

FOLLOW THROUGH INSPECTION REPORT

OFFICE OF EDUCATION STANDARDS
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

JANUARY 2021



Rite Start Day Care & PreSchool

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INTRODUCTION

FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTIONS OF SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND EARLY YEARS CENTRES IN THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

In academic year 2019-20, the Office of Education Standards conducted inspections of schools and early years centres across the Cayman Islands. Where the overall performance of a school or setting was evaluated as weak, then a further inspection was arranged six months following the publication of the initial report.

Views of stakeholders

During the follow-through visits, inspectors focused upon the recommendations that had been made at the time of the previous inspection. They evaluated whether the school/centre had made sufficient progress in addressing the areas requiring improvement. Inspectors used a four-point scale to comment on progress, with evaluations ranging between excellent, good, satisfactory or weak.

As part of the follow-through inspections, parents and staff were invited to comment upon the work of the centre by completing an on-line survey. The results from the survey are included within this report.

Follow-Through Inspection

The Follow-Through Inspection of Rite Start Day Care and Pre-School took place from **12th to 14th January 2021**, approximately sixteen months after the preschool's full inspection. This delay was attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic which disrupted the planned inspection schedule. Since the last inspection, the school directors, in response to the Office of Education Standards recommendations, had made several changes to improve the school's physical environment and programme. Chief among these were the expansion and reorganisation of the physical space, improvement in self-evaluation processes and the appointment of a non-teaching Principal. In addition, collaboration among staff as well as support from external partners had resulted in a team approach to addressing key areas of curriculum planning, teaching quality and assessment.

The inspectorate gathered evidence through lesson observations and discussions with staff and parents. School documents and children's progress and attainment information were also reviewed.



INTRODUCTION

Consistency in quantitative terminology








Inspectors use quantitative terms in reports, as follows:

All	The whole – as used when referring to quantity, extent, or duration	100%
Almost all	90% and more	90% to 99%
Most	Three quarters or more but less than 90%	75% to 89%
Majority	Half or more but less than three quarters	50% to 74%
Significant Minority	A quarter or more but less than a half	25% to 49%
Minority	15% or more but less than half	15% to 24%
Few	Up to 15%	0% to 14%









SCHOOL INFORMATION

General information





	School name	Rite Start Day Care & PreSchool
	Address	1365 Shamrock Road Grand Cayman
	Telephone number	(345) 945-3432
	Website	ritestartcayman@hotmail.com
	Name of the principal	Iohica Newell
	Date of this inspection	January 12 to 14, 2021
	Date of the last inspection	September 16 to 17, 2019

Students




	Number of students on roll	33
	Age range of the students	3 months to 4 years
	Grades or year groups	As above
	Number of Caymanian students	23
	Number of students with special educational needs	3
	Largest nationality group of students	Caymanian

SCHOOL INFORMATION


Staff

	Number of teachers	5
	Number of teaching assistants	3
	Teacher-student ratio	1 to 4
	Teacher turnover	0%

Curriculum

	Main curriculum	Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum
	External tests and assessments	None
	Accreditation	None

School inspection overall performance history

Cycle 1 Inspection	September 2019	 Weak
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RECOMMENDATION 1

Raise children's achievement in areas of learning as identified in this report.

The centre had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation

During the Follow-Through Inspection, Inspectors observed improvements in the quality of children's learning experiences in all four areas of the early learning goals. Teachers had begun to broaden the range of mathematical activities that children engaged in throughout the school day. All teachers provided real-life experiences for children to learn about concepts of shape, time, measure and simple classifications. For example, in the Sunbeams class, children measured the height of their peers and children in the Little Tots class compared the heights of plants and the size of animals using terms such as 'tall' and 'short' and 'bigger' and 'smaller'. There were instances, however, where teachers did not capitalise on opportunities to enhance children's mathematical skills such as investigating capacity during water play.

The reorganisation of the physical space and the establishment of well-resourced learning centres promoted children's natural curiosity as they engaged in a range of play opportunities. Children interacted excitedly with a wide range of resources such as building blocks and puzzles, magnifiers, wheeled toys, water play equipment, home center resources and mark making boards. They also used I-Pads and headsets to listen to audio stories during centre activities and at nap time.

Almost all children were developing awareness of self and a sense of responsibility. For example, in the Sunbeams class, children took on roles of line leaders.

All teachers placed appropriate emphasis upon the management of the classroom environment and communicated clear behavioural expectations to the children. Teachers' use of 'stop light behaviour strategies' increased children's awareness of the consequences of their actions. Established behavioural expectations were beginning to engender attitudes of confidence, care, collaboration and turn taking in children.

The preschool directors had also introduced further opportunities which helped promote children's environmental awareness. These included the cultivation of grow boxes and the introduction of two rabbits, a bird and fish to promote children's care and concern for living things. All teachers also prepared lessons that allowed children to actively learn about their environment. For example, children in the Sunbeams class planted seeds and watered vegetables in grow boxes to promote their understanding of how the environment provided for them.

All teachers actively promoted children's language skills and were more intentional in their interactions with children during play-based and self-care activities. Instances of good practice were observed in snack time sessions in the Sunbeams class where children used descriptive words to talk about the taste, shape, colour, and size of their different snacks. Caregivers' consistent use of songs and nursery rhymes in the nursery provided rich stimulation for infants who often babbled or giggled in response.



RECOMMENDATION 1

Circle time and centre activities promoted children's phonemic awareness; and mark making resources, such as blackboards and mini white boards supported children's emergent writing. There was, however, scope for more consistent use of open ended questions by teachers to extend children's learning and support their oral language development.

Almost all children demonstrated satisfactory listening skills in a range of settings. For example, children in the Sunbeam and Little Tots classes showed active listening as they participated in virtual field trips, nature walks and shared stories. In the Little Tots class, the teacher creatively incorporated a simulated field trip in a lesson outdoors using a hidden tape recorder. The recording of realistic sounds of farm animals had children scurrying to locate 'animals' in bushes. Additionally, in devotion time, children's rhythmic movement, singing and use of musical instruments showed their ability to respond to instruction and attend at age-appropriate levels. The inclusion of more opportunities for child-initiated learning aided children's creative expression. Children used available resources to show high levels of imagination as they acted out events from stories and their daily experiences.

In the Little Tots class, for example, children collaborated, built and launched a rocket into space. In the Sunbeams class, a group of children engaged in socio-dramatic play in the dress-up corner.

Children were beginning to make safe and healthy decisions as they discovered and learned about their bodies. Across the preschool, children fed themselves, disposed of their own garbage and were learning to take responsibility for their self-care and toileting needs. As a consequence, most were learning to manage their personal needs while developing independence. In circle time activities, children shared their happy and sad feelings and gave simple explanations for their state of being during conversations about emotions. Although most children displayed appropriate behaviour, there was a minority who required support to self-regulate. Children were given calming moments for reflection after outbursts. However, all teachers did not consistently structure opportunities for children to reflect on their achievements and learning experiences and so this aspect of reflection required greater focus.



RECOMMENDATION 2

Improve the quality of teaching across the preschool and ensure that there is a more appropriate balance of adult-directed activities and child-centred learning.

The centre had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation.

The teaching staff had received support from the Ministry of Education Early Childhood Care and Education Officers as well as teachers from other settings. As a consequence, Inspectors observed that the quality of the teaching across the preschool had improved. Teachers catered for the range of children's needs more effectively. This was evident from the well-planned lessons that incorporated a range of play-based activities. Additionally, lessons were carefully matched to the early learning goals of the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum. Staff had engaged in whole school planning meetings to ensure that there was continuity and progression in children's learning. Teachers knew their children well and responded to their individual needs. In the Sunbeams class, children were in age assigned phonics groups and modified learning experiences were sometimes included for children with additional needs. A minority were often paired with caregivers, as necessary for behavioural support. Teachers were receptive to feedback from their instructional leader and readily made adjustments to activities to improve the quality of children's learning. Additionally, suggestions made by Inspectors during the Follow-Through Inspection were quickly acted upon by teachers to further enrich children's learning experience.

The use of schedules and routines though not yet fully embedded in all classes had contributed to a more orderly and well-managed learning environment. Teachers often used visual prompts such as cue cards as well as bells and songs to alert children to intended changes in activities. This fostered a sense of structure to the nursery day and promoted effective transitions in a majority of instances. Additionally, the consistent enforcement of behavioural expectations even as children's autonomy in learning increased, aided the quality of interactions among teachers and children. Teachers were more effective facilitators and their use of open ended questions while not always consistent, fostered ongoing dialogue as children engaged in a range of play opportunities. Children's regular utilisation of the indoor and outdoor centres had led to higher levels of engagement and sustained concentration among children. Additionally, teachers used appropriate technological resources such as magnifiers, I-Pads, laptops and construction tools to stimulate children's learning. Inspectors observed a more appropriate balance of child-initiated and teacher directed activities across the setting. However, the time allotted for a few activities was not always adequate in duration for children to engage in the full rota of centre-based activities and therefore required review.



RECOMMENDATION 3

Improve assessment practices so that teachers use assessment data more effectively to plan appropriate learning activities for children.

The centre had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Following the inspection conducted in September 2019, the school directors and staff had carefully reviewed their assessment practices. They had developed an assessment policy to guide the tracking and monitoring of children's progress and achievement in the four early learning goals of the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum. In addition, teachers had received support from the Early Childhood Care and Education Officers from the Ministry of Education in reviewing their assessment documents and processes. As a consequence, common assessment tools were now being used across classes. These included developmental checklists linked to the early learning goals of the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum. These were completed each month by the class teacher and were used to track and monitor children's progress and attainment in key aspects of the early learning goals. The checklist included a summary of key observations for the children as well as their next steps in learning. Additionally, all children in the preschool had an electronic portfolio which included personalised information about their learning journey including the developments they had made and their personal experiences. The E- portfolios for the older children included a sufficient breadth of information on their achievement in the four early learning goals. However, the assessment documents for the youngest children required review to ensure greater monitoring and recording of their achievement in developmental milestones. Staff also used I-Pads to capture a range of photographic evidence of children's achievement in key aspects of their learning and these were shared with parents regularly.

Teachers also recorded anecdotal notes about the skills, knowledge and attitudes that children were developing. The school directors prepared termly reports regarding children's progress and these were shared during scheduled parent conferences throughout the school year.

The newly appointed principal was responsible for conducting lesson observations and for providing feedback to staff on their practice. A review of staff meeting minutes and teachers planning documents indicated that teachers were beginning to place appropriate emphasis upon the cycle of planning, teaching and assessment to improve the quality of children's learning experiences. This evaluation of learning was used to revise aspects of the preschool's planned programme. However, all teachers did not consistently use assessment information to adapt the content of lessons to meet the needs of all learners. A special educational needs (SEN) policy and a SEN register were in place. Teachers for the older children used the Early Intervention Kit to track progress and support children with special educational needs. As a consequence, children with special educational needs were supported through timely observations. All children with diagnosed learning needs had a learning support plan. Most teachers knew their children well but there was scope for a few to make further modifications to lessons to support those with special educational needs or to challenge higher achieving children.



RECOMMENDATION 3

Although a range of assessment practices were in place, the preschool directors should continue to develop a systematic approach to tracking children's progress across each area of the preschool curriculum and to use the information to plan for the next stage of their development to promote high quality learning for all children.



RECOMMENDATION 4

Review arrangements for admission and the available learning environment, so that the centre is fully compliant with the Cayman Islands Education Council guidelines.

The centre had made **good** progress in addressing this recommendation.

As part of their post- inspection strategy, the directors had undertaken a reorganisation and expansion of the preschool's learning environment. They had invested significant time, energy and resources to improve the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Renovations included the addition of three bathrooms, a sick bay and calming centres. All classrooms now had ensuite bathrooms. Partitions were removed to expand classroom space and to ensure better flow in the centres of interest. For example, the room previously used as the nursery was incorporated into the Sunbeams class. The impact of these improvements was evident in more effective and spacious classroom layouts. All classrooms now had established interest centres and these were equipped with a range of high quality learning resources. This effectively provided children with many opportunities to participate in a variety of activities and to interact with a range of resources. Over the course of the inspection, Inspectors observed that centre- based learning was used satisfactorily in a majority of lessons to promote choice and independence in children's learning. Furthermore, important additions to the outdoor learning environment such as a music wall, water play area, reading nook, mark making board and an outdoor play kitchen effectively promoted children's integrated skill development. The outdoor area was readily accessible from all classes. Throughout the day, children engaged in a wide range of activities indoors and out which promoted the development of their emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills as well as

their fine and gross motor skills. Mark making opportunities indoors and out successfully promoted children's pre-writing skills.

Staffing levels were appropriate for the number of children on roll and children were adequately supervised throughout the day. Sign in and out procedures for children's arrival and departure at the preschool were carefully adhered to. Parents signed in their children on arrival and then accompanied them to the classroom entrance. The preschool directors had also introduced multiple drop-off points. As a consequence, the classroom housing the oldest children was no longer used as a thoroughfare for the other classes and this had eliminated the constant disruptions to children in that room. Of note, the preschool directors had converted the cottage on the premises to a nursery to accommodate the infants. The newly refurbished nursery was bright and clean and had clear floor space. As a consequence, all infants were able to explore their environment freely and to interact with a range of developmentally appropriate resources that were in easy reach. Staff in the nursery were sensitive and affirming in their interactions with the infants, and were deliberate in promoting their sense of independence. For example, almost all infants fed themselves independently and a toddler even helped to pack away resources after play activities. Additionally, all staff in the nursery made effective use of non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, eye contact and gestures to gently encourage infants to vocalise.



RECOMMENDATION 4

As a consequence of the renovations to the preschool environment; adequate staffing levels and the effective redeployment of staff, the Education Council's requirements regarding required adult to child ratios were met. Overall, the preschool's reorganised and expanded learning environments effectively promoted children's exploration with a wide range of materials and resources through independent and guided opportunities. All children enjoyed rich inquiry-based experiences throughout the day.



RECOMMENDATION 5

Build on the centre's current self-evaluation arrangements to develop leadership and identify more accurately the priorities for future improvement.

The centre had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation.

The preschool directors' commitment to building leadership capacity following the previous inspection was demonstrated with the appointment of a Principal and a Safeguard Lead. As the instructional leader, the Principal provided guidance to the class teachers and had oversight for the core areas of teaching and learning. The Principal, directors and staff had worked closely to strengthen the preschool's curriculum. They had invested in supplementary resources for aspects of literacy, mathematics and science. The member of staff responsible for safeguarding had been instrumental in the ongoing development of the special educational needs programme to adequately cater for the children with diagnosed special education needs. As a consequence, learning support plans were recently introduced and the Principal was enrolled in a special education course.

The directors and staff had undertaken a detailed assessment of the preschool's strengths and weaknesses evidenced by the development of a self-evaluation document that was sufficiently aligned to the 'Successful Students and Achieving Students Framework'. In some instances, however, the preschool's own assessment was not sufficiently rigorous as some ratings were not always supported by the available evidence. The directors had also developed an action plan in response to the recommendations from the previous inspection. The priorities for improvement were realistic and the directors were proactive in monitoring targets to ensure that they were achieved. As a consequence, the physical layout was reorganised, institutional

policies were revised and monitoring and evaluation systems were strengthened. For example, walkthroughs and formal lesson observations were conducted using a standardised checklist and post-evaluation conferences were held with teachers to communicate areas requiring further development.

Greater collaboration was evident among leaders as well as the different categories of staff who willingly supported each other in their defined roles. For example, all staff were directly involved in the preschool's self-evaluation processes and were aware of the priorities for improvement. The Principal and directors regularly collaborated to ensure that administrative duties were carried out and established accountability systems were in place. Regular common planning and 'lunch and learn sessions' enabled the exchange of ideas and planning support for teachers. Additionally, on occasions staff performed dual roles to provide support to their colleagues. For example, the Principal taught alongside another teacher in the Sunbeams class and the cook assisted with the supervision of children in the Little Tots class during transitions from indoor to outdoor play activities. Effective partnerships were also established with other schools to improve staff's pedagogy and practice. Of note, professional development initiatives by the leaders had resulted in teachers benefitting from lesson observations at the Reception classes at Theoline McCoy Primary and a private early years institution.



RECOMMENDATION 5

Teachers had also participated in internal and external professional development sessions to promote children's oral language development during teaching and learning activities. Inspectors observed over the course of the inspection that a majority of the older children were confident communicators and were developing a rich and broad vocabulary.

While the preschool directors had made satisfactory progress in improving leadership and self-evaluation processes, they should ensure that there continues to be a sustained focus on strengthening the implemented policies and systems to foster greater impact across the preschool. There was also a need for increased rigour of self-evaluation processes to facilitate the preschool's continued improvement.



SURVEY RESULTS

Parents	21	Staff	7
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Parents

Survey: 'I am satisfied with the quality of education provided at this preschool.'

Almost all parents indicated that their children showed good progress in early communication. Most agreed that their children made good progress in mathematical understanding. A majority stated that children showed good progress in early scientific understanding. Additionally, most parents expressed that the preschool was effective in developing children's personal and social skills. Most felt that their children were being helped to take turns. All responded that their children were developing good environmental understanding. Of note, most parents stated that teaching quality was good and their children enjoyed lessons. Most believed that their children were inspired to learn. Also, a majority indicated that children were provided with a range of play opportunities. Almost all agreed that the centre provided good support for their children and that they were treated fairly. A majority shared that the centre was effective in dealing with incidents of poor behaviour. Importantly, all parents stated that children with special education needs were well supported and children's healthy lifestyle was promoted.

Similarly, most parents felt that the preschool was well led. They agreed that communication was effective and that information about their children's progress was regular and helpful. Most shared that the preschool responded appropriately to parents' concerns. A majority believed that parents meetings were well attended and helpful and that parents were effectively involved in the work of the school. Most stated that the centre had suitable and qualified staff to cater to children's learning needs. Parents' commentary generally highlighted their satisfaction with the provision for their children.



SURVEY RESULTS

Staff

Survey: 'This preschool provides a good quality of education.'

All staff indicated that the educational provision of the preschool was good. All agreed that children were well behaved. A majority felt that children were being helped to develop their personal and social skills. All agreed that children were developing good environmental understanding. A majority stated that the centre provided a positive environment and good opportunities for children's exploration, choice and independent learning. Most agreed that assessment systems were good. All shared that the centre provided a safe environment for all children and children were helped to choose a healthy lifestyle. Also, all agreed that children were treated fairly and that the centre dealt effectively with incidents of poor behaviour. All staff expressed that the preschool provided good support for children with special education needs.

Additionally, all staff shared that the school was well led. All agreed that they were actively involved in the self-evaluation and improvement processes of the preschool. Most stated that they were effectively supported through professional development opportunities. A majority expressed that there were sufficient resources available to enhance children's learning experiences. All staff highlighted that the centre enjoyed good links with the community and that parents were effectively involved in the work of the centre. A majority agreed that parent teacher meetings were well attended and helpful. Teachers also made positive comments about the work of the school.



Strongly Agree and Agree

27%

Increase since the last inspection

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

There will be no further Follow-Through Inspections of Rite Start Day Care and Preschool as the preschool will join the regular cycle of inspections.

WHEN WILL THIS SCHOOL BE INSPECTED AGAIN?

As Rite Start Day Care and Preschool was judged to be providing a **satisfactory** quality of education, the preschool will be inspected in the next cycle of inspections which commences in 2021.



WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE DO?

The Office of Education Standards is part of the Portfolio of Civil Service within the Cayman Islands Government. Our function is to inspect early childhood care and education centres, public and private schools and report upon standards in all educational institutions in the Cayman Islands.

How to contact us

You can contact us using the following e-mail address.
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Where to read our reports

Our reports are published regularly and are currently available on the Cayman Islands Government website. Please use the following link to read our latest publications.

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