



**EDUCATION QUALITY  
ASSURANCE UNIT**  
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

# **Inspection Report**

**June 2013**

**Little Trotters Farm and Nursery 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	Judgement	Description
1	<b>Very good</b>	Good in nearly all aspects and exemplary in some significant areas
2	<b>Good</b>	Good in most respects. Weaknesses are minor and not in significant areas
3	<b>Adequate</b>	No significant weaknesses, but no major strengths. Improvement needed
4	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	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](http://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*

**Senior Evaluator**

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

<b>Address</b>	<b>39 Columbus Close, off Walkers Road, PO Box 1046 Grand Cayman KY1-1006</b>
<b>Telephone numbers</b>	<b>949-4080</b>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:littletrotters@candw.ky">littletrotters@candw.ky</a>
<b>Name of owner</b>	<b>Josephine Hoar</b>
<b>Manager / lead teacher</b>	<b>Lesley Maddock</b>
<b>Age range</b>	<b>18 months - 4 years</b>
<b>Number on roll</b>	<b>86 boys and girls (28 Caymanian children)</b>

- Little Trotters Farm and Nursery is located in a residential area off Walkers Road in George Town.
- There are 14 full time members of staff. The senior team is made up of six members of staff – the school manager, head of literacy, head of mathematics, a class leader, grounds manager and a principal, who is also the owner of the school.
- The centre was last inspected in June 2011 and was judged ‘very good’ in all aspects inspected.

### 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

- There is good supervision, both indoors and outdoors. The ratio of adults to children across the school is good: children are always supervised by at least four adults. The premises are secure being well-fenced in and having gates with spring hinges and secure closures.
- The school encourages healthy eating, but food handling practices need to be reviewed as staff are not using gloves to prepare fruit slices for children. Water is served regularly. Older children serve themselves as needed and the younger ones are served by the adults. Children use and become familiar with their own cup.
- Children wash their hands after feeding the animals and before snacks and lunch. Child-sized sinks are located throughout the school to encourage this practice.
- Arrangements to ensure children's safety are good. For example, the school completes four fire drills each year and a new alarm system has recently been installed. The school monitors children with allergies closely and has posted notices that nuts are not served on site.
- For each class, parents sign in their children on arrival and sign out when they leave, enabling the school to keep track of attendance.

### Leading the direction for development and learning

- The school has a manager and a principal. The manager monitors staff's planning well and the principal is responsible for the overall running of the establishment. They work well together to ensure that children receive a well-rounded experience.
- The school has a mission statement that is embraced by staff and parents. The owner, who is also the principal, has a clear vision for the school which is regularly shared with staff.
- Some staff members have attended curriculum training facilitated by the ECCEU and the school has incorporated the new early years' curriculum into staff's planning. Staff plan around themes and share ideas well with each other. The school maintains good records of the themes throughout the school year.

### Management of the centre and staff

- The school operates smoothly from day to day. Parents and children know the routines and cooperate willingly with staff. All staff have contracts and job descriptions. Emergency procedures are well established.
- The manager monitors the work of the staff, and encourages and gives support where needed. Staff encourage each other and work well together. However, it is not clear what performance management procedures exist, or whether new members of staff are mentored appropriately.

- The literacy teacher has developed an appropriate observation and assessment record for each child in the oldest class, showing which skills the child has mastered. The areas of physical, independent, cognitive, language and social and emotional development are considered. Staff share useful information with parents about their children's progress.
- The school has a full-time grounds manager who ensures that the campus is well maintained inside and out, and the animals are well looked after. The site is kept clean and safe.

### **Links with parents and external agencies**

- The school has established close links with the parents and the community, locally and abroad. Links have been established with the Humane and Cancer societies. The school has liaised with a museum in Amsterdam to thank them for taking care of Van Gogh's art following children's art lessons looking at Van Gogh's work.
- There is an open door policy and parents are encouraged to contact staff to follow up on their children's progress. Individual parent conferences are held as needed. Weekly newsletters go home to parents to inform them of school events.
- The school has links with community helpers, for example nurses, dentists, the Fire Department. Fitness Connection provides swimming classes for children. There are three children who receive early intervention for delayed language, speech and occupational therapy.

**The leadership and management of the centre are good. Children are well supervised in a safe and secure site. The school communicates well with parents and other members of the community. However, strategies for performance management are not rigorous enough and adults do not always observe rules for the safe handling of food.**

## **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.*

- Activities are age-appropriate and foster creativity and curiosity in all children. The results of their work clearly demonstrate their individuality.
- The school is well resourced and all children interact with a variety of materials throughout the day. Soft background music helps children to work calmly or acts as a soothing aide as they take a rest.

### **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.*

- Children have very good opportunities to learn about Caymanian culture and other cultures, especially in a week designated to multi-cultural activities. During this time they celebrate the cultures of their staff.
- Children play sensibly with each other and can be seen helping each other, sharing resources, and taking turns fairly.
- Adults are respectful to children and show great care and concern for them. They greet children and parents warmly in the mornings and take time to listen to the children who talk about what they did at home.

### **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.*

- Adults constantly converse with children and introduce them to new words to widen their vocabulary. Most children respond to questions asked and are not afraid to make suggestions or ask questions of their own.
- Children are encouraged to speak about things they see and their experiences. For example, in a music session, they identified stringed instruments and were able to explain how they are able to identify the percussion instruments.
- Children are given regular opportunities to express themselves through various art forms. Older children learn about famous painters, for example Vincent Van Gogh, and create paintings, while younger children use paint and objects, such as potatoes, to create prints. Their work is clearly displayed and celebrated.

## 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 given very good opportunities to engage in a wide variety of activities such as, baking; print making; scientific exploration, for example by using of a magnifying glass; feeding farm animals; and planting and watering of a vegetables. There is also an awe-inspiring butterfly garden which the children can explore.
- Children are curious about the world around them. They enjoy interacting with a variety of farm animals. A caretaker cleans the premises one day a week, but this could be usefully extended to two days to maintain a cleaner environment.
- The school has added music, movement, and Spanish to its curriculum and the children are actively engaged in these activities.
- Outdoor space and equipment are well used and children are given many opportunities to develop their gross motor skills. The space is shaded by large trees which help to protect the children from the sunshine. The ground surface is sandy and children can explore by digging and reporting on what they find. There are a few outdoor areas that need attention to make them safer and the principal has already begun to think of ways to improve these.

**The effectiveness of provision, including teaching and its impact on children's learning and development, is very good. The school grounds provide an exciting environment for children to explore and they enjoy a stimulating range of activities. Staff show great care for the children and converse regularly with them to extend their vocabulary and develop their confidence.**

## Recommendations (These are the priority areas for development)

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

1. Ensure that performance management is carried out for all staff.
2. Ensure that food is handled appropriately using gloves.

## 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 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013.**