

# **BASELINE INSPECTION REPORT**

## **Creek and Spot Bay Primary School**

**12 to 13 March 2015**

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## **Introduction**

The Honourable Tara Rivers, Minister for Education, has requested an inspection of all government schools during the 2014-15 academic year. The purpose of these inspections is to provide a baseline assessment of the quality of teaching and its impact on students' learning, the progress students make and the standards they achieve, the effectiveness of the leadership and management of each school, and the standards being achieved in English and mathematics.

The resulting inspection report provides a clear understanding of each school's particular strengths and weaknesses, and makes recommendations for improvement where necessary.

## Information about the school and the inspection team

### Information about the school

Type of school:	Government primary school
Age range of students:	5-11
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	80
School address:	Creek Infant School 28 Student Drive Box 3 Cayman Brac KY2- 2300 Cayman Islands Spot Bay Junior School 170 Spot Bay Road Box 142 Cayman Brac KY2 – 2400 Cayman Islands
Telephone number:	345-948-0225
Email address:	<a href="mailto:Claudette.lazzari@gov.ky">Claudette.lazzari@gov.ky</a>
Name of principal:	Claudette Lazzari

Creek and Spot Bay were originally two separate primary schools on Cayman Brac, each having its own principal and housing students from Years 1-6. However, numbers were small and in some cases, year groups were combined. In 2003, Creek became the infants' school, housing Reception to Year 3, and Spot Bay became the junior school, with Years 4 to 6. Each retained its own principal until 2014, when the present principal took over responsibility for both sites.

There are 30 students on the special needs register. Six students have Spanish as their first language, but are sufficiently fluent in English that no extra support is provided for them.

### Information about the inspection team

<b>Lead:</b>	Mary Bowerman
<b>Team:</b>	Natasha Chopra Kevin Roberts

This inspection of Creek and Spot Bay Primary School took place from 12-13 March, 2015 and involved a team of three inspectors. The following aspects of the school's work were looked at.

- Standards achieved and progress made by students, particularly in English and mathematics
- The effectiveness of teaching and its impact on learning
- How well the school is led and managed

**Reception was not inspected on this visit.**

The inspection team gathered evidence in the following ways.

- Eighteen lessons, or parts of lessons, were observed, particularly in English and mathematics
- School documents, including teachers' planning and curriculum guidelines were looked at and students' work was scrutinised
- Inspectors listened to students read
- Discussions took place with the principal, deputy principal, those designated as lead literacy and numeracy teachers and with students from Years 3 and 6

Inspectors use the following grading scale to describe aspects of the school's work.

<b>Grade</b>		<b>Description</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Very good</b>	Good in all respects and exemplary in some significant areas
<b>2</b>	<b>Good</b>	Good in most respects. Weaknesses are minor and not in significant areas
<b>3</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	No significant weaknesses, but no major strengths. Improvement needed
<b>4</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Some significant weaknesses that have a negative impact on learning and achievement. Cause for concern

In the Cayman Islands, the key stages are defined as follows.

**KEY STAGE 1 – YEARS 1-3**

**KEY STAGE 2 – YEARS 4-6**

## **Executive summary of the report**

### **The overall effectiveness of the school**

The school's overall effectiveness is unsatisfactory and a cause for concern. Students' progress is too slow and they are generally not working at the standards expected for their ages. Much of the teaching lacks pace and the support for the relatively high proportion of students with special educational needs – more than a third of the school population – is not adequate. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not rigorous enough to produce the type of information that would be useful to the school in raising standards of achievement.

Having Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 on different sites in different parts of the island limits the amount of collaboration between teachers. There is no active senior management team, as those with designated management responsibilities all have full-time teaching responsibilities. Because the principal is the only senior manager without responsibility for a class she is frequently commuting between sites which, although not a great distance, takes time.

A school improvement plan has been developed, based on the broad categories provided to all government schools. There are no specific time frames for the implementation of actions and plans for monitoring and evaluation are imprecise. There is no rigorous self-evaluation or analysis of students' performance data from which the school could plan improvements.

### **What the school does well**

- Teachers know the students well and relationships are positive.
- Established routines enable the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
- Students are confident in the way they share and participate in lessons.
- Classrooms are welcoming and celebrate students' work.

### **What needs to improve**

- The support for students with special educational needs, to ensure that it is specific to the needs of the individual child and effective
- The tracking of students' progress so that appropriate support and challenge is provided.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning, to identify strengths which can be shared and weaknesses which need to be overcome.
- The management structure of the school, to ensure that there is an active and effective senior team.

## **Commentary on inspection findings**

### **How well students achieve and make progress**

Standards of achievement are unsatisfactory.

Lesson observations during the inspection confirm that, in the majority of classes, students are not yet reaching the standards expected for their ages.

At the end of Year 6, students take Key Stage 2 tests in mathematics and English that are marked and moderated locally (apart from the grammar, punctuation and spelling sections). The 2014 results are much better than the previous three years. However, only six of the nine students in the class achieved the expected level in mathematics (Level 4), whereas eight of the nine achieved the expected level in reading and writing. The cognitive abilities test, which provides an estimate of students' ability, indicates that students should have been able to achieve better results in mathematics.

One of the factors contributing to low achievement is the lack of consistent support for the relatively large proportion of students who are on the special needs register. Within the school, there are not enough teaching assistants and, although there is a special education needs co-ordinator, her time is limited as she is shared with another school.

The school analyses students' mid- and end-of-year reports and records achievement, but there are no records of further analysis to ascertain whether students throughout the school are making enough progress or whether they are working at the standards expected for their ages.

### **The effectiveness of teaching and its impact on students' learning**

Teaching across the school is unsatisfactory overall.

It is generally stronger at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2 but is varied in its effectiveness. This is evident in the impact it has on students' learning. During the inspection two-thirds of the learning at Key Stage 2 either needed improvement or was a cause for concern; more than half in Key Stage 1 was good or better. Most teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, but the teaching is not always pitched at the appropriate level. In some lessons expectations are too low; in others, the language used is too advanced, and students become confused as to what they should be doing.

One of the weaknesses identified during inspection was the shortage of provision for students who have special educational needs. Some classes have a relatively high proportion of such students and there are not enough teaching assistants to provide the support that is needed. Teachers make an effort to accommodate students of differing abilities but, in classes where the needs are severe, this is not always possible without assistance. In a few lessons, behaviour is a significant challenge. This is linked to the way lessons are organised; for example, where group work is not well supervised and students are not able to work without that supervision. In these lessons, often little of value is achieved.

Teachers across both key stages have good relationships with the students in their class and are calm and patient. Classes are small enough that teachers know their students well. They try to build students' confidence through use of appropriate praise.

There is not enough analysis of the progress students are making and little sense of urgency to ensure that the teaching is moving students' learning forward. Pace of lessons is often slow and, with the lack of ability on the part of students to concentrate and remain on task, much time is lost.

### **How well the school is led and managed**

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory

The school is situated on two sites. The principal spends more time at the infant site but she frequently has to travel between the two. The deputy principal is based at the junior site where she is the full-time teacher of Year 6. She is the lead numeracy teacher, and also has other responsibilities assigned to her. The designated lead literacy teacher also has full-time responsibility for a class. Neither of them has time for involvement in the monitoring of the subjects for which they are supposed to be responsible, nor is there a functioning senior management team as such. Being on two different sites also limits the amount of communication and collaboration between the infant and junior teachers.

The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are mainly the responsibility of the principal, although she has some help from the senior school improvement officer. The monitoring is not frequent enough or as rigorous as it needs to be in order to be of use in the raising of standards. There is some analysis of Progress in English (PiE) and Progress in Mathematics (PiM) results in order to set targets for the next school year. Questions are analysed and teachers try to provide more practice where it is needed. The principal attributes the overall improvement in the Key Stage 2 results to the extra practice provided by teachers. The school has no policies on marking or assessment. Teachers use the rubrics provided with the Ministry of Education's *Guidance for writing* document.

Although there is a regular schedule for reviewing the quality of teaching through lesson observations, the focus is more on what teachers do or do not do well rather than on the impact the teaching is having on students' progress and the standards they are able to achieve. Support for managing staff under-performance is limited. Teachers get some professional development through the weekly visits of the literacy coach who is based on Grand Cayman, but they feel that they miss out a great deal on professional development in mathematics.

Although there are clearly some students who need much more support, there is not enough evidence to suggest that all of the students presently on the special needs register should be there. Some enjoy being taken out of class for extra reading, for example, but that is not necessarily what is best for them. The special educational needs co-ordinator for Cayman Brac is mainly responsible for the *Levelled literacy intervention* programme and her time is limited as it is divided between two schools.

A brief self-evaluation was started just before the inspection, but this was not completed and is not based on strong evidence. The school improvement plan has therefore not

sprung out of school self-evaluation, but is based on a template provided to all government schools, which covers broad areas for improvement. The timelines for completion or implementation of specific actions all span the entire academic year: there are no time targets and plans for monitoring, and evaluation of the proposed actions is imprecise.

Both sites run relatively smoothly on a day-to-day basis even though staff with designated responsibilities such as the deputy principal and lead literacy and numeracy teachers have full-time responsibility for a class. Routines are well established.

### **The quality of teaching and learning in English**

The quality of teaching and learning in English is unsatisfactory.

Standards in English are below those expected for students' ages. Their progress in reading and writing is improving slowly but teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are generally too low. More able students make limited progress, as they are not suitably challenged and students with learning difficulties are not fully supported in their learning. Many pieces of work are left incomplete as they do not have the skills to work on their own. In Year 3, the large number of students with learning difficulties has hindered the progress of this particular group. Whilst there is some support for these students, there is little to help the teacher in managing the behaviour of students with more severe learning difficulties. This makes it hard for the teacher to focus on the rest of the class and progress is limited.

Standards are better in speaking, as the ethos established by the school encourages and supports students' confidence to participate in lessons. Students are good listeners and teachers encourage them to develop their speaking by asking for more detail when they respond.

Most students enjoy reading and many students read with some fluency but often without expression. The school uses published schemes to teach phonics and students have a fairly good grasp of initial sounds. Younger students use phonic skills to decipher unfamiliar words but have few strategies for making sense of the text. Playful rhymes are used to engage the students in the reading of sight words.

Older students enjoy reading fiction and work hard to develop higher order reading skills. There are lessons in which the teacher's choice of text and lively reading of a story keep students focused, or the teacher uses some excellent questioning to link the themes in the story to the students' own experiences. However, both younger and older students are insecure in their knowledge of different authors.

Resources for reading are good and teachers have worked hard to promote literacy in their classrooms. Many rooms are bright and spacious and have interesting displays of students' writing. Teachers have created attractive book corners and many rooms have 'word walls'. The school libraries on both sites house a range of genres and these rooms have been well organised into inviting and comfortable areas.

Students write for a variety of reasons. There are examples of students writing first person narratives, poetry, instructions and reports. In a Year 2 class students were encouraged to write in response to a book they had read on inventions. One more able

student used some technical vocabulary, such as *circuit* and *inventor* and was able to assist one of her peers in the accurate spelling of 'twilight' and 'sparkle'. Most students in the younger year groups are able to write in simple sentences and by the end of Year 3 are more consistent in the use of punctuation. Students are beginning to use interesting and varied vocabulary in their writing. The Ministry of Education has provided a *Guidance for writing* document which encourages the teaching of different genres. The overall effectiveness of this will be determined over time. Many students use paragraphs to organise and structure their writing. Handwriting and the general presentation of work are good, and in Year 6 many students make much progress in this area. Teachers mark students work regularly in all year groups and sometimes write comments to show them how to improve their work. However, students rarely improve the choice of vocabulary or change the order of their writing. In many classes, students are not given enough tasks encouraging them to become independent learners.

There is slow progression between the classes in literacy. Teachers plan within key stages and have some knowledge of what skills are taught in other year groups but the value of this is limited by the fact that the school is housed on two sites, which makes it harder for teachers to communicate with each other. There is a lead literacy teacher, but little guidance has been provided on what the role should entail. However, a start has been made to address some of the needs of the subject by supporting and advising colleagues. There are no established mechanisms for monitoring the teaching and learning of literacy.

### **The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics**

Standards of achievement in mathematics are unsatisfactory and are below age-appropriate expectations. The PiM data from Years 2 to 5 show that in most year groups, the number of students making the expected progress of two or more sub levels is too low.

The teaching in most lessons is unsatisfactory. In many lessons, the pace of working is too slow and students are not achieving as well as they should. Lessons are not sufficiently challenging for the more able students and, even though the least able students receive some support, they are not always able to demonstrate their learning independently.

Teachers use a variety of resources in lessons, such as whiteboards, place value cards and other real objects including fruit. For example, in a Key Stage 1 class, students were able to divide various fruits to help them understand the concept of sharing in halves and quarters. Students are sometimes provided with opportunities to use ICT. In another Key Stage 1 class, students used spreadsheets to organize data and create charts. There are frequent opportunities to improve students' basic mathematics facts at the start of lessons. However, the impact is not apparent, as students still struggle with basic computation skills including addition, subtraction and multiplication.

When students have the opportunity to work in pairs or groups, they work well with each other and become more engaged in the lesson. Students are frequently praised for good work and encouraged to use methods they are comfortable with to solve problems. Classroom displays are attractive, relevant to the learning of mathematics and consistently include examples of students' work.

Assessment is not used effectively to help students progress in lessons. In some lessons at Key Stage 2, students' pre-requisite skills are not sufficiently developed and, though this is clear, teachers do not always adjust their lessons to take this into account. In these lessons, students become frustrated and confused and make little or no progress. For example, in Key Stage 2, although students could recall prior learning of the formula for calculating the area of a rectangle, their understanding of the concept was not clearly developed. They can remember formulae and use them in familiar situations but have difficulty applying their learning in unfamiliar situations.

Students are supported in some lessons through effective use of a teaching assistant, but this is not consistent across all lessons where a teaching assistant is used. At Key Stage 2, samples of work show that marking is frequent and there are brief comments and feedback to help students improve. At Key Stage 1, students' work is also marked frequently with brief comments but practical suggestions for improving are not regularly provided.

At both key stages, students cover a good range of topics across the strands of mathematics, including number and algebra, measurement and geometry, and statistics. The level of work given is well within appropriate levels for Key Stage 1 but is inconsistent at Key Stage 2. Problem solving activities are neither frequent enough nor consistent across all year groups.

The designated lead numeracy teacher is not involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning in maths. However, the role involves meeting with some teachers for planning and working with the principal to analyse PiM and Mathematics Assessment for Learning and Teaching (MaLT) scores in order to set targets for the school improvement plan.

## Appendix A

### Recommendations

The following are some suggested ways that the school could try to overcome the weaknesses identified in the 'What needs to improve' section of this report.

#### **To provide specific and effective support for students with special educational needs.**

1. Ensure that all students on the special needs register have been appropriately identified as having special needs.
2. Request specialist advice for supporting more severe needs.
3. Help teachers to plan more specifically for meeting the differing needs within the class.
4. Consider ways of organising lessons so that groups of students are not left unsupervised.

#### **To track students' progress.**

5. Devise a simple tracking system to understand what each student's strengths and weaknesses are.
6. Help teachers to address these areas in their daily planning.

#### **To monitor the teaching and learning more effectively.**

7. Use the inspection handbook for examples of good practice.
8. Focus on the impact that the teaching has on students' learning.
9. Share good practice and seek the relevant support for weaker aspects.

#### **To improve the management structure.**

10. As long as the school is on two sites, allocate specific responsibilities to the deputy head for the running of the junior site.
11. Make an application for the hiring of an additional person who is capable of teaching Year 6 when the deputy has to be out of the class.
12. Allocate specific responsibilities to the lead literacy and numeracy teachers, including assisting with the monitoring of teaching and learning and the effective tracking of students' progress, and ensure that sufficient non-teaching time is available.

#### **Recommendations for improving the standards of English**

1. Raise teachers' expectations of what students can achieve.
2. Provide more support for students with special needs, especially in the current Year 3.
3. Make more frequent use of the library on each site to promote reading for enjoyment.
4. Provide regular opportunities for students to correct their own work by teaching them how to edit and re-draft their writing.
5. Allocate responsibility to the lead literacy teacher for monitoring progress in the teaching and learning in English.

### **Recommendations for improving the standards of mathematics**

In order to improve teaching and learning, teachers should take the following action.

1. Provide more activities to engage and extend the more able students.
2. Find ways to assess students' understanding of pre-requisite skills, and adjust lessons to build these skills before moving them on.
3. Assess the impact of the strategies used to build basic mathematics facts. Provide students with more problem-solving activities where they can apply these skills in a meaningful way.

In order to improve standards of achievement and progress, the school should take the following action.

1. Set aside time for the monitoring of teaching and learning of mathematics across the school. This should be done in conjunction with careful analysis of performance data, sharing of good practice and implementation of strategies to help underachievers.