

INSPECTION REPORT

OFFICE OF EDUCATION STANDARDS
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

JANUARY 2024



DISCOVERY KIDS

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Tel: 946-5437
Fax: 939-8355

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DISCOVERY KIDS PRESCHOOL

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Cayman Islands Early Childhood Inspection Framework

In January 2024, the Office of Education Standards commenced inspections of early childhood settings using the First Steps to Success: Nurturing Environments and Thriving Children Framework (Cayman Islands Government, 2023). Before the introduction of this tailored framework for the early childhood sector, inspections of educational institutions, including early childhood settings, were conducted using the Successful Schools and Achieving Students 2 Framework.

Developmental Domains

When used in relation to human development, the word “domain” refers to specific aspects of growth and progress. The universal domains of development in early childhood, and also reflected throughout this inspection report and the inspection framework, are:

- ***Cognitive*** – Refers to the developmental aspect of children’s mental and intellectual abilities. It encompasses the processes of thinking, learning, problem-solving, reasoning and understanding the world around them.
- ***Social Emotional*** – Refers to the development aspect of children’s ability to understand, manage and express their emotions, as well as their capacity to interact and form relationships with others. This domain encompasses a wide range of skills and behaviours that contribute to children’s social and emotional well-being, including self-awareness, self-regulation, sensory processing, empathy and building connections with peers and adults.
- ***Communication and Language*** – Refers to the developmental aspects of children’s ability to communicate effectively and develop language skills. It encompasses a range of skills and milestones related to language acquisition, comprehension, expression, writing and interaction.
- ***Physical*** – Refers to the developmental aspect of children’s gross and fine motor skills and overall physical well-being. It includes the development of both large muscle groups (gross motor skills) and small muscle movements (fine motor skills) as well as eye-hand co-ordination.





















Early Childhood Setting

The term ‘early childhood setting’ is used throughout this inspection report and the inspection framework, First Steps to Success: Nurturing Environments and Thriving Children. Early childhood setting is defined as:

An entity of establishment which provides services for the care and education of children under compulsory school age as registered by the Education Council and/or approved by the Ministry of Education.

Early childhood settings include privately owned and operated Early Childhood Care and Education Centres, Nursery and Reception programmes and classes in government schools and early childhood provision in private primary or all-through schools.

Early Childhood Setting Information

General Information		
	Setting name	Discovery Kids Preschool
	Address	91 Hospital Road, George Town
	Telephone number	345-946-5437
	Website	N/A
	Name of principal/manager	Irene Ebanks
	Name of owner	Rochelle Dilbert
	Date of this inspection	January 24-25, 2024
	Date of last inspection	June 16-18, 2021
Children		
	Number of children on roll	64
	Age range of the children	6 months - 4+ years old
	Groups	4
	Number of Caymanian children	19
	Number of children with additional learning support needs	7
	Largest nationality group of children	British
Curriculum		
	Main curriculum	Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework
	External tests and assessments	N/A
	Accreditation	N/A
Staff		
	Number of licensed teachers	3
	Number of other staff	15
	Teacher-child ratio	1:4

Context

Discovery Kids was initially established as an after-school care facility in 2010. Overtime, it gradually expanded its services to become an early childhood care and education centre. Discovery Kids is located on the first floor of the Sigma Building on Hospital Road. There are four class groups and children range in age from 6 months old to under 5 years old. There are currently 64 children at the centre.

There are three licensed teachers with Bachelor of Education degrees, and fifteen other staff members with a range of qualifications. There is a lead teacher for each of the three age cohorts. The centre is owned by Rochelle Dilbert. There is a Preschool Manager who has responsibility for the daily operations of the setting.

Overall Judgement History

Cycle 1 Inspection	May 2019	Satisfactory
Cycle 2 Inspection	June 2021	Satisfactory
Cycle 3 Inspection	January 2024	Satisfactory

Next Steps

The Centre is judged satisfactory or better and therefore, will be inspected within 2 years.

Current Performance Summary

Performance Standard 1 Helping our children to achieve in key areas of their learning and development				
Quality Indicator		Previous Inspection Judgement	Current Inspection Judgement	Judgement Change
Cognitive development	1.1 Attainment	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	→
	1.2 Progress	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	→
Social Emotional development	1.1 Attainment	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	→
	1.2 Progress	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	→
Communication and Language development	1.1 Attainment	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	→
	1.2 Progress	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	→
Physical development	1.1 Attainment	Satisfactory	Excellent	↑
	1.2 Progress	Satisfactory	Excellent	↑

Performance Standard 2 Promoting our children's emotional well-being and civic and environmental understanding				
Quality Indicator		Previous Inspection Judgement	Current Inspection Judgement	Judgement Change
2.1 Social emotional learning		Satisfactory	Satisfactory	→
2.2 Understanding and appreciation for culture, religion and the environment		Satisfactory	Good	↑

Performance Standard 3 Ensuring effective teaching to support our children's learning and development				
Quality Indicator		Previous Inspection Judgement	Current Inspection Judgement	Judgement Change
3.1 Teaching		Satisfactory	Satisfactory	→
3.2 Learning		Satisfactory	Satisfactory	→
3.3 Observation, assessment and planning		Satisfactory	Satisfactory	→

Performance Standard 4 Offering a curriculum that meets the care and educational needs of all our children

Quality Indicator	Previous Inspection Judgement	Current Inspection Judgement	Judgement Change
4.1 Curriculum quality	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	→

Performance Standard 5 Keeping our children safe and well supported

Quality Indicator	Previous Inspection Judgement	Current Inspection Judgement	Judgement Change
5.1 Health and safety	Satisfactory	Good	→
5.2 Support and guidance	Satisfactory	Good	→

Performance Standard 6 Leading and managing in partnership with parents and the community

Quality Indicator	Previous Inspection Judgement	Current Inspection Judgement	Judgement Change
6.1 Leadership	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	→
6.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	→
6.3 Links with parents and the community	Good	Good	→
6.4 Staffing and the learning environment	Weak	Good	↑

What the Setting Does Well

- (1) There were positive relationships across the early childhood setting; staff were warm and nurturing towards the children and parents were appreciative of the support and collaboration with staff.
- (2) Generous staff:child ratios ensured appropriate continuation of care for all children.
- (3) There were regular planned opportunities to promote children's fine and gross motor skills development.

Recommendations

- (1) Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring:
 - assessment data is accurate and used effectively to plan meaningful learning experiences for the children;
 - early childhood educators deepen children's learning through purposeful play, open-ended questioning and regular opportunities for conversations and reflection;
 - transition arrangements between activities and throughout the day are effective.
- (2) Strengthen the curriculum review process to ensure continuity and progression of skills; and appropriate alignment with the needs and interests of the children while also providing enhanced opportunities for the development of children's literacy, numeracy and scientific understanding.
- (3) Implement a more robust and effective performance management system to ensure an accurate understanding of the strengths and professional needs of the staff to fully meet the care and development needs of the children.

Inspection Findings

Performance Standard 1 Helping our children to achieve in key areas of their learning and development		
Quality Indicator		Inspection Judgement
Cognitive development	1.1 Attainment	Satisfactory
	1.2 Progress	Satisfactory

Cognitive development

Children’s attainment in the cognitive domain was judged as satisfactory with most children developing at age-appropriate levels. Strengths were identified in health, culture, environment and technological subdomains as children had regular opportunities to develop their skills and understanding in these areas. However, children’s attainment in scientific, mathematics, religion and literacy subdomains was hindered by less regular and effective learning opportunities. During the inspection, children used binoculars outdoors to view birds as they visited the birdfeeder. They used telephones in pretend play and opened a variety of locks, latches and zippers. Children in the Toddler and Preschool 1 classes were developing phonemic awareness as they learned about letters and their sounds during circle time. The Preschool 2 class used the Jolly Phonics programme, although this was not always implemented effectively, thus children’s achievement in literacy was impacted. The development of children’s understanding of culture, religion and environment were strengths. Children in the Preschool 1 and 2 classes could identify the Cayman Islands’ flag on their “passports” which they used during a travel role play to Cayman Brac. They interacted with natural resources and representations of Cayman’s National Symbols and also with toys and equipment made from repurposed material. With some prompting, children used recycling bins at the early childhood setting.

Documented learning records showed that most children demonstrated expected progress in line with developmental norms and outcomes. Although opportunities for rich scientific investigation were not sufficient and therefore, children’s progress in this subdomain was not as rapid as expected. Similarly, only few children made good progress through the stages of phonological awareness, as the early childhood staff required improved practices in this area. Although classes had a number of the week and the Preschool 2 class had recently started to use PowerMath to support the delivery of instruction in mathematical understanding, progress in numeracy development was also hindered due to a lack of rich experiences to understand number concept and quantities. Most children; however, knew shapes and colours. With increasing understanding, children were learning about a variety of world cultures, with their understanding of Cayman culture being a strength.

Areas for development

- Provide increased and effective opportunities for children to develop their scientific knowledge, mathematical understanding, appreciation of world religions and literacy

Quality Indicator	Inspection Judgement	
Social Emotional development	1.1 Attainment	Satisfactory
	1.2 Progress	Satisfactory

Social Emotional development

Social Emotional attainment was judged as satisfactory. Documented learning records revealed that most children achieved expected social and emotional levels of learning outcomes relative to their appropriate stage and capabilities. During observed sessions, most children displayed expected age-related skills, indicating a positive learning environment that supported the acquisition of developmental milestones. Children demonstrated respect towards their caregivers, accepting guidance and affirmation when provided. Incorporating activities that encourage children to reflect on their emotions and social interactions would further enhance their self-awareness and interpersonal skills.

Social Emotional progress was judged as satisfactory. Documented learning records showed that most children exhibited the expected progress in their social emotional development. Early childhood educators provided ready comfort for children who were upset and these children usually calmed quickly. Infants enjoyed exploring their environment, often checking in with a trusted adult for comfort or affirmation. They demonstrated that they were securely attached to their carers. In the Toddler class, most children were beginning to engage in parallel play, while older children participated in pretend play. A significant minority of older children were not yet engaging in regular collaborative play. There was scope to better promote children’s self-regulation by using positive behaviour strategies and creating opportunities for problem solving among peers, prior to adult intervention, would further support children’s development.

Areas for development

- Enhance the guidance for children’s self-regulation through the regular use of positive behaviour strategies.
- Create opportunities for children to engage in age appropriate restorative practices among peers, prior to adult intervention

Quality Indicator	Inspection Judgement	
Communication and Language development	1.1 Attainment	Satisfactory
	1.2 Progress	Satisfactory

Communication and Language development

Attainment in communication and language development was judged as satisfactory. Infants made good eye contact with their carers and most were babbling and cooing as expected. Older infants were beginning to say single words utterances. Most toddlers were able to name objects and express their needs verbally. Children in Preschool 1 were able to speak in longer sentences to express themselves. Preschool 2 children were able to have conversations, although there were not often ample opportunities for extended conversations on a variety of topics. There was the need for children to be exposed to extended language modelling and deeper questioning to promote their verbal communication skills. Throughout the setting, children made marks with a variety of writing tools, including crayons, markers and coloured ice, for example. Children in the Preschool 2 class were learning to write letters and numbers, with a few forming written words. Further development in the area of listening was required as most children did not demonstrate behaviours that indicated active listening nor did they respond appropriately using questions and comments as they processed information. Further opportunities for children to actively listen such as increased story times, nursery rhymes and listening walks would enhance children’s listening skills. Creative expression was a strength, with children making art work and recognisable objects out of playdough. They used natural materials to make collages, danced and engaged in role play such as serving food from the home living centre. Children in the Preschool 1 class role played travelling to Cayman Brac; pretending to check-in for their flight using their passports, take a plane ride and disembark on arrival.

Progress in communication and language development was judged as satisfactory. Babies communicated in age appropriate ways with their carers and most babies listened intently to circle time and devotion songs. Toddlers labelled air transportation vehicles and others excitedly shouted out when they spotted planes flying overhead during outdoor activities. Older children communicated in full sentences, but did not have sufficient opportunities to develop the skills of conversation in a variety of contexts. Across the early childhood setting, children progressed from scribbling with markers to writing letters, with a few older children being able to form words.

Areas for development

- Increase opportunities for children to develop skills of active listening
- Pose open ended questions to children more consistently to improve their thinking and expressive language skills

Quality Indicator	Inspection Judgement	
Physical development	1.1 Attainment	Excellent
	1.2 Progress	Excellent

Physical development

Physical development was judged as excellent. Almost all children demonstrated age-appropriate gross and fine motor skills with well-developed hand-eye coordination evident in activities such as mark making, manipulating toys, including those with small moving parts, and using playdough to create recognisable objects. Children safely navigated their environment as they crawled, ran, climbed and jumped within age-expected ranges. Younger infants were able to sit up and roll over while older infants moved confidently around their classroom by crawling or walking at their developmental expectations. Infants manipulated toys, equipment and sensory materials with ease and confidence by using a pincer grasp to pull apart cotton during play in the sensory box, for example. They demonstrated good hand-eye coordination as they crinkled dried leaves and used utensils to feed themselves. In the Toddler class, children segregated their index finger and used it to manipulate smaller parts of toys, such as wheels on a toy airplane. Almost all held markers with a palmer grasp as they scribbled and a significant minority were already using a tripod grasp to hold writing implements. Across the older classes, children pushed themselves on wheeled toys and moved around the setting confidently and safely. Older children in Preschool 1 and 2 classes manipulated playdough and made increasingly recognisable objects. A small group of children in Preschool 2 made playdough pizza, forming smaller pieces to represent toppings. Children were able to make marks which became more refined in the older age groups. Children painted with coloured ice, wrote letters and numbers with markers and pencils and used toys and equipment functionally as they played and explored their environment. Almost all children were able to make decisions regarding healthy lifestyles.

A review of the early childhood setting's report over time indicated that almost all children made excellent progress in the physical subdomains. Infants progressed from rolling over, to sitting and then walking within developmentally appropriate ranges. Older children progressed to running, climbing and pushing themselves on wheeled toys. Younger children used pincer grasps to tear paper while older children were able to write letters and numbers. They all had opportunities to develop physical skills indoors and outdoors in various centres and activities.

Areas for development

Performance Standard 2 Promoting our children’s emotional well-being and civic and environmental understanding	
Quality Indicator	Inspection Judgement
2.1 Social emotional learning	Satisfactory
2.2 Understanding and appreciation for culture, religion and the environment	Good

Social emotional learning

Social emotional learning was judged as satisfactory. Most children within the early childhood setting displayed acceptable behaviour and conduct during free play activities but found it more challenging to participate in whole group sessions. Almost all children displayed a sense of security and emotional well-being, separating from their parents easily in the mornings and accepting guidance and affirmation from early childhood staff throughout the day. Most children followed directions well as they cooperated with adults. Almost all children interacted with adults confidently and seemed to enjoy playing and interacting with adults throughout the early childhood setting. They displayed confidence and positive self-esteem. They were able to play alongside their peers with toys and equipment and most were able to share and turn take. However, a minority of children were not yet able to resolve conflict or play harmoniously at age-related expectations or collaborate to achieve a common goal. Almost all children did however, show delight and excitement when their peers arrived in the mornings and seemed to take an interest in their peers.

Understanding of and appreciation for culture, religion and the environment

Understanding and appreciation for culture, religion and the environment was judged as good. Almost all children demonstrated an age-appropriate understanding of Caymanian heritage and culture. Children interacted with culture centres in all classrooms which contained emblems representing the Cayman Islands. The inclusion in the learning environment of sea grape tree and silver thatch branches, thatch baskets and hats and stuffed animals representing local wildlife meant that children were further knowledgeable due to cultural immersion within the learning environment. There were various cultures represented with the families at the early childhood setting and these were shared and celebrated during the year. Christianity was promoted through the recitation of grace before meals and daily devotion; however, an age-appropriate understanding of world religions was not evident. Most children exhibited an age-appropriate understanding of environmental issues, reflecting the early childhood setting's commitment to fostering awareness of the importance of environmental stewardship. While involvement in environmental issues was acknowledged as a strength, there was room for further development as the setting could integrate environmental awareness more deeply into its culture and climate, ensuring that it becomes an integral part of the educational experience for all children.

Areas for development

- Improve children's understanding and appreciation of world religions

Performance Standard 3 Ensuring effective teaching to support our children’s learning and development	
Quality Indicator	Inspection Judgement
3.1 Teaching	Satisfactory
3.2 Learning	Satisfactory
3.3 Observation, assessment and planning	Satisfactory

Teaching

Teaching was judged as satisfactory. Planning and teaching strategies required improvement to meet the needs of all children as early childhood educators did not plan with sufficient detail. Teachers were able to support children in individual play but were less skilled at managing whole group sessions. Routines were evident in all groups, with picture schedules displayed in the rooms, for example. Rules; however, were not sufficiently communicated or enforced. Consequently, disruptions occurred. Transition arrangements between activities were ineffective across the centre and most children became dysregulated or passive during these times. Almost all early childhood staff had suitable knowledge of how children learned and supported learning and development in appropriate ways. All children had opportunities to make choices in their learning when interacting with a range of resources. Early childhood staff organised well-resourced indoor and outdoor environments, although these were not always arranged suitably for purposeful, integrated play. Early childhood educators did not always have high enough expectations for all children, often offering too much assistance to complete tasks which limited children’s opportunities for trial and error, problem solving and independence. Interactions between early childhood staff and children were respectful and nurturing. However, staff did not consistently extend children's language and thinking skills or provide sufficient challenge for all children.

Learning

Learning was judged as satisfactory. Most children had positive attitudes towards learning and showed enjoyment for learning as they interacted with toys and equipment in their environment. Infants explored their environment, manipulating cause and effect toys and playing with balls and sensory boards. Toddlers used binoculars to view birds that came to the bird feeder and excitedly pointed out planes that flew overhead. Almost all children independently made choices during play and engaged in activities of their choosing. A majority of children showed satisfaction in their accomplishments and things they created. This was evident during the inspection when children proudly shared a painted airplane, a project they had actively contributed to, with their parents when departing the early childhood setting. There was, however, a tendency towards passivity or disengagement noted among a minority, particularly during group activities. Most children opted to explore play centres instead of participating in scheduled group tasks. Only a minority displayed an inclination to ask questions or seek additional information to enhance their learning experience. Adult intervention was often too readily available, hindering the development of children's resilience and problem-solving skills.

Observation, assessment and planning

Observation, assessment and planning was judged as satisfactory. A range of methods was used to gather information about children's development including daily anecdotal records, pictorial evidence and parent submitted information. Sufficient monitoring of children's progress resulted in the timely identification of children's needs, enabling staff to collaborate with parents or to refer to external service providers if required. Next steps in learning were identified in reports as well as during communication with parents who commented that this information was very helpful in understanding how to support their child at home. The early childhood setting used the Lillio (formerly HiMama) app to record pictorial evidence of activities as well as daily care activities. This information was linked with the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework, but staff did not use evaluative statements to record the children's accomplishments. Regular anecdotal records were completed but were not always entered into the progress monitoring app. Birth to Five Matters was aligned with the curriculum outcomes and benchmarks used to report on children's achievements. However, the assessment information was not analysed and used to plan targeted and effective learning experiences to improve every child's learning. Children were not actively encouraged to reflect on their learning and interactions.

Areas for development

- Improve planning and teaching strategies to meet the needs of all children.
- Ensure transitions between activities and throughout the day are effective and calm.
- Use assessment information to inform next steps in children's learning.
- Support children to regularly talk about and assess their own learning.

Performance Standard 4 Offering a curriculum that meets the care and educational needs of all our children

Quality Indicator	Inspection Judgement
4.1 Curriculum quality	Satisfactory

Curriculum quality

Curriculum was judged as satisfactory. The Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework was satisfactorily implemented and it was evident that plans aligned with the four key focus areas of the curriculum, thus meeting the requirements of the Cayman Islands. However, planning needed improvement as existing plans did not always ensure children benefitted from a suitable range of purposeful experiences throughout the day. Caymanian culture and Christian elements were incorporated into planned activities. This cultural inclusivity enriched the learning experience and fostered a sense of identity and community among the children. Pictorial evidence showed that cross-curricular connections was a regular feature of the early childhood setting. Visitors to the setting enhanced children's learning experiences; providing children with real-world connections and diverse perspectives. However, plans did not consistently align with the age and stage of all children and differentiation strategies were not evident in the provided plans or observed lessons. A more structured system for curriculum review was required to ensure more consistent and accurate delivery by all early childhood educators. There was the need to improve planning for continuity and progression to prevent gaps in learning and repetition of content. Early childhood educators required development in order to ensure the effective facilitation of a purposeful, play-based curriculum.

Areas for development

- Ensure planning aligns with the curriculum and the needs of all children
- Review the curriculum to ensure continuity and progression of skills
- Provide professional development opportunities for early childhood educators to enhance their ability to implement an effective play-based curriculum

Performance Standard 5 Keeping our children safe and well supported	
Quality Indicator	Inspection Judgement
5.1 Health and safety	Good
5.2 Support and guidance	Good

Health and safety

Health and safety arrangements were judged as good. The early childhood setting satisfactorily implemented policies and procedures to ensure the safety of children, with active supervision and generous adult-to-child ratios. Child safeguarding was a priority and the early childhood setting collaborated effectively with partner agencies to support children's welfare. All early childhood staff had the required child protection training and knew what to do in the event of suspected abuse or neglect. The early childhood setting had established a systematic approach to maintain safe and secure premises, including detailed and organised record-keeping and regular risk assessments to mitigate potential risks. All regulatory requirements were met, with the setting having up to date inspections for regulatory agencies. Early childhood staff encouraged parents to pack healthy snacks and lunches, although this was not firmly enforced in some instances. Adequate time was provided for all children to rest. However, information on a healthy lifestyle was not systematically integrated into the day-to-day operation of the early childhood setting. While there were grow boxes in the outdoor area, they were not consistently planned for or utilised by the children so that they could understand the reciprocal relationship between themselves and the environment. Staff were vigilant regarding sanitation when diapering and feeding children, but the early childhood setting needed to implement a sanitation log to ensure the regular sanitisation of toys and equipment both indoors and outdoors.

Support and guidance

Arrangements for support and guidance were judged as good. There was an effective policy and procedure in place to support children with additional learning support needs. This policy was consistently implemented and monitored by a dedicated Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO). There was an effective system in place for the timely identification of children with special educational needs. Collaboration between parents, staff and external service providers was evident; with parents commenting on this as a strength of the early childhood setting. Transitions into and across the early childhood setting were effective. It was common practice in the early childhood setting to move at least one staff member up to the other age group to support children who were transitioning. This helped to ensure a smooth and positive experience for both children and their families. Staff's interactions with children were positive and nurturing. Staff provided appropriate care and guidance for children and they knew the children well. Adults consistently interacted with children at their level throughout the day as they engaged in play activities, contributing to a supportive learning environment. Early childhood staff provided some support for children as they learned to self-regulate, but this did not always meet the needs of all children.

Areas for development

- Ensure healthy living is well integrated into the curriculum.
- Establish and implement positive behaviour strategies to support children's ability to self-regulate.
- Implement a sanitation log to ensure the regular sanitisation of toys and equipment in both indoor and outdoor learning environments.

Performance Standard 6 Leading and managing in partnership with parents and the community	
Quality Indicator	Inspection Judgement
6.1 Leadership	Satisfactory
6.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Satisfactory
6.3 Links with parents and the community	Good
6.4 Staffing and the learning environment	Good

Leadership

Leadership was judged as satisfactory. Leaders were committed and passionate and had taken steps to improve provision at the setting. This was most noticeable in the renovations to the premises since the previous inspection which now allowed for more movement and exploration in the environment. Leaders emphasised respect and tolerance and ensured a fully inclusive approach. Work of the setting was not yet effectively guided by a robust performance management system nor detailed analysis of children's achievements. Therefore, leaders did not have an accurate understanding of the strengths and professional needs of the staff or evidence to accurately make decisions. Staff's needs were well catered to, and staff morale was high. Staff in classrooms collaborated well throughout the day. There were leaders at different levels, including classroom lead teachers, a SENCO and Child Protection Leads. There was an established Advisory Board and the Board had a secure knowledge of the statutory and regulatory requirements. However, not all members had a thorough understanding of how to hold leaders to account for the accuracy of assessment data and they were not all involved in the strategic planning process.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning

Self-evaluation and improvement planning was judged as satisfactory. While the self-evaluation was not yet fully aligned with the First Steps to Success Inspection Framework, leaders attempted to assess the setting's work using the framework. Despite misalignment, most self-evaluated judgements were accurate using the judgement descriptors. The owner and centre manager had worked collaboratively on the self-evaluation. Both the self-evaluation and improvement plan were live documents which the owner and manager consulted and updated over time. There was good progress on addressing the second recommendation from the previous inspection. The layout of the early childhood setting had been updated, with most classrooms now having larger spaces to allow children the freedom to move and explore their environment. The setting was now within expected ratio for space as per the Education Regulations, 2017. However, the first recommendation had not yet been met in full as teaching and learning still required improvement. Leaders now needed to create a more focused improvement plan based on children's achievement data and information based on effective performance management of staff.

Links with parents and the community

Links with parents and the community was judged as good. There were successful and creative methods of communication between early childhood staff and parents which served to foster collaboration and a strong relationship. Parents shared that staff often supported them with information regarding their child's next steps as well as how they could support their child at home, and to address any concerns that may have been observed. Through the preschool's assessment app, parents were also informed of their child's daily care such as feeding, diapering and napping. Formal reports on children's progress and achievement were sufficiently detailed, although, as assessment required improvement, these reports may not have always been accurate. The early childhood setting had established links with other settings. These links pertained to development in the learning environment, SENCO practices and teaching. There was regular and meaningful participation in the community, including fund raising for charities. The early childhood setting also had community partners who broadened the range of activities and unique learning opportunities for children.

Staffing and the learning environment

Staffing and the learning environment was judged as good. All staff were committed and qualified for their respective roles. The staffing levels were generous, ensuring a seamless continuity of care for the children. All staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities, but a more robust performance management system was required to guarantee suitable role assignments for each staff member. Staff also required further training and development to more effectively implement the play-based curriculum. Leaders had mechanisms in place to ensure the premises were effective and supported security and learning. There were considerable improvements in the physical layout of the setting and a reduction of the number of children enrolled, fostering a more positive atmosphere conducive with independent choice and play. The early childhood setting was accessible to all learners. The classrooms were creatively designed, incorporating repurposed and natural materials throughout. The outdoor area, though small, was well planned and designed, providing opportunities for integrated learning in a secure environment.

Areas for development

- Use effective performance management systems to plan for staff development so all staff are effective in their roles.
- Ensure all staff have a secure understanding of how to implement a play-based curriculum.
- Ensure the self-evaluation process is collaborative and accurate data is used to guide the development of the preschool's improvement plan
- Develop effective links with other early childhood settings and schools to enhance the work of the preschool

Summary of Parent and Staff Survey Results

Before the inspection, the views of parents and staff were obtained through surveys. The numbers of participants that completed the surveys were as follows:

Parents	59	Staff	17
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Parents

Almost all respondents felt their child was making good progress in his/her overall learning and development. A majority of parents agreed their child had an age-appropriate understanding and appreciation of culture, religion and the environment. Almost all parents agreed that adults consistently and effectively catered to the care and development needs of their child, that their child enjoyed going to the early childhood setting and that their child learned through a wide range of age-appropriate play opportunities during the day. Almost all parents felt their child was safe and cared for at the early childhood setting and that the setting helped their child to lead a healthy lifestyle. A majority of parents agreed the early childhood setting provided good support to children with additional learning support needs but a significant minority were unable to answer that question. Almost all parents agreed the early childhood setting offered support during times of transition. Similarly, almost all parents believed their child had positive relationships with adults at the early childhood setting and that leaders positively impacted their child's achievement and created an inclusive environment. A majority of parents felt the staff and leaders sought their views and opinions to evaluate their work and develop improvement plans. Almost all respondents felt that they benefited from regular and reliable two-way communication with the early childhood setting, that they received regular, accurate and sufficiently detailed reports about their child's progress and achievement and that the early childhood setting had effective systems in place to enable collaboration with and involvement of parents and other carers. Almost all parents were satisfied with the quality of education provided by the early childhood setting.

Staff

All staff members responded to the survey. The majority of respondents felt the behaviour of almost all children was positive and that children were able to manage their own feelings and behaviours in age-appropriate ways. All staff reported that children made good progress in learning and development in all domains while almost all staff felt children had an age-appropriate understanding and appreciation of culture, religion and the environment. All respondents indicated the early childhood setting promoted a positive learning environment and provided an appropriate balance of adult-directed and play-based child-initiated experiences. All respondents agreed children were independent learners and made choices and purposeful decisions about their learning. All staff felt there were good systems for assessment and transition arrangements. Almost all agreed the setting was safe and caring for all members and that there was good support for children with additional learning support needs. Almost all respondents felt that there were positive relationships between adults and children and that staff's well-being was considered by leaders. Almost all staff indicated that their continuing professional development was supported and that there was regular and reliable two-way communication between staff and parents. All agreed they were involved in the self-evaluation and improvement planning and that parents and other carers were effectively involved in the work of the setting. Almost all believed the setting had established connections with the wider community which had enhanced children's learning and there was adequate, appropriately qualified staff. Almost all agreed that, overall, the quality of education provided by the setting was good.

What Happens Next?

The early childhood setting should prepare an action plan within four weeks of the publication of this inspection report.

This should consider and address:

- the recommendations identified within this report;
- areas identified by the early childhood setting as requiring improvement;
- other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the early childhood setting.

Further Information

Inspections of Early Childhood Settings in the Cayman Islands

As determined by the Education Act (2016), all educational institutions are inspected regularly by the Office of Education Standards. The purpose of inspection is primarily to support ongoing improvement in each educational institution and also to provide rigorous, impartial and comprehensive information to parents, government officers and to Ministers regarding the quality of education both in government and private educational establishments.

Inspections are undertaken at least once every four years and will usually involve a team of inspectors visiting each school and early childhood setting for between two and five days. Inspectors use an agreed framework to reach their judgements. In the Cayman Islands, the early childhood inspection framework 'First Steps to Success: Nurturing Environments and Thriving Children' (Cayman Islands Government, October 2023) is the tool which is used both by early childhood settings to review their own work and by inspectors when they visit.

Inspection frameworks are a central feature of different educational institution evaluation systems worldwide. They provide a structure within which inspectors make judgements on the basis of evidence of observed practice. They serve a number of purposes:

- Indicators create a **consistent vocabulary and reference point** for a conversation with early childhood settings regarding the major determinants of educational success.
- Exemplars provide early childhood settings with clarity regarding the **expected standard** for a good judgement level.
- The indicators can be used by educational institutions for **self-evaluation purposes** and can be linked to improvement through effective development planning.
- The use of a common set of indicators encourages **consistency in judgements** across different inspection teams. Inspectors must base their judgements on the evidence of the practice they actually observe, rather than with reference to set norms or by employing relative ratings or referring to personal or individual preferences.
- The publication of inspection quality indicators enables settings to see inspection as a **transparent** process.

Judgements

The inspection framework is organised around judgements using a four-point scale. The four levels are defined as follows:

Excellent	Exceptionally high quality of performance or practice.
Good	The expected level for every educational institution, including early childhood settings, in the Cayman Islands.
Satisfactory	Partially effective in achieving positive outcomes for children but requires improvement. All key aspects of performance and practice in every educational institution, including early childhood settings, should, however, exceed this level.
Weak	Well below expectations and requires significant improvement. Any educational institution that receives a weak judgement will be expected to take urgent measures to improve the quality of those aspects of their performance or practice.

Consistency in Quantitative Terminology

Inspectors use quantitative terms in reports, as follows:

Term	Definition	Numerical Value
All	The whole - as used in 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 a quarter	15% to 24%
Few	Up to 15%	0% to 14%

The Office of Education Standards

Who Are We and What Do We Do?

The Office of Education Standards is part of the Portfolio of the 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: adminOES@gov.ky

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: www.oes.gov.ky

Information About the Inspection Team

Role	Name	Affiliation
Lead Inspector	Carol Bennett	Office of Education Standards
Team Inspector	Nadesha Nyathi	Cayman Associate Inspector



Office of
Education
Standards



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CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT



www.oes.gov.ky | adminOES@gov.ky

Office of Education Standards
Government Administration Building
133 Elgin Ave, George Town
Grand Cayman