

# **BASELINE INSPECTION REPORT**

## **Prospect Primary School**

**24 to 25 NOVEMBER 2014**

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## **Introduction**

The Honourable Tara Rivers, Minister for Education, has requested an inspection of all government schools during the 2014 to 2015 academic year. The purpose of these inspections is to provide a baseline assessment of the quality of teaching and its impact on students' learning, the progress students make and the standards they achieve, the effectiveness of the leadership and management of each school, and the standards being achieved in English and mathematics.

The resulting inspection report provides a clear understanding of each school's particular strengths and weaknesses, and makes recommendations for improvement where necessary.

## Information about the school and the inspection team

### Information about the school

Type of school:	Government primary school
Age range of students:	4-11
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	354
School address:	Prospect Primary School 169 Poindexter Road PO Box 910 Grand Cayman KY1-1110 Cayman Islands
Telephone number:	345-947-8889
Email address:	Gloria.bell@gov.ky
Name of Principal:	Gloria Bell

The school has 354 students from the ages of four to eleven, with slightly more girls than boys. Students start in Reception at the age of four, and in Year 1 when they are five. There are 12 classes in Years 1 to 6, with an average size of around 27 students. Additional support is provided for 123 students who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Those for whom English is an additional language, mainly Spanish speakers, are supported in learning English. The school offers the primary years programme (PYP) of the International Baccalaureate (IB). This is an accredited IB school (2013). The school has recently had its tenth anniversary. The principal has been at the school for eight years.

The ability profile of the school is broadly in line with the UK average, although some year groups have a profile slightly below average.

### Information about the inspection team

<b>Lead:</b>	Linda Donowho
<b>Team:</b>	Joy Richardson Mark Albini Kathleen Silvester Ann McDonnell

This inspection of Prospect Primary School took place from 24 to 25 November 2014 and involved a team of five inspectors. The following aspects of the school's work were looked at.

- Standards achieved and progress made by students, particularly in English and mathematics
- The effectiveness of teaching and its impact on learning
- How well the school is led and managed

**Reception was not inspected on this visit.**

The inspection team gathered evidence in the following ways.

- Twenty-nine lessons, or parts of lessons, were observed, particularly in English and mathematics
- School documents, including teachers' planning, curriculum guidelines and school policies were looked at and students' work was scrutinised
- Inspectors listened to students read
- Discussions took place with teachers and the principal
- Discussions were held with students, and their activities in lessons and outside the classroom were observed
- Comments from parents and staff were taken into account from the pre-inspection questionnaires

Inspectors use the following grading scale to describe aspects of the school's work:

<b>Grade</b>		<b>Description</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Very good</b>	Good in all respects and exemplary in some significant areas
<b>2</b>	<b>Good</b>	Good in most respects. Weaknesses are minor and not in significant areas
<b>3</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	No significant weaknesses, but no major strengths. Improvement needed
<b>4</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Some significant weaknesses that have a negative impact on learning and achievement. Cause for concern

In the Cayman Islands, the key stages are defined as follows.

**KEY STAGE 1 – Years 1-3**

**KEY STAGE 2 – Years 4-6**

## **Executive summary of the report**

### **The overall effectiveness of the school**

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Students entering Year 1 from Reception have acquired a positive attitude to learning and already have basic number and phonic knowledge. Students make good progress and are broadly attaining in line with the norm for their age, and exceeding this in English. Students throughout the school make better progress in English than in mathematics. Overall, progress accelerates in the older year groups.

The school is well managed and careful evaluation of progress and of the school improvement plan directs the way forward. The principal has a clear vision for the school's development. All staff are involved in this process and staff expertise is both valued and used in bringing about improvement and change. The school is active in seizing all avenues of support for its pupils and a range of interventions supports students' learning.

Assessment data is plentiful and is beginning to be used regularly to track students' progress. Although it is carefully analysed and levels of achievement noted, the results of this analysis do not sufficiently inform lesson planning and the needs of specific groups or individuals.

### **What the school does well**

- The senior leadership involves all staff in the evaluation of the school's improvement plan, encouraging input and insight into the future needs of the school and the identification of the steps needed to achieve these.
- Staff strengths are recognised, valued and used to support staff and monitor teaching.
- The school has high standards in literacy and creates a stimulating environment to encourage reading.
- The school makes effective use of classroom assistants in supporting pupils and ensures that training for classroom assistants is available.
- The school makes good use of the Primary Years Programme (PYP) to promote inquiry and engagement in learning and to encourage pupils to reflect on their learning.

### **What needs to improve**

- Information from assessment is not sufficiently used to guide teaching and show students how to improve, and to close the gap when students are falling behind.
- Teachers do not regularly adapt work in lessons to address the needs of different abilities within the class.
- Staff need to develop their knowledge, understanding and teaching of mathematics

## **Commentary on inspection findings**

### **How well students achieve and make progress**

Students' achievement is good overall because they make good progress through the school and, from a low base, reach standards that are broadly in line with expectations for their age.

At the end of Year 6, students take Key Stage 2 tests in mathematics and English that are marked and moderated locally (apart from the grammar, punctuation and spelling sections). Standards are higher in English than in mathematics. Results have been below or close to the UK average in recent years, but there has been a trend of improvement from 2011 to 2014. Over this period, the percentage reaching the level expected for their age (level 4) increased from 58 to 85 per cent in English, and from 50 to 72 percent in mathematics. In 2014, 28 percent achieved level 5 in reading, exceeding the expectation for their age, while 19 percent did so in mathematics. Results in 2014 were in line with the UK average in reading and writing, but well below in mathematics.

Standardised tests of Progress in English (PiE) and Progress in Mathematics (PiM), taken annually, show that older students are broadly attaining in line with the norm for their age, and exceeding this in English. In mathematics, students in the younger year groups are attaining below the norm for their age. When cognitive abilities tests are compared with outcomes, these show that students are achieving well for their ability in English, but underachieving in mathematics.

Observations in lessons and scrutiny of students' work confirm the results of the school's own assessments. Students make good progress from the start of their schooling in English, and progress accelerates in the later years. A range of interventions support those who make a slow start in reading and writing, so that they make steady progress. In mathematics, progress is slower in the younger years, and many students achieve less than they should, but progress accelerates in the later years. Boys progress at a slower rate than girls and are particularly behind in their learning in literacy.

### **The effectiveness of teaching and its impact on students' learning**

The quality of teaching is good overall.

In the best of lessons across all year groups teaching demonstrates a brisk pace, good subject knowledge and clear learning objectives; this enables students to acquire new knowledge and make progress. Good use is made of teaching assistants throughout the school to support students' learning.

In the most successful lessons, students listen attentively, are keen to contribute in discussion, and teachers use effective questioning to encourage independent thought. In these lessons, teaching promotes students' enthusiasm and confidence to attempt a task and they diligently produce an appropriate amount of work. In lessons where there are lengthy introductions and few expectations for pupils to participate actively, their

attention wanes, there is limited opportunity to apply their skills and little progress is made.

When given the opportunity, students co-operate well in paired work, respecting each other's opinions and sharing ideas. When students are expected to work in larger groups, often one or two students take the lead doing all of the work, whilst other students disengage from the activity, lose interest and behaviour deteriorates.

Particularly good teaching is evident in lessons where teachers have planned effectively to meet the needs of the different abilities within the class. In these lessons students behave and co-operate extremely well and demonstrate notable enthusiasm for learning. However, this provision is not seen consistently.

Planning is monitored and, throughout the school, long-term plans are detailed and provide appropriate cover of the required curriculum. The quality and the detail of short-term lesson planning are variable. The lack of regular evaluation of lessons and of students' prior learning, using assessment passed on from the previous year, results in some lesson planning taking little account of the different abilities of students in the class. In these lessons inappropriate levels of work are expected and there is often too strong a focus on complex terminology, rather than the basic skills required for reading and writing.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are withdrawn from classes for additional support or 'catch-up' literacy sessions. Individual education plans are provided for phase 2 and phase 3 students but these are not consistently referred to in order that teaching regularly addresses their difficulties and the gaps in their learning. In the more effective lessons, worksheets or questions aimed at the different abilities in the class are well matched to the needs of the pupils. When pupils of higher ability or pupils with learning difficulties are not given appropriate challenge or support, their progress within lessons is limited and their concentration wanes.

Pupils are regularly made aware of their progress and visual displays indicate their current levels and the level they should aim for. However, these do not sufficiently guide students' work, or provide them with specific steps that they should take to progress further. More specific learning targets are indicated in the teachers' marking of their work in English, with clear guidance for students to help them improve. However, marking in mathematics is often cursory and students are not routinely guided as to how they can progress.

### **How well the school is led and managed**

Leadership and management are good.

The strong vision and the purposeful direction for the success of the school are reflected in the progress of students and their attitudes to learning. There is a strong sense of purpose and community spirit. Students are proud of their school and of their successes across a wide range of activities.

This extremely positive ethos is well secured by a cohesive leadership, which is well supported by a committed team of teaching and non-teaching staff, many whom have been in post at the school since the principal was appointed.

The senior leadership gives clear direction and school improvement is a priority. This vision is formalised through a comprehensive school improvement plan that provides a clear focus for identified elements for improvement to which all members of staff contribute. Targets together with the actions necessary for their completion are identified clearly and the plan is regularly evaluated by staff at all levels of responsibility.

Communication amongst staff is effective and well organised. Collaboration and discussion play a key role in staff professional development. The school draws on external support where this is available but is active in organising its own professional development based on the specific needs of its students and staff. The strengths of staff are recognised and sharing of good practice is a notable feature in staff training.

Monitoring of overall progress is undertaken through careful scrutiny of assessment data. The school uses regular analysis of assessment data and comparisons over time to provide information with regard to attainment and progress of year groups. This is used to establish the school's success in gaining higher levels in National Tests and areas for improvement. However, this information does not inform classroom practice to ensure that all abilities are equally provided for in lessons. There is no system established to track individual students' progress as they move through the school.

Steps have been taken to monitor the quality of teaching through lesson observations, scrutiny of work and 'learning walks' that give an overview of teaching and learning. However, these are not always successful in identifying weaknesses. They are often congratulatory rather than analytical. As a result, the quality of teaching varies in terms of subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics, and in provision for the most able and those with SEND.

The school has strong links with parents and regularly organises information evenings on such topics as reading and numeracy. Through these, parents are strongly encouraged to become involved in their child's learning.

### **The quality of teaching and learning in English**

The teaching of literacy is good overall and leads to above average standards. Speaking and listening are integrated into activities across the curriculum and, in the best lessons, students are encouraged to explore and explain their ideas in groups as well as in class work. Most students use correct standard English in their speaking and writing.

Reading is given high priority. In Key Stage 1, students are taught through a mixture of shared, guided and independent methods. Parental involvement is assured through the taking home of books alongside a home/school record. Parents are offered guidance on helping their child to read and enjoy books. In the best lessons, work is based on a text and students are guided to explore literal and non-literal features. The library provides an inviting environment for reading and research, albeit some of the stock is outdated. A

daily period of silent reading helps to build reading stamina and enjoyment throughout the school.

Writing is taught in specified blocks according to the genre being studied. Students are taught the elements of each genre but, in many cases, this learning of terminology limits the amount of time when the students actually write, resulting in a lower volume and, in some cases, standard of work produced. In the less successful lessons, students spend an inordinate amount of time copying out questions and so have little time to plan and write reasoned answers. Students at the top end of the school are provided with opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing across the curriculum, developing more advanced writing skills. Comprehension skills are not systematically taught throughout the school, and this results in several students being unable to understand or engage with more complex texts. Although spelling is methodically taught throughout the school, the work is rarely suited to individual needs in this area, and accordingly many students remain unable to use strategies taught to write new words. The standard of handwriting and presentation is high throughout the school.

### **The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics**

Outcomes for pupils are adequate in mathematics, although their achievement is lower than would be expected for students of average ability. More able students are not sufficiently challenged or encouraged to be independent thinkers and the less able pupils are not consistently given appropriate support.

A good practical base of number understanding is established in Year 1, and by Year 3, students are confident with number and are beginning to use this knowledge in practical situations. They understand place value, use number bonds to 20 and can count in 10s to 100. They identify lines of symmetry and can create simple bar charts using given data.

By Year 6, students' knowledge and experience develop and they work with shapes and angles; metric measure; place value; data handling and Venn diagrams. They can multiply and divide; use order of operations; multiply and divide by 100 and 1000. They are given strategies to solve problems but do not use them as a matter of course. This slows down their progress, as much time is spent considering how they should approach problems. Older pupils are beginning to use their knowledge of times tables in their work. Overall, the recording of work is limited and standards are lower than would be expected for pupils of similar ability.

The pace of lessons is often slow with too much time being spent on mathematical terminology. Frequently teachers' introduction to the topic takes up much of the lesson and little time is left to complete tasks. This, together with the lack of appropriate adaptation of work for the different abilities within year groups, impacts negatively on progress and students' interest.

In the most successful lessons, teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge but this is not consistent across all year groups. The school is active in providing training for staff in order to improve subject knowledge. The Maths Recovery programme is providing some support for pupils of lower ability and support staff have been trained to

implement this. However, this is limited in its impact because of time and staff constraints.

## **Appendix A**

### **Recommendations**

The following are some suggested ways that the school could try to overcome the weaknesses identified in the 'What needs to improve' section of this report.

1. Develop the process to observe and review the quality of teaching.
2. When marking and assessing students' work, provide regular, clear direction as to how they can improve and link this to individual student's targets.
3. When planning and teaching lessons, use the information from assessments and evaluation of lessons to provide for the different abilities of students.
4. Increase the pace of lessons so that students complete more work in the time available.
5. Ensure that teachers understand that students need to have a secure knowledge of tables and a full range of strategies needed to tackle mathematical problems