



**EDUCATION QUALITY
ASSURANCE UNIT**
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

Inspection Report

June 2013

**Shining Stars Childhood Care
and Education Centre**

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:
 - Well-being
 - Respect
 - Communication
 - Exploration

The criteria for inspection have been circulated to all centres and primary schools, and these include some indicators of good practice. Centres have also been asked to complete a self-evaluation form which will be taken into account as part of the evidence gathering for the inspection.

Inspectors use the following grading scale to describe aspects of the work of the centre / reception class:

Grade		Description
1	Very good	Good in nearly all aspects and exemplary in some significant areas
2	Good	Good in most respects. Weaknesses are minor and not in significant areas
3	Adequate	No significant weaknesses, but no major strengths. Improvement needed
4	Unsatisfactory	Some significant weaknesses (might be only one or two) that have a negative impact on children's learning and progress. Cause for concern

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

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

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

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Education Quality Assurance Unit

Background

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

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

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

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

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

General Information about the centre

Address	Pasadora Place, Smith Road, George Town Grand Cayman
Telephone numbers	943-7077, 923-2594
Email address	shiningstars@candw.ky
Name of owner	Lorraine Bobb-Stuart
Manager / lead teacher	Carlene Bradshaw-Miller / Angela Ocasion
Age range	5 months – 4+ years

- Shining Stars is a new establishment that was first opened in December 2011. There are currently 89 children at the centre, ranging from five months to four years of age.
- This is the centre's first inspection.
- The lead teacher has been in post for a few weeks and is currently observing the centre's activities in order to identify areas that need improvement.

Leadership and management

Inspectors consider the extent to which the impact of leadership of learning improves outcomes for children and the efficiency of day-to-day management.

Ensuring the welfare, health and safety of the children

- The school monitors children's attendance well and absence is followed up promptly. The school has implemented a sign in and out policy and staff have individual class registers to record children's attendance.
- Arrangements for meals are good. Meals are cooked on site and the chef has attended food and safety training, and prepares meals based on their nutritional value. Weekly menus are sent to parents who are encouraged to send healthy foods with their children to the centre. The menu has been changed from processed food to freshly cooked food.
- The school employs a full time member of staff who is solely responsible for cleaning and sanitizing. All staff have access to cleaning materials to spray and wipe toys after use, and use sanitary wipes to help children to clean their noses and hands.
- There are separate toilets for boys and girls and staff monitor their use carefully.
- The premises are secure and visitors must be identified before gaining entry. In keeping with their health practices, persons entering the children's section that must take their shoes off and wear socks or enter bare-footed.
- The school has not carried out a fire drill since its opening. Although there are fire extinguishers and smoke detectors, these have not yet been checked by the Fire Department.
- The school has established policies on discipline and these have been shared with all staff to ensure that there is consistency of practice. Children are given time out for unacceptable behaviour.

Leading the direction for development and learning

- The school uses its mission statement appropriately as a guide for designing and implementing its various programmes.
- Although managers have an idea of where good practice is in their school, performance management is not yet in place so that areas for improvement and consequent targets for staff cannot be identified accurately enough.
- The school has not drawn up job descriptions or contracts for its staff and, as a result, existing staff and new recruits are unclear about what is expected of them. There is little consistency in the way staff do things in the same situations, which undermines the smooth running of the facility.

Management of the centre and staff

- Staff do not plan together so there are too few opportunities to share good practice or learn how to make the best use of the curriculum and guidance in the ECCE documents.
- Staff do not record their assessments of children regularly in order to plan to meet their individual needs. Useful 'learning stories' for children are completed in two classes, which are effective ways of documenting what children know and can do. However, this is good practice is not used by all staff.

Links with parents and external agencies

- Parents said they are pleased with the care given to their children. The school's new website has general information for parents and the public. Although this is not yet well used, there are plans to enable parents to log on securely and communicate with staff regularly.
- The school has quarterly class meetings where parents can talk to staff regarding their child's progress. Not all parents have taken advantage of this offer. Parents are given clear information about how well their children are doing each week and staff can track the children's progress effectively. This is not yet a common practice across the school.
- The school organises stimulating field trips and has invited in several guest speakers from the community to visit their school and share their experiences with the children.

The leadership and management of the centre are unsatisfactory. The lead teacher is new in position and is still learning about the centre and the owner's expectations for development. The owner is also new and, although she has many ideas for improvement, they have not yet been shared with staff. Although there is some good practice, not all staff monitor children's progress adequately. Policies and procedures are not yet well established and staff's practice from one age group to another is inconsistent.

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.

- Staff are providing a wide range of opportunities for children to develop resilience by making choices through centres and free play. Children work sensibly and cooperatively with each other within the open school plan. Staff keep noise to a sensible level so that activities in one class do not disturb those in another.
- Children are given good opportunities to play outdoors and enjoy the fresh air. Staff apply sunblock to those children whose parents have provided it. Children are well supervised when they use the outdoor play equipment.
- Staff are caring and children are happy and well looked after. There is good provision for meals; portions are adequate and there is no waste.

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 work with consideration for others. They show respect for each other and speak softly so as not to disturb anyone else. Staff often remind children of the appropriate social etiquette and as a result children quickly learn how to behave well.
- After eating, children are not asked to clean up after themselves because there is an assigned cleaner. Older children miss the opportunity to learn respect for others by tidying their spaces and developing greater independence.
- Children share things readily. They take turns as they work and play without having to be prompted by their staff. For example, they take turns blowing bubbles during free play outside. During play, they engage well and persevere with their chosen activity and behave well.
- The school conducts combined devotions once monthly. Staff plan class devotions and encourage children to choose the songs they want to sing. Most children participate well and say their prayers and sing respectfully.

Communication

Inspectors consider the extent to which each setting provides a safe and supportive environment which will foster and enrich children's ability to listen and respond to others and to clearly express their own ideas, thoughts and feelings.

- Children work well together but staff do not start conversations with children often enough to help them learn new words and promote language development. The essential activity of discussing children's work with them is not yet incorporated into staff's daily routines.
- The school does not have enough age-appropriate books for the children. There are too few opportunities for shared reading and discussion which hinders the development of children's literacy skills.

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?

- Staff provide opportunities for activity centres and free play and the children are fully engaged in their chosen activities. Staff could enhance children's experiences further by discussing with them what is happening as they play.
- Some children are developing their fine motor skills well as they manipulate various media and finger-paint, but children do not get enough opportunities to do this in all groups.
- One group explored mixing primary colours to make secondary ones and followed the staff's guidance with complete concentration. At the end, they gasped in astonishment as the new colours emerged. Through the staff member's questioning, they could explain how they carried out the task.
- The school has started to look at ways of improving its provision and has bought a range of new materials such as magnifying glasses. They have yet to be incorporated into learning activities to help develop children's curiosity. More resources are needed so that all age groups have enough opportunities to explore their surroundings.

Although some good teaching practice was evident, the effectiveness of provision, including teaching and its impact on children's learning and development, is unsatisfactory. Not enough opportunities are provided for children to explore or communicate and staff are unsure of how to plan to meet the individual needs of children.

Recommendations (These are the priority areas for development)

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

1. Develop an evacuation plan as a matter of urgency and conduct regular fire drills so that everyone knows what they must do in the case of an emergency.
2. Ensure that good practices are shared across the school and the school's vision is shared widely.
3. Make sure that new staff are mentored effectively and their work adequately monitored so that teaching practice across the school is consistent.
4. Develop job descriptions and contracts for all employees so that they know what is expected of them.
5. Encourage staff to question and talk more often with the children in order to build up their vocabulary and develop their communication skills.
6. Invest in resources such as sensory apparatus which will help children to develop fine and gross motor skills.

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 6, 2013.