected to colour in the same picture, which was too easy for many children. Some four year-olds can write their names and recognise letters, such as 'f', and can pronounce it correctly. However, they are not given opportunities to 'write' or draw freely.
- Rooms do have reading corners but they were not seen in use. They were not well prepared and attractive spaces which encourage children to sit and 'read' or look at a book.

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 are developing their gross motor skills well when they play outside. The playgrounds include a wide range of large equipment, such as slides, climbing frames and swings. Children play well together and staff also join in. However, children only have this good experience three times per week rather than every day.
- The babies enjoy being taken outside in a multi-buggy but the activity is limited because there are not enough seats for all of them and they have to take it in turns.
- Few opportunities were seen in classrooms for children to explore things for themselves or to engage in practical activities that make them think harder or to encourage their creativity. Too often staff told children exactly what to do or did the work for them. All children did the same 'hands-on' activities, which were too easy. Staff did not plan different activities to meet the learning needs of all children.
- Children are not challenged enough to develop numeracy skills well. Staff plan suitable counting activities, for example, three year olds counted the number of wheels on their picture of a bus, but do not use questioning skillfully enough to help children think harder. One child could say that one more wheel (than two) would make three, but this was done independently.
- Staff do not make the best use of the spacious areas that most classrooms enjoy. Often children are pointlessly crowded into a small floor space when other parts of the room are unoccupied.

The effectiveness of provision, including teaching and its impact on children's learning and development, is unsatisfactory. Children are not given enough to do for themselves and too many of the activities are too easy or not well matched to their learning needs. Consequently, they are not developing the skills they need for resilience and independence. Staff do not plan activities to develop children's numeracy and literacy skills well. Children have suitable resources to develop their gross motor skills and they enjoy playing with them, but they do not spend enough time using them. Staff care for children well.

Recommendations (These are the priority areas for development)

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

1. Address the issues to do with health and safety by:
 - Introducing regular fire drills
 - Arranging for a fence to be erected between the school grounds and the neighbour's garden
 - Ensuring that all staff have appropriate first aid training
 - Asking the Fire Department for advice about using the upstairs room safely, in particular, to check that exits are child-friendly
 - Ensuring that pillows are not used in cots, unless necessary for medical reasons
2. Improve the way that the centre is led and managed by:
 - Providing staff with written job descriptions
 - Introducing a rigorous performance management system
 - Providing more support for planning, using the new curriculum
 - Improving the assessment records to reflect the new curriculum more closely
 - Ensuring that all visits to the school, such as by Environmental Health Services, are logged
3. Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - Providing more opportunities for children to develop independence and resilience
 - Providing more interesting and engaging tasks for children
 - Providing suitably challenging tasks for children of different abilities
 - Using the space more effectively in classrooms.
 - Making better use of the reading corners
 - Allowing children to write and draw more freely.

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 10th, 2013.