



Cayman Islands Baseline Inspection of Schools: Overview Report

June 2015

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1. Introduction

All 15 government funded education settings in the Cayman Islands were inspected in the period November 2014 - March 2015, to provide baseline information on the overall quality of education and outcomes for students from the ages of 5 - 18. Individual reports are available separately which represent the findings for the ten primary schools, three high schools, one special school and one further education centre visited. This summary report sets out the overall findings of the 15 inspections, with a brief overview of students' achievement in English and Mathematics.

The report concludes with a number of recommendations to the Ministry of Education. For ease of reference, all educational settings are referred to as schools in the text of the report.

The discussion of broader issues and considerations regarding the future of inspection in the Cayman Islands are not included in this report but these are of important contextual interest for the Ministry to consider.

2. Executive Summary

The schools present a varied picture of quality, including some that include good features and demonstrate diligent work to improve the students' achievement. However, students' achievement overall is below age-related expectations and represents significant underperformance at all stages of education. The weaknesses in achievement are notably related to teaching quality.

Teachers are usually long-serving but may stay in each school for a relatively short period of time. This places a heavy duty on the Ministry and the leadership and management of the schools to ensure that continuity of teaching and learning is not compromised. In addition, new teachers are drawn from diverse backgrounds and from different parts of the world. Teaching assistants do not provide effective support and are not usually suitably trained or deployed. Likewise, in the areas of special educational needs and the support of able, gifted and talented students, specific training is necessary for teachers and teaching/support assistants if they are to have a substantial impact on the students' performance.

Some of the challenges facing schools stem from factors outside their direct control; these include staffing (quality, turnover and shortages), changes in national initiatives or priorities, poor quality accommodation and resources, and poorly defined professional development. Some school leaders are required to fulfil a number of key roles within the school, which divert them from their main leadership role.

The provision of staffing is inadequate overall, in particular for special educational needs, counselling and careers. Resources are also insufficient in these areas. Special educational needs co-ordinators do not have sufficient time for their roles and there is a shortage of teaching assistants. Many teachers and support assistants do not value the quality and content of induction training or professional development, whether provided by the Ministry or the school, and feel that training in connection with handling the complex needs of many students is especially weak. Performance management of staff is inconsistent both within and across schools and has not identified or brought about the improvements required in the quality of teaching.

Substantial changes will be required to achieve the ambitious aims of the Ministry. Strategies for improvement will inevitably depend on the resources available and the preferred approach. Whichever direction is chosen, we recommend the following actions as a matter of priority:

- i. improve recruitment, retention and deployment of high quality teaching staff;
- ii. modify appraisal and performance management of staff to ensure that underperformance is readily identified and managed appropriately;
- iii. enhance the collection and use of national and in-school analysis of assessment data, including monitoring of trends over time and performance of different groups of students;
- iv. widen the criteria of success for the secondary schools beyond that of targets for the proportion of level 2 passes;
- v. identify and share areas of good practice and success, and provide encouragement for support between schools;
- vi. increase resourcing and improve the training and support for management of special educational needs and behavioural issues;
- vii. ensure that teaching assistants are effectively deployed and supervised;
- viii. refresh induction and professional development programmes to be more effective in meeting the needs of teachers, assistants and students;

- ix. in individual schools, respond to identified challenges that are having an adverse impact on students' achievement and progress.

3. Achievement

Overall, achievement is lower than UK norms by a year and sometimes more. This is the case for all subjects including English, Mathematics and Science. Standards of attainment are particularly low in Mathematics and the practical aspects of Science. A significant factor influencing students' achievement is the quality of teaching.

Data provided by the schools inspected was used for the analysis of attainment on entry and students' performance in externally standardised examinations and tests. Schools in the Cayman Islands enter students for Key Stage 2 tests, GCSE and IGCSE examinations. Students' ability is measured using CAT tests. Students also take standardised tests of attainment in English and Mathematics. Where possible, comparative data is given for UK, world-wide and Caribbean region averages established by the Caribbean Examinations Council (though the Caribbean averages are based on level 2 pass rates only). The ability profile of students in primary and secondary schools is below the UK average. The ability profile of students in Year 4 is higher than in Year 6, whilst that in the secondary schools is lower than that in the primary schools.

Results in National Curriculum tests at age 11 are below the UK average for maintained primary schools. Results in 2012 showed improvement from 2011, with the same standard maintained into 2013. Results in English are generally better than in Mathematics. In 2013, results in Reading were higher than in Writing and Mathematics. Mathematics has only really seen notable improvement in the last three years, where both English and Mathematics have experienced a sudden growth in the proportion of pupils achieving level 2. Boys' performance overall was lower in 2012 than girls', but in 2011 and 2013 performance between genders was more even.

GCSE results have been below the UK average for maintained schools. Results have shown improvement from 2011-13. Boys' results are lower than girls' when compared against gender-specific norms. IGCSE results have been lower than worldwide norms overall, although results in Physics have been similar to them.

The level of attainment both in primary and in secondary schools indicates that students make insufficient progress in relation to the UK average for students of similar abilities.

3.1 Primary

In the primary schools, levels of attainment vary widely and do not show consistent trends between classes, by school or nationally. Results in standardised tests of attainment indicate that students' performance in English and Mathematics is below UK norms. Results in English appear to be consistently higher than Mathematics.

The proportion of 11-year olds achieving at least the expected Level 4 in English in the most successful schools is more than twice that of those in the least successful.

2014 KS2 results by school	Overall %		English Reading		Writing %		Mathematics %	
	L4+	L5+	L4+	L5+	L4+	L5+	L4+	L5+
Bodden Town	55.6	16.7	55.6	19.4	58.3	19.4	30.6	5.6
East End	53.3	6.7	66.7	20.0	46.7	0	46.7	0
Edna Moyle	50	25	87.5	12.5	50	25	0	0
George Town	46.7	13.3	73.3	26.7	33.3	6.7	44.4	13.3
Prospect	84.9	28.3	86.8	39.6	77.4	26.4	71.7	18.9
Red Bay	86.8	31.6	97.4	71.1	52.6	10.5	73.7	40.8
Savannah	69.8	23.3	86	44.2	53.5	9.3	41.9	4.7
Spot Bay	88.9	33.3	88.9	44.4	88.9	33.3	66.7	33.3
Sir John A Cumber	36.8	8	47.4	16.1	27.6	6.9	26.4	2.3

2014 KS2 results by school	Overall %		English Reading		Writing %		Mathematics %	
	L4+	L5+	L4+	L5+	L4+	L5+	L4+	L5+
West End	66.7	16.7	83.3	16.7	66.7	0	33.3	0
National average	63	19.8	76.7	36	49.5	12.4	47.9	14.8

Where achievement is unsatisfactory, groups of students such as the more able and those with special educational needs do not receive specific support in lessons. Regular assessments are made, as required, but information gathered is not effectively analysed or used to inform future planning or teaching. Expectations of all students are too low, with few reaching above expected levels at the end of Key Stage 2.

It is characteristic of schools where achievement is adequate or better that concerted efforts have been made to ensure that interventions support those who make a slower start to their learning, using the most effective teachers in key year groups.

3.2 Secondary

Achievement in the secondary schools varies by school, subject and year-to-year. Attainment on entry is generally low. Results of standardised tests of attainment indicate that students' performance in English and Mathematics is below UK norms, though the difference in performance between English and Mathematics is not as pronounced as in primary schools. In comparison with other schools in the Caribbean region, English results were a little below the regional average up to 2011 but since 2012 they have been above average for the region. Mathematics results have generally been below average for the standards of region, falling substantially below between 2008-2010. In 2013, however, they rose to above average, returning in 2014 to scores similar to the average for the region.

In the most successful schools, rapid progress is made, especially in Key Stage 4. Baseline tests taken in Year 9 are used to predict Key Stage 4 outcomes but the predictions are often unrealistically optimistic.

2014	% five level 2 passes incl. English and Mathematics	% English level 2 pass	% Maths level 2 pass
John Gray High School	28	51	32
Layman Scott High School	65	74	65
Clifton Hunter High School	35	62	42

In the less successful schools, students are below expected levels of attainment on entry and continue to fall further behind the expected levels as they progress through the school. Significant differences in the achievement of some groups, including boys, the most able and those with special educational needs are evident.

Students' performance data is not used effectively to identify areas of underperformance because the analysis does not focus on specific subjects, year groups or target groups but looks instead at overall trends.

4. Teaching and its impact on students' achievement and progress

The most successful features found in the islands' schools are universal ones, including:

- prompt starts to lessons;
- careful lesson planning, which includes provision for individual abilities and needs;
- a brisk and purposeful approach;
- good questioning to stimulate thinking;
- encouragement of students to ask their own questions;
- continuous assessment and application of the findings;
- tasks requiring initiative by the students;
- encouragement of students to follow interests for themselves.

In a significant number of less successful lessons, teaching is not pitched at the correct level and there is little sense of urgency; as a consequence the pace of learning is slow and time is lost. Introductions and explanations are lengthy, with insufficient activity for the students, who have little to do but listen. As a result, students' concentration wanes, behaviour deteriorates, and not enough time is subsequently left for the students to complete work on their own.

4.1 Primary

The quality of teaching across the ten primary schools inspected, ranges from good to inadequate. No school provides teaching that is consistently good across all age groups and subjects. Teaching does not often reach a dependable standard that would support and sustain students' progress.

In the most effective lessons, teaching is well planned and proceeds at a crisp pace with a high expectation of what the students can achieve in the time. In these lessons, teachers display strong subject knowledge and a clear understanding of students' needs. Relationships between staff and students are strong. As a consequence, students are enthusiastic, excited to learn and eager to do their best. However, these instances are few and generally the pace of lessons is slow. In most cases, teaching fails to engage students' interest and enthusiasm. The lengthy introduction to many lessons, the labouring of terminology and the lack of consideration for students' needs leads to lessons where students move from activity to activity with no opportunity to complete a task.

Little provision is made in lessons for sustained pieces of work to be finished and students are not sufficiently required to discuss, collaborate, or work independently. Overall, the volume of work accomplished in lessons is limited by the approach to teaching and students lose interest and become disengaged. In the lessons observed, there were many instances where activities had captured students' interest but this engagement was subsequently interrupted with the requirement to move on to the next planned activity, regardless of students' needs and completion of the task at hand.

Schools follow a rigorous programme of mandated assessment. Regular assessments in Mathematics and English enable senior leaders to track the progress of students, particularly those with SEND. The results of these assessments are discussed with teachers. However, teachers do not, as a matter of course, use these results to plan their lessons and guide the next stage in their teaching. There is little evident in lessons to suggest that teachers consider and cater for the specific needs of students. Questioning skills in teaching are

weak and they fail to engage and encourage independent thought and perseverance. This is a significant failure across all schools. Teaching does not support the less able students and consequently they fall further behind. Many instances were observed where these students disengaged from classroom activities but this was not picked up by teachers, or was ignored by them. Individual educational plans are prepared for those with SEND but most teachers lack training in responding to students' individual needs and providing the small steps in learning required to build understanding.

The quality of learning support across the schools is mixed but there is little evidence of expertise in providing for students with SEND. Similarly, very little provision is made for the more able students. Very few lessons evidenced support or encouragement for either of these groups of students.

The developmental assessment of students' work is unhelpful. Inconsistent approaches to marking hamper students' achievements and contribute little to their learning. Across the schools, most work remains either unmarked or only cursorily marked with ticks and crosses. In the best cases, students are offered advice on how to improve their work and in these cases there is often a noticeable incremental improvement. Some schools have introduced targets for students, which are proving to be successful, but this practice is not universal.

In most lessons, students' behaviour is adequately managed but continual low-level disruption is not uncommon and when it remains uncorrected the standard of work is commensurately low. In the best schools, teaching assistants are effectively deployed to monitor and support the potentially disruptive students but this is not always the case.

Teachers report that teacher training does not equip them with the creativity and skills needed to adapt lessons to meet the needs of all students. We are not able to comment on this aspect of provision as it was not part of the baseline survey. However, evidence from inspection, including lesson observation and scrutiny of students' work, indicates that teaching is frequently overly prescriptive and as a result does not generally respond to the needs of the students but rather follows a predetermined structure or script regardless of the students' capabilities.

4.2 Secondary and Further Education

In the three high schools, the further education centre, and the special school, the picture of achievement and the quality of teaching varies from good to unsatisfactory. The strengths and weaknesses in teaching are universal ones and similar to those delineated above for the ten primary schools. Beyond this, the inspection findings are best understood from the individual school reports.

In all of the schools, there are instances of very good teaching, as well as teaching which is a cause for concern. The proportions vary from school to school but, overall, there is far too much teaching that is unsatisfactory in whole or in part. Overall, the teaching is generally better for students in Key Stage 4 than for those in Key Stage 3. The schools' efforts to improve the quality of teaching vary widely, but not enough is done to identify where there are weaknesses in teaching or to help teachers to improve. Initiatives to improve teaching are not applied consistently.

In too many lessons, the teaching is uninspiring, students become disinterested, behaviour deteriorates, and little is accomplished. In some lessons, where behaviour deteriorates, maintaining discipline rather than fostering students' learning becomes the main focus of the lesson or alternatively an over-emphasis on discipline stifles students' interest and involvement. In others, the teacher fails to address low-level disruption, which not only affects learning in that class, but has an adverse effect on learning in other classes, especially where there is no sound-proof barrier between classrooms.

The teachers spend too much time talking at the students or asking them to copy out notes, so that students become passive recipients of teachers' knowledge, rather than active and engaged learners. Little opportunity is provided for students to develop independent learning skills. As a consequence, many become reliant on adult support and show reluctance to work things out for themselves.

Teaching lacks understanding of how to deal with students' different learning needs and does not adapt the nature, content and level of tasks to cater for different levels of ability. Teachers have low expectations of what students can achieve and present them with low-level, mechanical tasks which offer little challenge, especially for the most able students, who become bored. Often, the slow pace of the lesson contributes to students' boredom. Conversely, students with special educational needs are frequently expected to complete the same work as everyone else, and there is insufficient additional support to enable them to make progress. Where teaching assistants are available, they are frequently not deployed effectively, and communication between the teacher and assistant is poor.

Teachers' questioning skills are weak and often fail to develop students' knowledge and understanding. In some lessons, teachers even discourage any form of dialogue and the sharing of ideas, or prohibit students from asking questions. They provide little encouragement for students to apply and develop written and practical skills. The marking of students' work is at times non-existent, frequently perfunctory and rarely helps students to understand what they need to do to improve their work. A few teachers have poor subject knowledge. In one school, a significant amount of teaching time is lost because students or teachers routinely arrive late for lessons. Some teachers are disorganised and are not fully prepared for their lessons. Occasionally, lack of resources or the poor condition of the accommodation have an adverse impact on students' learning.

In stark contrast is the good and very good teaching which is evident in differing proportions in all schools. The same group of students can be poorly behaved and disengaged in one lesson, yet well behaved and highly motivated in the next when they find interesting teaching which engages their attention and a teacher who has high expectations of what students can achieve. In such lessons, students are encouraged to aim for the highest grades and not be content with a pass at the lowest level. Lessons are conducted with a sense of urgency, and students capture teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects responding with interest and enjoying their learning.

Planning for the best lessons is often detailed and imaginative, and is based on teachers' knowledge of what students already know and what difficulties they have encountered in previous lessons. It provides for different teaching methods, variety of resources and relevant activities which make the lessons interesting and engaging for the students. The teachers encourage students to think for themselves, to collaborate, working in pairs, sharing their ideas and asking questions. The teachers mark students work regularly and thoroughly, providing them with helpful and constructive comments which help them to understand what they need to do to improve.

5. Leadership and management

Leadership and management at all stages of education vary from good to unsatisfactory. In three of the 15 schools, the quality is 'good'; in four it is 'adequate'; and in eight it is 'unsatisfactory'.

School development plans follow national guidelines but are not always specific, realistic or precisely timed. Performance data is not regularly linked to priorities in improvement plans.

In many schools there are insufficient staff to cover routine and senior leadership roles. This hinders the establishment of strong, long-term senior leadership. Oversight of

specialist areas, including special educational needs and the provision for able, gifted and talented students is limited in scope and effectiveness.

Some good practice was seen in relation to monitoring teaching to identify weaknesses and standards, and to improve teaching. However, feedback following lesson observations is sometimes too generous. Monitoring of policy implementation, including those for teaching and assessment is weak. Insufficient use is made of data on students' performance to target interventions and to evaluate longer-term progress through the school. Staff training is sometimes used effectively to share expertise and knowledge, but development of subject expertise, particularly in Mathematics, is insufficient.

In the primary sector, schools generally run smoothly day-to-day. Leaders have a good knowledge of individual students and are keen to nurture their individual gifts. Resources are generally appropriate, often including well-stocked school libraries.

In the three high schools, the further education college and the special school, the relevant aspects of leadership and management are specific to each and are best represented by the appropriate sections of the separate baseline reports.

6. English

6.1 Primary

Standards of achievement in English are improving very slowly and whilst there has been some progress over the past three years it has been too little in the time. Most students are not attaining the level expected for their age and ability in reading, writing, and speaking and listening. Across all schools, the standards of achievement in English are better in reading and speaking and listening than in writing. The Ministry initiative to improve standards of English teaching in schools means that the curriculum now provides planned opportunities for the younger students so that they have a good foundation to support their learning as they move on through the school. However, older students are still lacking in many of these early skills and this gap grows wider over time as those who struggle, particularly with their writing, do not have sustained support.

Younger students make good progress in their reading. Reading is taught through a mixture of shared, guided and some independent reading where students are encouraged to discuss their reading with their peers. A systematic process of teaching phonics enables students from an early age to succeed in reading. Students are encouraged to use a range of skills such as decoding and contextual and picture cues to decipher unfamiliar words. However, these skills are not sustained and many older students struggle to decode words. There is no clear policy on home/school sharing of reading. In some schools, books are sent home and a home/school diary kept, whilst in others books are not sent home at all. Consequently, in these schools reading is limited to the group activities during school time. Individual reading for enjoyment is rarely encouraged. Very few opportunities are provided for independent research and in most schools the library is under-used. Many older students find it difficult to detect meaning beyond the literal, or to scan a page to find information. This limits their capacity for research and development of their understanding in a wide range of subjects.

At Key Stage 1, speaking and listening skills are regularly promoted in most schools and, when given the opportunity, students are eager to discuss and confidently put forward their ideas. They are excited about their learning and enthusiastically join in with activities. They listen to stories and can concentrate for sustained periods of time. For older students, there are few such activities. Discussions are predominantly teacher-dominated; closed questioning prevails and so students have little incentive to develop skills of debate and discussion.

The quality of students' writing is very variable across the schools and in only a few does it reach a good standard commensurate with age and ability. Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are inconsistent and are often too low. Students do not write as well as they read because links between reading and writing are not made strongly enough. Tasks are often made unnecessarily complicated in the early stages by focusing on organisational features. Teaching is planned to ensure the systematic development of some key skills, but does not ensure that students pay enough attention to the importance of good standards in presentation, accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar. This impedes the development of fluency. Insufficient emphasis is placed on creative writing and writing at length. Much time is given in lessons to students copying out questions and learning objectives and no time is set aside for students to enjoy writing and become absorbed in the task.

The provision for students with individual needs is developing and the role of a SENCO has been established in schools. Students with special educational needs have helpful individual education plans and are withdrawn from classes on occasion for support in literacy. This is effective, but not enough on its own to accelerate their progress significantly. Usually, in class all students do the same work at the same pace. Additional challenge for the most able is rare and so these students often 'mark time' in lessons. Teaching assistants are not trained and deployed effectively to support students' learning and teachers struggle to support these students in lessons.

6.2 Secondary and Further Education

Students' achievement and the quality of teaching and learning vary from school to school. Although improving, standards in English on entry to secondary school are low. The proportion of students who achieve a level 2 pass in English by the end of Year 11 is below the equivalent UK national average, but opportunity to retake English at the end of Year 12 raises the proportion of level 2 passes across all secondary schools to just over two-thirds of students. Standards are highest in the island's smallest secondary school, where almost three-quarters achieve a level 2 pass by the end of Year 11 and over 90% by the end of Year 12. Across all schools, girls achieve better results in English than boys. The quality of teaching in individual lessons varies from very good to unsatisfactory, though the proportions vary between schools.

Many students are articulate and perform well when giving individual presentations, although the strategies for and success in developing students' speaking and listening skills vary widely. At its most successful, students are given plenty of activities involving group discussion. They are encouraged to express their views in lively question-and-answer sessions in many subject areas. Teachers' questioning challenges students' understanding and points of view and as a result they develop excellent listening and good speaking skills. They are respectful of others' points of view.

In contrast, in the least successful schools, activities for students to develop speaking skills are not arranged sufficiently often in lessons. Students give brief answers to questions without being challenged or required to extend their answers. In some cases, students are denied the opportunity to engage in discussion, even when they appear keen to contribute. In one school, the lack of dividing walls between classes impedes oral work and engagement in role-play activities.

The schools are generally successful in developing students' reading skills. Many students enter secondary school with very low reading ages, but these improve markedly by the end of Key Stage 4. The use of graded reading books, peer reading schemes, volunteer readers, the encouragement of independent reading, good use of the library and specific intervention programmes all contribute to the development of reading skills. Students' subject-specific vocabulary is good in some subjects, but others do not give enough attention to this aspect

of students' learning. As a result, older students sometimes struggle when confronted with complex vocabulary.

Success in developing students' writing skills also varies widely from school to school. At its best, students enjoy creative writing, even though their spelling and use of paragraphing need attention. Elsewhere, students are prepared adequately for examinations, but are not helped to develop fluent writing styles. They are not sufficiently required to produce creative writing or extended pieces of written work. A strong emphasis on grammar and gap-filling exercises fails to stimulate or engage students and so this approach is not particularly successful. Poor grammar and weak spelling routinely mar the writing produced by lower-achieving students, even though presented neatly and with good handwriting. The marking of students' work is occasionally excellent but too often it does not help students to improve the quality of their writing, and little attention is given to the quality of written English in other subjects.

The teaching of the lowest-achieving students and of those with special educational needs is a cause for concern. Although staff have had access to relevant information and recommended strategies for teaching these students, there is no check on how well these strategies are implemented or what impact they are having. In many cases, no account is taken of their particular needs, and they are required to complete the same work as the most able students. Assistants are not deployed effectively and specialist support is insufficient. In one school, where most of the teaching of English is good, the teaching for the lowest-achieving students remains weak.

All schools have given thought to developing literacy skills in all subjects, and policies for cross-curricular literacy development have been drawn up. However, outside English lessons, the policies have not been implemented consistently. Few staff show much regard for the policies, and senior staff have not checked their implementation or what impact they are having on developing students' literacy.

7. Mathematics

7.1 Primary

Results in assessments show that across all schools standards in Mathematics are low. Attainment is well below that expected for students' age and ability, particularly for the younger age range.

Mathematical understanding and competencies amongst teachers are generally poor. Some teachers have good knowledge, understanding and skills in Mathematics, and expertise in teaching the subject, but this is not uniform and the majority do not display confidence or enthusiasm for the subject nor do they employ strong teaching strategies. Overall, there is little diversity of tasks for students according to their abilities. Consequently, less able students struggle and lose interest whilst more able students lack the challenge and impetus to achieve their full potential. Teacher expectations are too low and the pace of lessons too slow.

The plethora of different testing of mathematical achievement does not have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Data accumulated is not yet fully used to track students, to highlight areas of concern, or to inform planning for teaching and learning.

Preferred approaches to teaching are too prescriptive and teachers follow set methods without a true understanding of the implications for learners. For example, teachers are encouraging over-use of 'number lines' for addition and subtraction, to the extent that students are slowed down in their calculations and prevented from using mental strategies or learning other more efficient methods of calculation. Teachers often require 'mental arithmetic' calculations to be written down mechanically. Many students who have limited

literacy skills find this difficult and time consuming, so further limiting their ability to develop their skills in creating mental solutions to problems. Students are rarely required to consolidate their skills and apply them in different contexts. Often, the volume of work achieved in lessons is poor.

Younger students learn to count, order numbers, add on, take away and use mathematical vocabulary, securely and with enjoyment. However, their skills are not reinforced and extended as they move through Years 3 to 6. They do not sufficiently practise the speedy recall of number bonds and multiplication facts. This makes it difficult for them to calculate accurately in their head, or to tackle problems involving several steps; a skill that therefore continues to elude them as they move through the school.

In the best lessons, teachers give students opportunities for 'real life' problem solving and peer discussion is encouraged. However, often these sessions are laboured and not specific in the instructions, so slowing pace and progress. Teaching of strategies to support problem solving does not always use efficient methodology. Students of higher abilities are rarely given extension work to match their abilities and potential.

At Key Stages 1 and 2, students frequently 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 of variable quality at Key Stage 2. Lessons are too often mundane and do not inspire students to learn.

Schools do not have their own policies for Mathematics but follow that set out by the Department of Education. This approach, whilst effective for some, prevents other schools from developing different strategies that may be more effective in responding to students' needs and interests.

Students have no textbooks to work from, lesson planning is of mixed quality, and only a small number of teachers provide graded exercises for students of differing abilities. In many lessons, all students, regardless of their ability, are expected to do the same work. This leaves the less able students floundering, while able students are not extended. 'Maths recovery' classes are provided in some schools, giving useful extra practice to students who are falling behind. However, there is not an obvious link with timetabled Mathematics lessons and communication between staff about the sessions and their impact on students' understanding is poorly developed. In lessons, valuable time is often wasted in writing out questions before working on them. For less able students in particular, this leaves little or no opportunity for written practice and support.

7.2 Secondary and Further Education

In view of the differences between the three high schools and the further education centre, the best source of information on the inspection findings is contained in the separate baseline reports.

In the lessons observed, progress varied considerably across and between schools, with most rapid progress occurring in well-planned lessons that made effective use of time and a variety of approaches. In many other lessons, however, there was no clear structure or expectation. The pace of working was slow and little progress was made.

Teachers' knowledge of Mathematics and examination requirements is generally good but teaching fails to capitalise on this expertise by poor planning and use of time.

In one school, there has been a sharp focus on developing Mathematics teaching and the quality is often good. Students have 'Numeracy Thursdays' for problem solving and afternoon sessions are held for the more able students and those who need help. Many subjects have an emphasis on Mathematics and parental involvement is encouraged. Explanations are clear and techniques are developed in small, calculated steps. Worksheets

are suited to different needs. Students help others, explain methods and spot deliberate mistakes.

At the further education centre, the quality of teaching in certain subjects is good or very good. Excellent planning enables teachers to be successful in meeting the needs of their students. They provide ready help and give informal feedback. Regular checking of work ensures that those who have previously struggled with Mathematics are not cast adrift. Challenging activities in every lesson keep the more able students focused. Formal tests are regular and informative to the students, who appreciate the way teachers explain concepts to them.

8. Next steps and recommendations

Substantial changes will be required to achieve the ambitious aims of the Ministry. Strategies for improvement will inevitably depend on the resources available and the preferred approach, whether that is through centralised co-ordination of national programmes, the development of school-led systems for improvement, or other methods. Whichever direction is chosen, we recommend the following actions as a matter of priority:

- i. improve recruitment, retention and deployment of high quality teaching staff;
- ii. modify appraisal and performance management of staff to ensure that underperformance is readily identified and managed appropriately;
- iii. enhance the collection and use of national and in-school analysis of assessment data, including monitoring of trends over time and performance of different groups of students;
- iv. widen the criteria of success for the secondary schools beyond that of targets for the proportion of level 2 passes;
- v. identify and share areas of good practice and success, and provide encouragement for support between schools;
- vi. increase resourcing and improve the training and support for management of special educational needs and behavioural issues;
- vii. ensure that teaching assistants are deployed effectively and supervised;
- viii. refresh induction and professional development programmes to be more effective in meeting the needs of teachers, assistants and students;
- ix. in individual schools, respond to identified challenges that are having an adverse impact on students' achievement and progress.