

LITTLE CAYMAN EDUCATION SERVICE

Full Inspection Summary Report



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SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE INSPECTION

This report offers an assessment of the quality of the work of the Little Cayman Education Service.

Before the inspection, the school assessed its own performance in teaching; learning; links with parents and the community and standards of achievement in language arts, mathematics and science, against criteria published in the Cayman Islands *Handbook for the Self-Assessment and Inspection of Schools*. The inspectors took account of these judgements during a visit to the school which took place from 26th to 28th November 2003. On 26th November, a meeting for parents was held which, together with a questionnaire, allowed parents to express their views on the work of the school. This information helped to form the agenda for the inspection.

The report is divided into two parts:

Part I contains background information on the service and the inspection. It also provides a summary of the inspection findings, key strengths of the service and the key issues for action. Part 1 summarises the outcomes and is intended for parents. The service will receive the full report.

Part II contains a detailed commentary on various aspects of the service's work.

Throughout this report, terms such as 'good' and 'sound' are used to describe the quality of the service's work. These relate directly to the following five-point scale used by both the service and the Inspectorate:

Many good features, some of them outstanding.

Good features and no major shortcomings.

Sound but unremarkable.

Some shortcomings in important areas.

Major shortcomings in most areas.

PART I

A SERVICE AND INSPECTION CONTEXT

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SERVICE

1. The Little Cayman Education Service is a government service that was established in January 2000 to provide primary-school education. The service is located in one room of a building that is shared with the island's clinical services. There is a small, fenced-off hard play area.
2. At the time of the inspection, there were six boys on roll aged between six years and ten months and eleven years and four months. They were placed in Years 2, 3, 5 and 6. Two pupils do not have English as their first language.
3. The service is run by one teacher supported by a full-time teacher's aide. The teacher has been in post since September 2002 and the teacher's aide, since November 2001.

PARENTS' VIEWS

4. Prior to the inspection, a questionnaire was sent out and a meeting was held for parents of children attending the service to provide parents with an opportunity to express their views. All of the parents/carers that attended the meeting and responded to the questionnaire were very supportive of the staff and expressed positive views regarding the quality of teaching and the support provided for their children by the staff. They all considered that the staff give generously of their time outside of school hours and work well with parents and the local community.
5. Parents unanimously agreed that their children enjoyed their experiences at school and were keen to attend. They also shared the view that their children were making very good academic progress and achieving high standards in almost all areas, and that all were well prepared for transition to the next stage of their education, whether within the Cayman Islands or elsewhere. Parents commented very positively on the assignments their children were given for homework that required using the internet for research.
6. Physical education was the one curriculum area that caused concern among parents. They were keen to stress their view that major contributory factors to shortcomings in the provision, such as inadequate facilities and a lack of resources, were outside of the control of the service.

B MAIN FINDINGS

SUMMARY OF THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

Teaching

7. Overall, the quality of the teaching is sound with some good and very good features. A particularly effective feature is the skillful way the teacher and the

teacher's aide work together to manage successfully the demands of teaching four year-groups in one room at the same time.

8. In almost all lessons, the teaching methods and approaches used are effective. Information and ideas are usually conveyed accurately and clearly. Skillful use of questioning and prompts deepens pupils' thinking or clarifies understanding and help them to learn effectively. These are particularly strong features in the teaching of language arts and mathematics.
9. An effective learning environment has been created in which pupils are encouraged to ask questions, share ideas and make suggestions. Praise and feedback are used effectively to help pupils recognise their own achievements and understand how they can make progress.

Quality of learning

10. Overall, the quality of learning is good with some very good features. Pupils make good progress in religious education. In language arts and mathematics progress is good overall, with particular strengths in pupils' speaking and listening skills and their knowledge and use of number. Pupils make sound progress overall in science and social studies. In art, music, physical education and information and communication technology (ICT) pupils' progress over time is limited by the absence of planned programmes of work.
11. Pupils work well independently and in small groups. They read texts critically, ask pertinent questions and provide clear explanations when answering questions. During devotions and at other times, pupils communicate their thoughts and ideas well. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills have a positive impact on their learning across all areas of the curriculum.
12. The pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and contribute significantly to their learning overall. Pupils organise themselves maturely, settle quickly and work constructively on their own and with others.

Standards of achievement

13. There is some variation in the standards achieved in relation to pupils' age. However, standards achieved in language arts, mathematics and religious education are at least in line with those expected of pupils in the different year-groups. In many elements of language arts and religious education they are above expectations, and in speaking and listening and number they are well above. Pupils are achieving standards that are broadly in line in science; social studies; music; physical education; art and in some aspects of ICT.

The curriculum and assessment

14. When considered as a whole, the curriculum promotes pupils' intellectual, creative, physical and personal development. There are limitations, however, within some subjects. Where there is a clear programme of work in place, such as for language arts and mathematics, the teaching and learning builds effectively on what pupils already know, understand and can do, and pupils make

good progress. Where there is no programme, for example, art; ICT; physical education and music, learning is uneven and skills, knowledge and understanding are not developed systematically.

15. All pupils have equal access to the whole curriculum provided by the service and the curriculum content is well adjusted to meet individual pupil needs. Due to circumstances outside of the control of the service, the pupils do not have equal access to the full physical education curriculum provided normally for pupils in Cayman Islands schools.
16. Overall, the service is suitably resourced and the resources available are well used. However, the range of reference and fiction books available is limited and a lack of regular ICT technical support results in many occasions when the computer is out of use. The lack of a covered outdoor area limits the potential for the pupils' physical development.
17. Good use is made of a range of tests and informal assessment to target teaching and learning. Pupil profiles are well maintained and used effectively to track progress.

Personal development

18. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils are able to draw on the moral codes that they learn about in religious education to help them act in accordance with their own developing sense of what is right and what is wrong. Their strong sense of fairness, justice, compassion, empathy and respect for themselves and others is demonstrated through, for example, the prayers pupils offer during devotions and in the way that conflicts are resolved through honest and open discussion. Behaviour throughout the day is mostly very good.
19. Pupils have a sound understanding of their own cultural heritage and are keen to take part in community events. However, opportunities are missed to extend pupils' awareness of music, art and literature from other cultures.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

20. The service provides sound, and in some cases good, support and guidance for its pupils. The staff provide a secure, nurturing and safe environment in which the pupils' academic progress and pastoral needs are suitably monitored. Pupils' academic progress is monitored well through regular testing and test scores are entered into pupils' profiles. Accurate attendance records are maintained and absence and lateness are followed-up appropriately. The support provided for pupils transferring to subsequent schools is good. However, records for pupils coming into the service are not complete in every case.

Leadership and management

21. Good quality leadership and management are strong features of the service. It is characterised by effective teamwork that supports the smooth running of the service. There is a strong sense of common purpose and a commitment to all pupils achieving high standards. Procedures and routines are well established,

understood and adhered to by pupils and parents. Relationships are excellent. Staff and pupils are friendly towards, and genuinely caring and supportive of, one another. All pupils are treated with equal care and respect.

Links with parents and the community

22. Good links have been established with parents and the community. The service maintains effective communication with parents on a daily basis. Parents are very supportive of the service and have a realistic appreciation of many of the difficulties the staff encounter in trying to meet the learning needs of the pupils. Parents are provided with regular, written reports, presented in a clear format, on their children's performance in all areas of the curriculum. The reports also helpfully provide opportunities for parents to add comments on their children's learning. Visits are regularly arranged for the pupils to experience and learn about local places of interest. Pupils are encouraged to take part in local and national events and competitions, and they are provided with good support to enable them to perform well and experience success.

KEY STRENGTHS

23. The inspectors identified the following as key strengths of the service:

- the service is well led and managed;
- there is effective teamwork which results in a caring and positive ethos in which pupils are happy, settled and confident;
- the quality of teaching and learning in language arts, mathematics and religious education is good;
- pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are well developed;
- pupils have very good attitudes to their learning;
- overall, pupils achieve well and make good progress;
- pupils' personal development is very good;
- pupils generally behave very well;
- parents and community members are committed to the service and actively involved in, and supportive of, its work.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

24. In order to further improve the quality of teaching and learning and to raise the standards achieved by its pupils, the service needs to:

- ensure that the work in all subjects helps pupils to build on their skills, knowledge and understanding in a systematic way.

The service should seek help, where necessary, to address this issue.

The school is responsible for drawing up an Action Plan within 40 working days of receiving this report, to show how it plans to address the issues identified. The Schools' Inspectorate will monitor and report on the implementation of the Action Plan.

The Cayman Islands Schools' Inspectorate