

BASELINE INSPECTION REPORT

West End Primary School

9 to 11 March 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Information about the school and the inspection team**
- 3. Executive summary of the report**
- 4. Commentary on the inspection findings**
 - i. How well students achieve and make progress
 - ii. The effectiveness of teaching and its impact on students' learning
 - iii. How well the school is led and managed
 - iv. The quality of teaching and learning in English
 - v. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics

Appendix A

Recommendations

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:	63
School address:	West End Primary School 10 ABC West End Road Box 104 Cayman Brac KY2- 2000 Cayman Islands
Telephone number:	345-948-1425
Email address:	April.tibbetts@gov.ky
Name of acting Principal:	April Tibbetts

West End Primary School is one of two primary schools on Cayman Brac, with approximately 52 students on the roll. Because of unforeseen circumstances, over the last few years, the school has had several changes of leadership. The present acting principal has been serving at the school in this capacity since September 2014. Prior to the inspection, by way of the online questionnaire, parents voiced their concern at having so many different persons at the helm, and expressed their desire for more stability.

Information about the inspection team

Lead: Mary Bowerman

Team: Natasha Chopra

This inspection of West End Primary School took place from 9 to 11 March 2015 and involved a team of two 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

The inspection team gathered evidence in the following ways.

- Twenty-four 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 from Years 3 and 6 was scrutinised
- Inspectors listened to students read
- Discussions took place with the principal, the senior teacher, those designated as lead literacy and numeracy teachers and students from Years 3 and 6

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

Grade		Description
1	Very good	Good in all respects and exemplary in some significant areas
2	Good	Good in most respects. Weaknesses are minor and not in significant areas
3	Adequate	No significant weaknesses, but no major strengths. Improvement needed
4	Unsatisfactory	Some significant weaknesses 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 overall effectiveness of the school is unsatisfactory. Students are not achieving the standards expected for their ages, although there is some progress, especially in reading. Standards in writing and mathematics are too low. Rapid progress in Year 6 as a result of good teaching helps students a great deal, but cannot make up for the lack of support or challenge they may have missed earlier.

Through unforeseen circumstances, a succession of acting principals has contributed to a lack of consistent leadership. There is no clear management structure within the school as all teachers have full-time teaching responsibilities. The acting principal has been in position since September 2014. Added to the responsibilities of leading and managing the school, come occasional practical necessities, such as driving the school bus or filling in for an absent teacher.

Support for literacy is provided by a literacy coach who travels from Grand Cayman to Cayman Brac on a weekly basis. There is less support for numeracy, as there is only one numeracy coach, who is not available to travel to Cayman Brac. Written guidance from the literacy and numeracy specialists in the Ministry of Education has been helpful in providing guidelines for extending the types of writing being taught and units of work in mathematics for Years 1 to 4.

The school is making some progress in identifying areas of weakness and is beginning to introduce strategies to address these.

What the school does well

- It provides a positive learning environment where students feel secure
- There is strong teaching in many classes, especially in Year 6
- Students make good progress in reading
- It is identifying areas of weakness and working towards resolving these

What needs to improve

- Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve
- The progression from one year to the next in English and mathematics
- Standards of achievement in mathematics
- The way teachers track students' progress and use the information to help them plan
- The analysis and use of students' performance data to identify weaknesses in teaching and learning

Commentary on inspection findings

How well students achieve and make progress

The standards students achieve are unsatisfactory.

They are considerably lower than the standards expected for their ages, and although there is some progress, it is too slow. Class numbers are small, but this should not be a barrier to students' attainment.

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). Standards were consistently low from 2011 to 2013. Standards in mathematics dropped from 38 to 22 percent achieving level 4 and then rose again in 2013 to 36 percent. However, during these years, only two girls in the class managed to attain the expected level (level 4) in mathematics. In 2014, the Key Stage 2 results in English were much improved, with four of the six students achieving the expected standard in writing, five of the six achieving the expected standard in reading, but only two of the six in mathematics. Cognitive abilities tests, which provide teachers with an estimate of the standard of which students are capable, suggest that there is much under-achievement, particularly in mathematics.

Across the school, lessons observed during the inspection confirm that more able students are not challenged to reach their full potential, while less able students do not receive enough support to help them make progress at an appropriate rate. When students reach the end of Key Stage 2, the good teaching they receive enables many of them to make rapid progress, but there is not enough time for them to make up all the ground they have lost.

The effectiveness of teaching and its impact on students' learning

Overall, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, but it has good features in Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2.

Class sizes are small and teachers in Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2 use varied activities and a range of different resources to maintain a good pace and keep students focused. However, the way that lessons are organised, particularly in English, while allowing opportunities for group work and a variety of activities, can be very disruptive to students' learning, especially at Key Stage 2. Students rotate through different activities such as computer time, 'word work' using blocks or cards to spell words or make sentences, independent reading or guided reading. In such lessons, students are often just settling into an activity when they have to change and do something else which may or may not be related to what they have just been doing. Most classes do not have an assistant, and students who do not happen to be working with the teacher at a particular time are generally unsupervised, and much valuable time is lost.

The teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 1 has been helped by the units of work developed by the numeracy specialist in Grand Cayman. However, not all teachers are

confident teaching mathematics, and often the pace is very slow and students are distracted or discouraged because of lack of support or challenge. In Key Stage 2, the learning is not helped by the use of different materials by different teachers, which makes it difficult to ensure progression in learning from one year to the next. Students make good progress in Year 6, but not enough to reach the standards expected for their age.

Teachers' marking is regular and often includes suggestions for improvement, although corrections by students are not often seen. Many older students take pride in the presentation of their written work but younger students especially have trouble keeping number work neat without having exercise books with squares. The range of work covered since the beginning of the school year is good, although the amount that has actually been completed varies considerably.

Teachers know their students well and keep track of their progress, but they do not always make good use of that assessment information to plan their lessons in a way that would meet the different needs of students. There is often little challenge for more able students and not enough support for the less able. It is during these times that students become disengaged because they have either completed the task they were given or are struggling to know just what they should be doing; behaviour deteriorates and little is accomplished.

Students who need extra help with reading are withdrawn during their literacy time by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) or a teaching assistant for *Levelled literacy intervention*. It is too early for the school to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of this intervention, but students with special educational needs require extra support for all subjects. A small selection of books is provided in each classroom, but especially at Key Stage 2, there is not an attractive variety at the appropriate level.

Classrooms across the school are bright and attractive and provide a welcoming learning environment where students feel comfortable to express themselves and ask and answer questions. Many teachers are enthusiastic and their animated teaching and clear explanations provide the stimulation that students need to stay on task. Almost all teachers share clear learning objectives with students, although sometimes these focus more on the topic to be covered or the activities that will be done, rather than on what students should know and be able to do by the end of the lesson.

How well the school is led and managed

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory, but have taken action to promote future improvement.

Following unforeseen circumstances, the school has had a series of acting principals, and parents have expressed concern over what they perceive as a lack of stability. The present acting principal has been in post since September 2014.

There is no designated senior management team. All other staff have full-time teaching responsibilities, including the present senior teacher, who has been acting principal on occasion, and the unofficial lead teachers for numeracy and literacy. Direction for the work and development of the school is therefore led by the acting principal, whose responsibilities not only include the duties of a principal, but also driving the school bus or

supply teaching when necessary. There is a senior school improvement officer based on Cayman Brac, who is available for consultation.

The past months have been spent observing lessons, monitoring the teaching and learning and analysing the data on students' performance produced by the Department of Education Services. Lesson observations have raised some concerns and action plans, with deadlines, have been put in place in an attempt to address these. A reading scheme is also being developed as teachers are using different strategies and the need for progression and continuity of learning has been recognised.

There are plans to re-establish a school library and the process of sorting the books has begun. Currently there is no whole-school marking policy. Assessment is included as a part of the teaching and learning policy, and the guidelines for behaviour management have just been completed and are ready for further consultation.

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Routines are well established and procedures are consistently implemented. An example of this was seen in classes where teachers used de-escalation techniques learned and practised in assembly to help students to calm down before behaviour got out of hand.

The school improvement plan was completed with input from the staff and the SENCO and shows evidence of a great deal of thought, though some of the dates may need to be adjusted. One of the main difficulties in the management of the school is the lack of personnel to take on any more responsibilities. The present acting principal has recognised where improvements need to be made, and is making some progress.

The quality of teaching and learning in English

Overall, outcomes for students in English are adequate, with some good features, but improvement is needed because more able students are not suitably challenged in lessons, and expectations are not high enough. Students with learning difficulties do not receive enough support. In some classes where students are not suitably challenged or supported they become restless and bored and cause low-level disruption.

Standards of achievement in English are better in reading, speaking and listening than in writing because the ethos established by the school encourages and supports students' confidence to participate in lessons. Students make good progress in reading and their writing is slowly improving.

There is a good range of effective teaching of English in Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2. During the inspection, some good lessons were seen where teachers maintained a lively pace and used a range of methods to develop skills in speaking and listening. In some instances students asked searching questions that showed an awareness of the need to be critical listeners who think about and question what is being said. For example, a teacher's lively, animated manner brought the lesson alive and questions were asked effectively to draw out students' understanding and a confident response, even including gasps of amazement. By the end of Year 6 many students express themselves in full, grammatically correct sentences. They confidently interact with visitors about what they do in school and express preferences about reading material.

Students in all year groups make sufficient progress in reading. Younger students talk confidently about books they have enjoyed and oral reading of unknown texts shows fluency. Students use a range of skills such as decoding, and contextual and picture cues to decipher unfamiliar words. They read with expression and can self-correct when they misread a word. They are not overly reliant on the teacher for help. The use of phonics in reading and writing shows students are confident in the use of letter sounds.

Older students are confident enough to read with expression and with an understanding of the text. In both age groups, students speak confidently about different types of books and can define the difference between fiction and non-fiction. They know few authors and this could, in part, be due to the fact that classroom reading areas are insufficiently resourced and at present there is no usable library in the school. They are able to identify the features of an information text such as a contents page, index, and a glossary but there is not enough promotion of reading for enjoyment.

Handwriting is of a good standard in Key Stage 2 and students take pride in the presentation of their work. In younger classes, students print fairly neatly but the overall presentation of work could be better. In the younger classes, students express ideas in a simple way. By the time they reach Year 3, they are confident in their use of capital letters, full stops and exclamation marks. Spelling of common words is mainly accurate.

Students write for different purposes and a good range of writing is evident in students' books. For example, students have written different forms of poetry such as shape and acrostic poems. The introduction of the *Guidance for Effective Writing* produced by the literacy specialist in Grand Cayman has had a positive impact on learning about a range of genres. During the inspection, all classes were completing a unit on report writing. 'Word walls' with key vocabulary were found in most classrooms, and there were many examples of students actively using them to help with the spelling of words. The school recognises that spelling is an aspect that needs improvement.

Work is marked regularly and teachers write evaluative comments to help students improve their work. Targets are set for students and are referred to in most classes.

In classes where teachers use their expertise and subject knowledge to make lessons interesting and lively, students are motivated and behaviour is good. Students are able to make more progress and are enthusiastic about their work. In a lesson on report writing, the teacher encouraged students to write about a topic that interested them, asking searching questions that evoked good discussion and debate, and then modelled how to organise their writing into paragraphs. This gave students confidence and boosted their self-esteem. In all classes students display positive attitudes and respect each other's ideas. This supports their learning and creates a secure learning environment.

The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics

Outcomes for mathematics are unsatisfactory and a cause for concern. The Key Stage 2 results consistently show that students are achieving standards considerably below what is expected for their age and, although many students make rapid progress in Year 6, there is not enough time to compensate for their previous lack of progress in basic skills.

Students in Key Stage 1 make adequate progress in concepts such as addition, patterns, mental mathematics and multiplication tables. In some classes, students learn to work in groups to solve problems and teachers plan activities that match the differing needs of students and help them to consolidate concepts taught. For example, in a lesson on counting in twos, the teacher ensured that there were a number of different and varied activities to help reinforce the concept and move the students forward in their learning. In a particularly well-planned lesson in Key Stage 1, a clear learning objective helped to set up the framework for the lesson and students knew what was expected of them. The teacher used a range of teaching methods to engage all abilities and encouraged them to use mathematical vocabulary such as 'numerator' and 'denominator'. Where teaching does not meet the needs of all students, the pace is slow. More able students are not challenged enough.

Classroom resources are arranged attractively with displays that celebrate students' work in mathematics. They enjoy talking about their work and explaining it.

In Key Stage 2, the teaching and learning of mathematics is not as good as it should be overall and students are not making enough progress. In many classes, the work is pitched too low and does not challenge the more able students, or students do not have the pre-requisite skills to tackle the objectives. Teachers give few opportunities for students to discuss their work. An exception to this was seen in a lesson on finding the mean and the mode. Students worked in small groups. They collaborated about the responsibilities of each member of the group and discussed what procedures they would use to complete the task.

Teachers use a variety of schemes to guide their planning but there is not a clear overview of the continuity and progression of key skills across the school. As such, there is some confusion as to where students should be in their achievement. Teachers' plans do not indicate how students' progress is to be assessed so that they know what the students understand and can do.

Where teachers are not confident enough in their knowledge and understanding of mathematics, lessons are not well structured and learning objectives are not clear. In some lessons, explanations and instructions to students are unclear. Students are confused about what to do and make little progress. Quite often, questions merely test recall and do little to deepen and develop students' understanding. Behaviour is generally good, but when the pace of lessons is too slow, students mark time and there can be disruption in some classes. Students make up a lot of ground in Year 6 in response to the good teaching they receive, but most are still not where they should be by the end of Key Stage 2.

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.

Raise teachers' expectations of what students can achieve.

1. Allocate responsibility for researching expected standards on UK websites as the Cayman Islands' curriculum is based on the English National Curriculum.
2. Seek support from specialists in the Ministry or Department of Education Services.
3. Liaise with teachers from Layman Scott High School regarding their expectations of students entering Year 7.

Provide an overview of expected year-to-year progression in English and mathematics.

4. Meet together as a staff to produce 'curriculum maps' which set out the knowledge, skills and understanding expected at the end of each year in English and mathematics.
5. Assess the progress of each year group at the end of term, and aim to work on the identified areas for improvement.

Raise students' attainment in mathematics.

6. Match the expectations for each year group with the knowledge, skills and understanding securely possessed and identify where the weak areas are.
7. Produce an action plan for each year group with specific time scales for implementation.
8. Support each other as a staff by sharing good and effective practice.
9. Use the predictions from the cognitive abilities test results to help to support or challenge students as needed.
10. Use PiM and MaLT results to pinpoint weak areas and focus on these.
11. Ensure plenty of mental mathematics to strengthen knowledge of number bonds and multiplication tables.

Track students' progress and use this information for planning lessons.

12. Devise a simple tracking system (traffic lights – RAG) for example, to understand where each student's strengths and weaknesses are.

13. Aim to address these areas in daily planning.

Use students' performance data more effectively.

14. Seek help in interpreting the data correctly.

15. Do an 'in-house' evaluation to determine specific strengths and weaknesses.

16. Seek help if it appears that teaching in particular areas may be weak.

Recommendations for English

1. Raise teachers' expectations of what students can achieve.
2. Continue work on developing a school library.
3. Adopt an appropriate spelling scheme.
4. Provide opportunities for students to go over work that has been marked and make corrections themselves

Recommendations for mathematics

1. Raise teachers' expectations of what students can achieve.
2. Ensure progression of learning from one year to the next.
3. Ensure that teachers are given more opportunities for professional development in the teaching of mathematics.
4. See further recommendations in general section above.