



**EDUCATION QUALITY
ASSURANCE UNIT**
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

Inspection Report

May 2013

**Tiffany's Pre-school
and Childcare 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. 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	Judgement	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.

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 to provide support.

General Information about the Centre

Address	82 Boltins Avenue West Bay
Telephone numbers	945-7978
Email address	Karen.ebanks@ubs.com
Name of owner	Karen Ebanks
Manager / lead teacher	Sonia Grant
Age range	9 months to 4 years
Number on roll	

- Tiffany's was last inspected in November 2010 and has addressed the issues for action identified in that report.

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 staff look after children's welfare, health and safety. They provide adequate supervising indoors and outdoors and are warm and caring towards the children. The centre provides a secure environment for children as access to the building is appropriately restricted.
- The school undertakes fire drills, but only once per year and records of these drills are not kept.
- Resources in classrooms are appropriately placed at heights where children can access them on their own. However, the two year classroom is small and has inappropriate lighting and items placed on the walls. This classroom also lacks proper hygienic changing facilities for children.
- The centre collects and maintains personal data for each child. Children are not given medication without the appropriate release forms being signed.
- Menus are sent home each month and the staff ensure that meals and snacks are healthy and appropriately portioned; although at times the lunch menu lacks vegetables.
- The kitchen is inspected by the Department of Environmental Health and the centre swiftly addresses any recommendations for improvement.

Leading the direction for development and learning

- Staff are attempting to use the new Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework (CIEYCF) when planning together and the principal reviews these plans each month. Staff attend monthly workshops organised by the Early Childhood Association in a committed effort to improve their practice.
- Staff observe and record children's progress using a checklist that is sent to parents four times a year. However, staff do not collect evidence to support their evaluations of children's progress.
- The principal maintains staff files with the appropriate documentation. She monitors staff through frequent walk-throughs, but does not conduct formal observations or undertake performance management evaluations and feedback.
- The principal supports staff and provides cover when they are under-staffed.

Management of the centre and staff

- Staff are working together well. There are staff meetings every month, which enable staff to discuss their plans and procedures. They collaborated to complete the self-evaluation exercise for this inspection.
- The centre has developed appropriate policies and procedures that identify the expectations for staff and children. Parents and staff sign their agreements to these regulations, including the administration of medication, attendance at parent-teacher meetings and expectations about children's behaviour.

Links with parents and external agencies

- Communication with parents is effective. Parents have the opportunity to speak with staff when they drop their children off in the morning or pick them up at the end of the day. In addition, staff send messages and progress reports to parents in a communication envelope, which parents sign to indicate receipt of information. This is good practice.
- Parent- teacher (PTA) meetings are held three times a year and parents accompany staff and children on field trips and visits. Members of the community visit the centre to talk to the children.
- The Early Intervention Programme (EIP) provides support for children who have been referred by centre staff. Though the EIP team give staff targets to work on with the children, they do not share more detailed reports with the centre or guidance on how to support the children.

The leadership and management of the centre are adequate. Some aspects are good. For example, communication with parents is effective and staff provide a secure and caring environment for children. Children's welfare, health and safety are generally well looked after, although fire drills are too infrequent and not documented, and there are inadequate changing facilities in one of the rooms. The principal monitors what is going on regularly but performance management is not yet established.

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.

- Children are happy and respond appropriately to staff. They are well looked after by staff, who are affectionate and caring. For example, two anxious new students were cared for very sympathetically by staff and helped to settle in to school.
- Children have the opportunity to use the outdoor play area each day. They have a free choice over which equipment to use and are developing their gross motor skills effectively as well as learning how to make safe choices.
- The centre has invited the nurse and dietician to address parents at PTA meetings in order to support the school in encouraging healthy balanced diets for children. Children are given healthy snacks and encouraged throughout the day to drink water. Though there are limited toilet facilities, children wait patiently for their turn and clean up after themselves.

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 participate respectfully in devotion and eagerly suggest which songs to sing. They are gaining an awareness of different cultures through, for example, staff sharing stories and customs with them. Staff are aware of children's religions and allow them to participate or sit out during religious observances as necessary.
- Sometimes, children have to wait around for too long between activities, with the result that some start to misbehave by pushing and hitting each other. Though students are often reminded about the need to listen to staff and expectations for behaviour are set at the beginning of the day, there is a need for more frequent reminders, such as, at the beginning of each activity.
- Children are beginning to learn how to take turns and to share with others. Sometimes, though, a few children are allowed to call out and dominate discussions so that their other less vocal peers are not heard.

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 enjoy listening to stories read to them by staff. They can retell stories that they have heard many times but do not have enough opportunities to discuss them and to make real-world connections. Children have access to 'books', but too often these are simply photocopies rather than the actual objects and this limits children's experience of how to handle, respect and enjoy real books.

- Staff encourage children to be independent through certain daily rituals and routines. For example, children sign-in to record their attendance at school and clean-up after play and meal times.
- Children are expected to listen and sit for lengthy periods of time, which unsurprisingly given their young age, many find difficult at times.
- Though students have the opportunity to use glue, markers and paint, they have little choice about the materials and how to use them, which inhibits their creativity. Expectations of what children can do are often too low and worksheets are overly prescriptive.

Exploration

Inspectors consider the extent to which staff's 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 plan for the four areas using the ECCEU early years' curriculum framework, although children have limited opportunities to investigate and discover their world. Learning experiences are directed by staff and questions do not encourage children to develop critical thinking skills.
- When children are provided with the chance to choose their own activities, there is little discussion about what they are doing and no purpose defined for children. However, children are given a number of opportunities to visit different places in the community.

The effectiveness of provision, including teaching and its impact on children's learning and development, is unsatisfactory. Aspects of provision are adequate, such as provision for children's well-being but expectations of children are often too low and they have to spend too much time listening or waiting between activities. Outdoor play provides good opportunities for children to choose activities but they are not given enough choice of activities indoors and need more experiences of books.

Recommendations (These are the priority areas for development)

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

1. Improve aspects of health and safety by:
 - Having more frequent fire drills and documenting these
 - Improve the changing and toilet facilities for babies and toddlers.
2. Improve the quality of provision, particularly teaching, by:
 - Raising expectations of what children can do and allowing them more scope for choice and creativity indoors
 - Reducing the amount of time children have to sit and listen, and wait around between activities
 - Ensuring that some children do not dominate question and answer sessions
 - Giving children more experiences of real books.
3. Implement performance management for all staff.

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 6th, 2013.