



PROSPECT PRIMARY SCHOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

MARCH 2007

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.

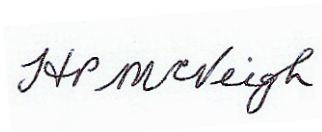
Each school receives an inspection every four to six years. The inspection identifies the school's strengths and the areas that need to be improved. Between inspections, schools are visited regularly by a link inspector to check on the progress that has been made in tackling the priority areas and to 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 inspection 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 Prospect Primary become a more effective school.



Helena McVeigh
Chief Inspector of Schools

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL AND THE INSPECTION TEAM

THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Government Primary
Age range of students:	4 years 9 months – 12 years 1 month
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	382
School address:	Poindexter Road, Prospect, Grand Cayman
Telephone number:	947 8889
Fax number:	947 2405
Email address:	gloria.pollard@gov.ky
Name of Principal:	Mrs Gloria Bell

THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Team Inspectors: Roger Holmes Pachent Smythe Mary Summers Jennifer Paul-O'Donnell	Cayman Islands Schools' Inspectorate Cayman Islands Schools' Inspectorate Overseas Inspector Local Occasional Inspector

INTRODUCTION

Information about the school

Prospect Primary School opened in September 2004, just one week before Hurricane Ivan struck the Cayman Islands. The school escaped the devastation wreaked on other schools and was used as a shelter for several months, at one time accommodating over 800 people.

When it first opened the school took only Years 1 to 4. Since then, it has grown into one of the largest schools on the island, with 382 students in Years 1 through 6. There are big differences between the numbers in each year group, with only 24 in Year 4 and 101 in Year 6. There are significantly more boys than girls in Year 3, but most other year groups have roughly equal numbers.

Over 90 per cent of the students are Caymanian. There are three students receiving support for learning English as a second language and 42 students on the school's register for special needs: four students have individual education plans (IEPs) for learning difficulties, 15 have IEPs for speech and language and a further four students are on modified programmes awaiting assessment.

The school's mission is to 'provide a comprehensive education for all students through the use of a child-centred integrated curriculum, in partnership with parents, staff and the community, to produce disciplined, competent and technologically proficient lifelong learners who will embrace the Caymanian culture and make positive impacts on society.'

The school houses a separate unit, called 'Stepping Stones', for students with emotional and behaviour difficulties. It is attended by primary age students from across Grand Cayman. It is not part of Prospect School, but the teacher in charge of the unit attends staff meetings and leads some training for staff at the school.

Information about the inspection

The inspection took place from 19th to 21st March 2007 and involved 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
- 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 help 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 five lessons or parts of lessons were observed, mainly language arts and mathematics, but including science, social studies, physical education (PE), music, art and ICT.
- Other activities, such as devotion, assembly, after-school clubs, lunch and break times, were observed.
- School documents, including teachers' planning, curriculum statements and guidelines, were looked at.
- Students' work was scrutinised.
- Inspectors spoke with students and took their views from the questionnaires into account.
- The work of the behaviour unit was sampled.
- Inspectors heard students read during lessons.
- Discussions with teachers and other members of staff took place.
- Comments from parents at the meeting before the inspection and from the questionnaires were taken into account.
- Information obtained through the regular link inspector visits was also taken into account.

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

Grade	Judgement	Description
1	Excellent/very good	Good in nearly all respects and exemplary in some significant areas
2	Good	Good in most respects. Weaknesses are minor and not in significant areas
3	Satisfactory	Adequate in most areas, no significant weaknesses, but no major strengths
4	Unsatisfactory	Some significant weaknesses (might only be one or two) that have negative impact on learning and standards

INSPECTION FINDINGS

How effective is the school overall

Prospect Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its students and has a number of strengths. There is a very positive ethos. Students are respectful, friendly and generally behave very well. Their attendance is very good and parents are extremely supportive of the school.

Overall, students are achieving satisfactory standards in reading and writing, and their speaking and listening skills are good. The picture is less positive for mathematics, where students' achievements are below what they should be.

Some of the teaching is very good, but there is too much that is unsatisfactory. There have been some promising strategies to improve literacy that have not yet had time to impact fully on students' progress.

The new principal has a clear vision that is firmly focused on improving students' achievements. Some parents, teachers and students have found it hard to come to terms with the different approach to discipline and miss her predecessor's style of leadership. Nevertheless, the principal is gradually gaining support for the new ways of working and students are learning to take more responsibility for their own behaviour.

The school is well organised and runs smoothly each day, but the systems for monitoring its work are not yet effective. Members of the senior management team have specific responsibilities, but they are finding these difficult to sustain alongside their full-time teaching commitments and too much is left to the principal.

The school is well placed to act on the recommendations in this report, given the strong parental support, the responsiveness of the students and the strengths within the teaching staff — provided that the senior management team, particularly the deputy, is able to play a greater role in the running of the school.

What the school does well

- There is a positive and purposeful school ethos, which provides a good foundation for children's learning.
- Students' personal development is good — students behave well and have good attitudes towards learning.
- The leadership has a clear vision for the school, which is directed towards improving students' achievement.
- Some of the teaching is very good.
- There is a good focus on improving literacy across the school.
- Parents' support for the school and the involvement of the parents and teachers' association (PTA) are key strengths.

What needs to improve

- The way that the senior management team fulfils its individual and collective responsibility to ensure that the work of the school is of a consistently high quality
- The way that teachers match work to the different capabilities of children in their classes, particularly the most and least able, who are not always well catered for
- The monitoring of students' progress and achievements and how this is used to plan the next steps in their learning
- Provision for mathematics, which is not yet good enough, although some of the teaching is very good

The school is expected to modify its existing improvement plan or to prepare a supplementary action plan to address the areas for improvement identified above. The amended plan or supplement 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 the areas identified as needing to improve.

How high are standards at the school?

The current Year 1 students started school with a wide range of attainment, but, overall, it is in line with what would be expected for their age, based on the Entry Behaviour Test findings. For example, most children know their colours, recognise shapes and can write some letters and numerals. The school's assessment of students in 2005 indicated that over three-quarters had reading ages two years below what they should be.

Students make generally satisfactory progress through the school, although it is faster in some classes than others. Their achievements in reading and writing are satisfactory. Students' speaking and listening skills are often good and generally better than expected for their ages. Some excellent examples were seen of children speaking clearly and confidently in front of their peers. This is promoted and encouraged well in some classes from Year 1 upwards.

Students' achievements in mathematics are not as good as in language arts and overall, the inspection team judged them to be lower than they should be for their ages. Even the older students do not recall simple number facts, such as 7 plus 3 equals 10, and this is slowing down their progress in mathematics.

Students' results in the TerraNova standardised tests showed a very wide spread, but, overall, were in line with the average for the Cayman Islands in 2005 and 2006. The 2006 results for Year 2 and 3 were generally better than the Cayman average in reading and mathematics.

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

There is some excellent teaching at the school, but also too much that is unsatisfactory. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was judged to be good or very good in 40 per cent of the lessons.

The teaching was unsatisfactory in 22 per cent of lessons. In the unsatisfactory lessons, students failed to make enough progress, mainly because the pace was too slow and, in some cases, they had to wait for everyone to complete a task before moving on. The work was not challenging or interesting for students, particularly the most able.

In most classrooms, teachers have established productive environments for learning. Their relationships with students are generally warm, friendly and respectful. Students respond well and they are attentive and eager to learn. There were very few examples of poor or disruptive behaviour during the inspection. At worst, students were restless and distracted, but this tended to occur only when they had to sit passively for long periods of time.

Some teachers are making good use of 'brain gyms', where students are given five minute breaks to stretch and move or play games such as 'Simon says'; this is good practice as it allows children to be refreshed and ready for learning. A Year 1 teacher made excellent use of singing, clapping and movement to maintain children's attention as well as to reinforce their learning of numbers, colours and early language skills.

Teachers often use a good variety of approaches in their lessons, including 'hands-on' techniques, such as games in which students check each other's spellings, or computer

programs to reinforce their learning in some subjects. Teachers use story tapes and PowerPoint presentations to enliven their whole class instruction. Group work is a feature in most lessons and is helping students to become self-reliant and to work cooperatively with others. Several examples were seen of students willingly helping their peers who were struggling with their learning. Teachers sometimes assign roles to members of the groups, which helps to develop their skills in leadership and team work.

The project work this term has been well received by teachers and students. The approach draws on different subject disciplines and has made learning interesting and relevant for students as it has been linked to their everyday lives. The projects are helping to engage students in research as well as improving their literacy and numeracy skills and their knowledge and understanding of science and social studies. A Year 6 class was totally engaged in a mathematics lesson in which they drew pie charts representing the percentages of different types of developed and undeveloped land in the Cayman Islands. The students made progress in mathematics and spoke with passion about why we should be taking more care of the mangroves in Cayman.

Teachers' subject knowledge is mainly satisfactory and in some cases good, particularly in language arts. In the best lessons, teachers' enthusiasm and knowledge of the subject and how children learn stimulated interest and improved progress. In mathematics, though, some teachers' questioning and approaches suggest a lack of confidence in the subject that is undermining students' progress and achievements.

Most teachers plan their lessons well but there are inconsistencies and some weaknesses. Teachers often write 'objectives' for the lesson on the board and share these with students, but not all teachers do this. There are also different interpretations of the term 'objective' with some being lists of activities rather than expectations of what the students will know, understand and be able to do by the end of the lesson. Teachers also rarely revisit the objectives at the end of the lesson to assess how much has been learned.

There are two main areas that need to be improved in relation to teaching. The first is differentiation — the way that teachers match work to the stage and abilities of students. The second is the use of teachers' assessment to plan work that is appropriate for students. These areas are closely linked because teachers need to be able to assess how well students are doing in order to give them appropriate work. In Prospect, most teachers are giving students the same work regardless of their ability and prior attainment. Sometimes teachers suggested that they were differentiating when, in practice, they were simply giving different activities as part of a 'centres' approach where groups spend time on one task before moving on to the next.

Although teachers regularly check and mark students' work, they rarely give feedback as to how it could be improved and do not seem to use the assessment to change their future lesson plans. Teachers do not always follow up their marking or make changes when students have failed to respond. For example, several students' exercise books included the teacher's comment 'incomplete' time after time, suggesting that the work was not appropriate for the student or he/she did not have time to complete it. Students showed that they are responsible, eager learners, who, if given the chance, could be involved in setting targets for improvement and evaluating their own and others' work.

Some teachers are giving extra support after school when they have accurately assessed that students do not understand a concept. This is helpful but more could be

done in lessons to meet students' different needs. Year 6 students are taught in ability sets for language arts, which is also an appropriate way to differentiate, but it is not wholly effective. The 'top' set is large and includes a range of abilities. The most able students need to be given more demanding work so that they can reach their potential.

What is the quality of students' personal development?

All aspects of students' personal development are good. There is a positive and welcoming ethos at the school that promotes a good environment for learning. Students are happy and are encouraged by the warm and caring manner of the principal and most staff.

Students' spiritual development is good. They have a clear understanding of their values and beliefs, as demonstrated by their respectful attitudes and in the generally good relationships, in and out of the classroom. Students are given many opportunities to develop their spirituality, for example, in assemblies and devotions. They participate well in joyful songs, drama presentations, poetry, reflection and prayers. Children pray before meals and are given a time for reflection at the end of the day. Some classrooms have Bible verses or positive words written on charts. In one Year 1 class, words such as 'please' and 'thank you,' are written on mobiles. Teachers invite pastors and other community members to share in devotions and special assemblies. Some children attend the after-school Bible club where they learn about topics such as 'temptation', which are dealt with through activities and discussion.

Students' moral development is good. They show a good awareness of the school-wide behaviour motto, 'Be Good, Don't Slip Up', and are learning to take responsibility for their own behaviour. They know the school rules and what the consequences are for breaking them. They know what constitutes right from wrong and most abide by those principles. The majority of the students show respect and concern for other people and for their ideas and beliefs. For example, in a language arts lesson, students applauded their peers for a presentation on their poetry project and all joined in singing a poem they had written.

Most students are well-behaved and strive to avoid conflict by reporting matters to an adult such as the counsellor, a teacher, principal or the security guard. Students who are reprimanded for misbehaviour are usually remorseful and compliant. Sometimes students are asked to apologise to teachers or their peers verbally or in writing. There is a useful 'reflection area' in the office where students who have misbehaved (mainly during break times) are expected to sit and reflect on what they have done and work out their differences. Sometimes students manage to resolve the issues themselves and become friends again even before they have spoken with the principal. This positive approach to discipline is helping students to grow in self-assurance and confidence and in the ability to deal appropriately with others.

The prefects set good examples for their peers and younger students. They wear their badges with pride and feel a sense of achievement when they carry out their duties, which they do well. The leadership opportunities they receive and responsibilities they undertake enhance their self-esteem. For example, one student worked conscientiously in the library before school and during lunch breaks whilst the librarian was absent. Older students are being helped to develop a sense of responsibility and wise decision-making through the Drug Abuse and Resistance Education programme (DARE), which is taught by the community police officer.

Students' social development is good. One of the school's aims is to '*empower students to become productive, well-rounded citizens*' and this is achieved through the wide range of extra-curricular activities in which they are involved. Students have opportunities to develop leadership skills and responsibilities as monitors or prefects. Activities such as charitable work also help students' social development. After-school clubs, such as scouts, brownies and rainbow provide positive ways for students to develop cooperation and respect for others.

Students are now allowed to engage in quiet conversation while they eat their meals at lunchtime, which helps develop their social skills. However, the intrusive use of a loudspeaker to call for less noise and the public shaming of students who have misbehaved or spoken too loudly, are not effective ways of supporting this initiative.

Students are confident, assertive and articulate in the way they express themselves. For example the Year 6 student who was master of ceremonies at an assembly handed over the programme to the principal in a very respectful, mature manner. Students who spoke with inspectors were very confident and answered questions politely and with a sense of purpose.

The school develops students' cultural awareness well. There is a strong focus on celebrating and learning about Caymanian culture and heritage. Throughout the school there are images of local history and customs. Pictures of indigenous plants and animals, such as silver thatch palms and iguana, are also evident around the school. Students experience regular field trips to local places that enrich their learning about the Cayman Islands, past and present. They show a great deal of interest in the local culture and are knowledgeable about it.

Students also learn about other cultures through, for example, Commonwealth Day activities where they experienced some of the customs and food of different countries. They also sing hymns in Spanish and some girls are learning to Salsa in the after-school dance club. Students participate in a number of artistic and cultural activities, such as the National Children's Festival of the Arts in which they are often successful.

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

Students experience a broad curriculum that caters well for all aspects of their personal development. However, the time allocated for language arts and mathematics varies considerably between classes and results in uneven provision. Most classes only include 30 minutes of PE and art every week, which is less than the time recommended by the Education Department. Although they receive only half an hour of music each week, the good provision through extra-curricular clubs means that students are able to develop their skills to a high standard. Students are given many opportunities to sing, for example, in devotions and assemblies as well as during music lessons, and the quality of singing is good.

There is a wide range of after-school activities, for example, in sports, dance, spelling and Bible studies, which support students' academic, personal and physical development. Teachers give generously of their time to provide these activities, showing good commitment to the school and students.

The curriculum is relevant to students' interests. The most recent initiative to teach subjects through an integrated topic approach has been especially successful. Students enjoy this project work immensely and talk enthusiastically about their research into ecosystems and the environment. They are proud of their achievements. This approach contributes greatly to their good personal development and growing academic achievement.

The school's assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. Students' progress is not tracked well enough to ensure they are building effectively on their previous learning. It is difficult for the senior staff to gain an overview of the achievements of individual students, classes and year groups because there is no consistent whole school approach to assessment. Ongoing assessment is not yet routinely used to identify students who are underachieving and who need support, or those who are capable of moving at a faster rate in lessons. Some useful systems have been introduced in language arts to check students' progress in writing and these will help to identify individual strengths and weaknesses. It is important that teachers learn to use this data effectively to modify their lesson plans and to attempt to cater for students' different needs.

The school has started to analyse the results from the annual TerraNova tests in language arts. The findings from the analysis have resulted in intervention groups that help to fill gaps in students' learning, for example, in their phonic knowledge. This is a good start at using data to drive decisions about students' learning, but mathematics results have not yet been evaluated or used in this way.

How well is the school led and managed?

The principal has been in post since September 2006. Her vision for the school is clearly and appropriately focused on raising students' achievement and promoting academic excellence. The vision has been shared with parents, staff, and students, who enthusiastically recounted the motto, 'commitment to excellence' during assembly. There has been some resistance to changes made by the principal who followed a popular, charismatic leader with a very different approach to discipline. Some parents, teachers and students feel that discipline has suffered under the new, less rigid style and they yearn after the past. Nevertheless, teachers are increasingly supportive of the changes and students are learning to appreciate the different approach, which places a greater emphasis on them taking responsibility for their own behaviour.

The senior management team includes some very experienced and effective classroom practitioners. They meet regularly and decide on school strategy. Members of the team have specific responsibilities, but they are finding these difficult to sustain given their full time teaching commitments. The deputy principal is very supportive and helps where she can, but has little non-contact time to fulfil her role. Given the size of the school, there is the need for a non-teaching deputy, as currently too much is left to the principal, which may explain why progress has been slower than it otherwise might have been.

There are some good examples of cooperation amongst teachers of the same year group. For example, they planned together well for the project this term, particularly in Year 6 where the focus is on natural environment and incorporates science, social studies, language arts, mathematics and ICT.

The systems for monitoring the school's work are informal and not yet effective. The principal has a strong presence around the school. She visits classrooms regularly and checks lesson plans. However, there are inconsistencies in teachers' plans and in their classroom practice that suggest more formal approaches are needed, along with action to help bring about improvements where necessary. Members of the senior management team need to play a more significant role in the running of the school by, for example, taking responsibility for ensuring that there is greater consistency in their areas. Also, with the exception of literacy, the role of subject coordinator is generally under-developed, and needs to be clarified and strengthened. The coaching model employed by the literacy coordinator is a useful way to support teachers in the classroom, which could be applied to other subjects, particularly mathematics.

There is a need for agreement amongst staff, starting with the senior management team, about a whole range of issues, including what constitutes good student behaviour and how teachers should respond to students, as well as what is expected in a well differentiated lesson and good assessment for learning.

The school manages some aspects of provision for students with special needs well, but the lack of a special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) until this year has left its mark and there are weaknesses. The teacher who has volunteered to take this responsibility has made a good start, but she has a class, so does not have a great deal of time to manage the support for students.

The school is well organised and runs very smoothly each day. The secretary plays a major role in helping to ensure that the school is administered well and is a huge asset to the school, as is the security guard who helps to maintain good discipline as well as looking out for children's safety. Given the size of the school, the principal needs more clerical support to assist in administration, particularly as there will be more students next year and she will have more responsibility for managing the budget.

The school facility is a great asset and is used well. The school is clean and well kept. There are lively and interesting displays of students' work in the corridors and bulletin boards that celebrate their achievements, which enrich the environment and enhance their personal development. Students also take good advantage of the excellent playground equipment in the early mornings and at lunch times.

The principal has established a good approach to performance management. She has met with all teachers and support assistants and prepared personalised performance agreements for each of them, with targets for their work and identified professional development needs and opportunities.

Arrangements for teachers' professional development are generally satisfactory, although the induction for new teachers needs to be improved. Teachers have experienced a range of professional development opportunities, mainly in-house, using the expertise of members of staff, including the head of the 'Stepping Stones' unit, and literacy coordinator as well as support from their link inspector. There is some evidence of the training having a positive impact, for example, in the way that teachers are increasingly using group work in their classes. It is also useful to see that teachers who attend overseas conferences are expected to present what they have learned to the rest of the staff. The mentoring of new teachers is a good idea in theory, but in practice is not as effective as it should be. Mentors need more guidance as to how they can

support their mentee, who needs more opportunities to observe a range of teaching styles and subjects.

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

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

The school takes good care of students' welfare and safety.

The school is well kept. It is clean, tidy and attractive which makes for a stimulating learning environment and contributes to the positive ethos. There is good attention to safety issues through, for example, regular fire drills and a vigilant security officer. The playing fields are, though, in urgent need of repair as the unevenness and presence of gravel are potentially hazardous for children.

Students' **attendance and punctuality** are very good. The systems for monitoring absenteeism are thorough and carefully followed. The counsellor keeps in good contact with the truancy officer and parents, where necessary, for the few students who have recurring patterns of unauthorised absence.

Students' records are located centrally and staff have appropriate access to them, providing they follow procedures to maintain the necessary confidentiality. The records include students' academic, medical and personal information, but all are not kept up-to-date and there are gaps in some important sections. For example, the reports for parents are not complete. Class teachers also keep their own records of students' assessments and have individual educational plans. Some staff use the information well to adjust the way they teach and relate to individual children, however, this is not done consistently.

The school has effective systems for identifying students with special educational needs, and provides additional support for them. This support is effective for students with autism, and those for whom English is not their first language. The children who attend the 'Stepping Stones' unit also receive very effective support with their emotional and behavioural difficulties. The literacy coordinator has developed some helpful strategies to support students with weak literacy skills and some teachers provide additional classes after school for these students. However, the majority of the students with learning difficulties are not catered for well enough in their regular classes. Their progress is not well monitored and too few have individual education plans.

The school counsellor is a real asset to the school. She provides very effective support to the students through the small group and individual sessions. She has placed a lot of emphasis on working with a group of boys who have been exhibiting challenging behaviour. The students are taught anger management and self control strategies through games, discussions and other activities. In these sessions, they practise taking turns, work cooperatively, respect each other's differences and reflect on their own behaviour and performance. In one session, the students played a game in which they were only allowed to ask questions when it was their turn and when they were holding a soft toy. The counsellor liaises effectively with other professionals, for example, the school nurse, in sessions on health, hygiene and puberty, and workshops for parents on parenting skills. She keeps good records of her meetings and counselling sessions and is in regular contact with teachers and the principal.

There are two children from Prospect who spend part of their week in the 'Stepping Stones' unit alongside students from other Cayman primary schools. The unit teacher provides useful training for Prospect staff on how they can support children in the classroom. Some parents are concerned about having the unit in Prospect School, but many benefits are derived from tapping into the unit teacher's wealth of knowledge and experience.

The school has a behaviour policy but it is not being implemented consistently. The staff have not agreed on what constitutes good or inappropriate behaviour and there is variation in the way teachers punish or praise students. As a result, students receive mixed messages regarding what different teachers will accept.

The school promotes healthy living appropriately through special talks by the counsellor and other community workers who attend special assemblies. Until a week after the inspection, the school benefited from the services of a nurse who visited twice per week; she carried out hearing, visual, and obesity checks on children and contributed to lessons on safety, hygiene and sanitation. This was a valuable resource that will be missed.

Links with parents and the community

The school has developed good links with parents.

The principal sends out monthly newsletters for parents to keep them well informed about upcoming events and clubs. The newsletters occasionally include tips on how parents can help with their children's learning. Some teachers also send out their own newsletters that include topics and work being covered in their classrooms.

Parents are happy with the information they receive about their children's progress, for example through the report cards. However, the reports do not include enough specific information about how students are performing or targets for improvement. They could also be improved by the addition of a space for parents to comment on the report.

Parents are extremely proud of the school. Their support and the involvement of the PTA are key strengths. Parents feel comfortable and welcomed in coming to the school or approaching staff. Monthly meetings are held which are very well attended. Some parents regularly help out in school by volunteering to support in classrooms, chaperoning field trips, coaching teams, fundraising and encouraging other parents to be involved. The PTA provides funds for the bus wardens, free meals and transport costs for field trips. They have also completed some major projects at the school, such as funding for the large playground equipment, basketball court and assisting with costs of overseas training for teachers.

The school has developed good links with the community. Students are involved in many field trips across the islands. Guest speakers from different organisations, such as the National Trust, come into the school to give presentations or run after school activities. The school also has a good relationship with the local Kiwanis club. Students participate in island events such as National Children's' Festival of the Arts (NCFA), Spelling Bee, Pirates' Week, Reading Week and in the Department of Tourism sponsored environmental project, Jiminy Cricket's Environmental Challenge. They also

take part in various church activities and social gatherings where they sing or dance and events such as walk-a-thons that are organized by the PTA.

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

Language arts

Standards achieved by students in language arts are in line with what is expected for their age overall. Students achieve good levels in speaking and listening. They speak confidently in class, using a good range of vocabulary. Teachers focus well on extending students' vocabulary in many different subjects. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, students spoke confidently about the life cycle of a butterfly, describing how it 'emerged from a chrysalis'. Students gain great confidence from speaking in front of an audience during school assemblies, drama sessions in class and in national competitions

Students' written work also shows good development in vocabulary, for example, in the projects completed by Year 6 students, where they describe different ecosystems on the island. They are developing a clear, fluent style of handwriting that will stand them in good stead for the future. Spelling is usually accurate and students take delight and satisfaction in testing each other in spelling games and activities. Most develop a sound phonic knowledge, apart from a few students in every year group who are weak in this area. These gaps have not been identified and addressed quickly enough in the past and are currently affecting the overall performance of these students. The school has recently taken steps to help them catch up but these interventions need further refinement to ensure the best chance of success. Punctuation and grammar are satisfactory and students are gaining confidence in these areas of their written work when they write for a range of purposes.

Students are enthusiastic readers. Year 2 students read together in class with animated expression and great enjoyment. The library is well used before school each morning as students check through reference books to support their project work and share stories together in pairs and small groups. The library is very well resourced, but is not organised well enough to ensure that students can access the range of books on offer.

Students enjoy lessons and work hard in class. They also work well in groups, discussing their work and sharing ideas and opinions. This recent development in the organisation of language arts lessons provides excellent opportunities for teachers to plan work at different levels to meet the needs of the most and least able students in their classes. This is not yet happening but is the obvious next step in the good work that is being carried out to improve literacy provision.

There is a very positive learning ethos in classrooms. Teachers usually present lessons in a lively and stimulating way. They use a wide variety of methods to help students learn new concepts. They illustrate teaching points by using PowerPoint presentations and engage students in lively question and answer sessions which clarify and refine their understanding. Many teachers designate different areas of the classroom for different activities and students move around, changing their focus and maintaining their interest.

Students are keen to complete written assignments and focus well on the task in hand. Their work is marked regularly but teachers seldom provide any useful comments or targets for improvement.

Lesson plans are evolving in the school and currently identify what will be covered every week in each area of language arts. Learning objectives are not identified clearly enough to focus teachers' attention on exactly what students will learn in each session and help them assess outcomes. Objectives need to be shared more often with students so as to involve them more in the learning process and help them judge how well they are doing.

Teaching is not always as effective as it might be. In a few instances, lessons are conducted at a slow pace and the teaching methods and materials are not appropriate to the needs and levels of all students. In these situations, students make limited progress.

Provision of language arts is improving throughout the school. Areas for development have been highlighted and progress on some of these has been good, for example the group work to promote cooperation and discussion and the wide range of opportunities provided for students to use their literacy skills in other subjects. There are some excellent examples of teaching throughout the school that need to be shared with less experienced colleagues to support their professional development. Further work is required to establish an assessment system that tracks students' progress in all aspects of language arts as they move through the school. A useful start has been made on this but not all teachers have responded positively to this very important initiative. Data provided by these assessments needs to be used to identify and address underachievement and where the curriculum needs to be adapted and improved.

Literacy across the curriculum

This is a strong aspect of the school's work. School staff have worked hard to increase the opportunities students have to practise and refine their literacy skills in other subjects. The integrated project approach adopted this term has led to students improving their research skills, using books and computers to help them find out about the environment, animals and their habitats. It has also meant that students learn how to write for a range of different purposes. Haiku poems about the environment and reports of their field trips to Mr Willie's Farm and the Botanic Park, for instance, help them practise what they have learned in language arts lessons.

Mathematics

Students do not achieve as well as they should in mathematics. Results in the most recent TerraNova tests were very close to the average for all schools in Cayman, but showed a wide range of achievement with many students performing well above expectations, but many performing well below. This wide range of performance is very noticeable in mathematics lessons at the school and some teachers manage the students' different needs more successfully than others.

Most mathematics lessons are lively and students are actively involved, so that they generally enjoy the work and have positive attitudes to the subject. Although all lessons usually have clear objectives, teachers have significantly different approaches to the subject. In some classes there is a focus on learning how to carry out operations, for example cancelling zeros to simplify a fraction. This approach works for some students,

but others make mistakes and, because they are following a drill rather than understanding what they are doing, they do not realise that their answer is likely to be wrong. For example, several students in a Year 6 class calculated that 10 percent of \$18,000 was \$18 and did not spot this obvious error.

A more effective approach is adopted in other classes, where the emphasis is on developing an understanding of the process. In these lessons, students make very good progress as a result of being challenged to think carefully about what they are doing. For example, in Year 4, the teacher made sure that the students understood that fractions were parts of equal size before setting up practical activities where students realised that $\frac{2}{4}$ is the same as $\frac{1}{2}$ and so on. The teacher used a wide range of visual, auditory and practical stimuli, such as cutting up a cake, to cater for students' different ways of working. The discussions that the teacher encouraged helped to reinforce what had been learnt and students quickly developed a firm and confident grasp of the topic.

Even in the very successful lesson on fractions described above, a few students were hampered by their poor knowledge of number facts. For example, they did not immediately recognise that 3 needs to be added to 7 to make 10, or that 2 is a third of 6, which made it harder for them to understand the new ideas they were being taught. Students' poor knowledge of number facts such as these is a feature of much of the work in mathematics throughout the school. It is often a barrier to students' understanding when they move on to new topics, because they have so much difficulty handling even simple calculations. It also slows down the progress of more able students when the teacher has to keep going over explanations.

The school knows which students do well in mathematics and those who struggle. Individual teachers provide extra support within lessons, but there is no overall policy for analysing students' particular needs and responding to their difficulties. Sometimes the extra support includes imaginative use of alternative approaches, but at other times it is restricted to repetition of practice that students failed to understand in the first place. As a result, some students fall further and further behind.

Most classrooms have some mathematical equipment that students can use to help them understand procedures and the properties of numbers. Teachers do not all make good use of these resources. Some encourage everyone to use them, whilst others see them only as a last resort for those in difficulty. There is also very little incidental support for mathematics in some of the classrooms, such as number lines on desks and readily available practical apparatus, although all rooms have displays of mathematical work on the walls.

There have been three coordinators of mathematics in three years and a new person will take over in September. This rapid turnover has undoubtedly contributed to the unevenness of provision in mathematics across the school. There is considerable variation in the time that teachers spend on mathematics, even within the same year groups. The excellent approaches used in some classes are not adopted by others, despite the teachers planning together. There are plans to have a school focus on improving mathematics next year and the coaching model currently used for literacy would be a good approach to take.

Numeracy across the curriculum

The recent project work has been planned effectively to make use of mathematical concepts, such as measuring the area of land in Cayman that is used for different purposes and using tables and graphs to present information. Students have responded well to these opportunities to use mathematics in a meaningful context and their understanding of the concepts has deepened. Apart from this, there are few examples of numeracy being used in other areas of the curriculum. Whereas teachers often take the opportunity to reinforce language concepts, commenting on a particularly effective adjective for example, they miss opportunities to reinforce ideas to do with numeracy.

ICT across the curriculum

Overall, the use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory.

Students are given opportunities to develop their ICT skills in most classrooms and in the well-equipped computer room. They enjoy working with computers to produce PowerPoint presentations, brochures, banners and flyers. Students from Year 2 to Year 6 have a 'computer' lesson each week, taught by a visiting specialist (peripatetic) teacher. However, there is not enough liaison between the work they are given in these lessons and what they do in their classrooms for other subjects. The most capable students are not challenged by these computer lessons, which are generally less demanding than the work they do in the classroom or at home.

The use of ICT in different subject areas is dependent upon individual teacher's skills and preferences and is not well planned or monitored across the school. There are some examples of good practice, such as using *Google Earth* to show where the Sister Islands are located. The planning for the integrated projects this term also helpfully included the use of technology.

Teachers have had some professional development and are given peer support to increase their skills and comfort level in using technology with their students. They have not always had ready access to an efficient system for dealing with software and hardware issues, though the situation has improved recently.