



CAYMAN BRAC HIGH SCHOOL



SUMMARY INSPECTION REPORT

8-11 March 2004

Cayman Islands Schools' Inspectorate

"Working in partnership for high quality education for all students"

Foreword

The Cayman Islands Schools' Inspectorate is responsible for monitoring and reporting on educational standards in government and private schools. The Cayman Islands school evaluation model includes school inspection and self assessment by schools and is designed to support school effectiveness and school improvement.

School inspections are carried out once every six years for each school. They identify the school's strengths and the areas requiring attention. Between inspections, there is a formal monitoring visit to check on the progress the school has made in tackling the priority areas. Inspectors are guided by the criteria in the Cayman Islands *Handbook for the Self-Assessment and Inspection of Schools*.

Inspections provide schools, parents and the community, the Education Department and the Ministry of Education with an external and impartial evaluation of the quality of a school's work and its impact on students' learning and the standards they achieve in their work and personal development. Through the publication of the summary inspection report, inspection contributes to accountability, transparency and openness within the education system.

Self-assessment by schools is an important part of the Cayman Islands school evaluation model. Together with inspections, self-assessment provides a balanced system of internal and external accountability for schools.

In 2003 the Inspectorate completed the first cycle of inspections. Following extensive consultation and research, the inspection model and the Handbook were revised to make them more useful to support school effectiveness and improvement. Changes were also made to the inspection reports, to improve their clarity and helpfulness for readers. This revised model was piloted in 2004 with inspection of a primary and a secondary school.

The Inspectorate trusts that the inspection and self-assessment processes and the inspection reports will prove helpful to the school, parents, the Education Department and the Ministry of Education, Human Resources and Culture, and will contribute in a positive way to school effectiveness and school improvement.



Mary Rodrigues
Chief Inspector of Schools

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Information about the school

Cayman Brac High is a government school for students from Years 7 to 12. It is the only secondary school on the Brac, with 155 students currently on roll. The intake has increased in recent years and there are significantly more students in Years 7 and 8 than in the other year groups. The school has 67 students on its register of special educational needs (SEN), 35 of whom have been formally assessed. There are 23 full-time teachers and one part-time teacher on the staff. The majority of teachers have more than 10 years of teaching experience. Four teachers are new to the school this year, but most have been with the school for at least three years, and, in one case, 25. In addition, there are two part-time peripatetic teachers and a guidance counsellor. The school reports that a significant proportion of the students have weak literacy and numeracy skills when they join Year 7.

Information about the inspection

The inspection took place from 8th to 11th March 2004 and involved a team of six inspectors. The inspection covered all aspects specified in the *Handbook for the Self-Assessment and Inspection of Schools, 2nd edition*. In addition, English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) were inspected as well as a sample of lessons in other subjects. The inspection drew on the findings of a survey of the school's provision for technical and vocational education, which had been undertaken two weeks earlier.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

How good the school's performance is and how much progress has been made since the last inspection

The school was first inspected in 1997, when six key issues for action were identified. The post-inspection report of 1999 established that the school had made good progress since the 1997 inspection and indicated that there had been improvements in relation to most of the key issues, although there was still further work to be done. The current inspection has found that overall the school has continued to make good progress in many areas, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning and in raising standards. Analysis and the use of performance data have also improved. However, the need to monitor practice to ensure consistency has not been fully addressed.

Cayman Brac High is a good school and it has the capacity to improve even further. The school has a generous allocation of well qualified and experienced teachers who are committed to the school and its students. Leadership is good and there is support from parents and the community. With these secure foundations, the school is well placed to act on the recommendations in this report and to move from strength to strength.

What the school does well

- Most students make good progress and achieve well in external examinations.
- A high proportion of the teaching is good or very good, and is consistently so in science.
- The leadership is very effective and has established a strong ethos where staff have a clear commitment to the school and to its students.
- The school is working hard to cater for the wide range of students and offers them a broad curriculum with an extensive range of subjects and courses.
- The school has established very productive links with the community.
- The school's analysis of data on students' performance in tests and examinations is comprehensive and very thorough.
- Very good use is made of ICT by students and staff in many subject areas.

What needs to improve

- Teachers' expectations and teaching approaches for some of the students who are low attaining or who lack motivation
- The use of on-going assessment by teachers to guide teaching and learning
- The school's approach to planning for its further development, which is currently not based on a systematic monitoring and review of practice.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the school's action plan. The school is required to provide parents with an annual update on the progress that is being made in addressing these issues.

In their reports, inspectors use terms such as "very good" or "satisfactory" to describe the extent to which the school's work and students' outcomes meet the standards expressed in the criteria. These relate directly to the following five-point scale:

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| 1: | <i>very good</i> | <i>(many good features, some outstanding)</i> |
| 2: | <i>good</i> | <i>(mainly good features)</i> |
| 3: | <i>satisfactory</i> | <i>(overall, meets basic requirements)</i> |
| 4: | <i>unsatisfactory</i> | <i>(requires some improvement in key areas)</i> |
| 5: | <i>poor</i> | <i>(requires substantial improvement in key areas)</i> |

LEARNING, STANDARDS AND TEACHING

(The judgements that follow are based on in-depth evaluations of English, mathematics, science and ICT, which included classroom observations, scrutiny of students' work and interviews with students and staff. Other subjects were only sampled.)

How effective is students' learning?

- The quality of learning is generally good. During the inspection, learning was satisfactory or better in 88 per cent of lessons and good or very good in 46 per cent. Overall, most students make good progress over time and achieve well, often from a low starting point. There is a strong correlation between the progress students make and the quality of the teaching they receive.
- Almost all of the students are keen to learn, which contributes significantly to the progress they make. Students' attitudes to learning in lessons are also closely linked to the quality of teaching: they are invariably highly motivated when the teaching is good and as a result make better progress. Students make particularly good progress in science.
- On the whole, most students develop a range of appropriate learning skills. The progress and achievements of a significant minority of students are, however, inhibited by long-standing weak literacy skills.

How high are standards at the school?

- Inspection evidence indicates that by Year 9, students generally achieve standards that are in line with what is expected for their age in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Results in the 2003 Education Department's tests were above the national average in all subjects tested.
- By Year 12, many students achieve standards that are at least in line with, and often above, expectations in most aspects of mathematics and ICT. In science, standards are significantly above expectations. Standards in English are more variable: some students achieve above expectations, others are below.
- Students are entered for a wide range of external examinations and results are often good. For example, a significant proportion of students (nine out of 24) were 'honours graduates' in 2003, gaining seven or more higher grade passes in the CXC General and IGCSE¹ examinations. All students gained at least one good pass at Basic level, with the majority achieving three or more good passes.
- These results represent a very good achievement, particularly given the high proportion of students in the 2003 Year 12 cohort (over 40 per cent) who had special educational needs.
- Examination results have been maintained at a good level over the past few years. There have been fluctuations, but these can generally be accounted for by variations in the proportion of students with SEN and the small cohort sizes.

¹ CXC- Caribbean Examination Council; IGCSE- International General Certificate of Education; Higher grade passes are grades 1 to 3 for CXC General and A* to C for IGCSE

How effective is the teaching in supporting learning and raising standards?

- Overall, the quality of teaching is good, which has a positive bearing on students' learning and the progress they make. The teaching was satisfactory or better in 89 per cent of lessons seen during the inspection and good or very good in 52 per cent.
- There were many examples of very good teaching throughout the school, and in science the teaching was consistently good.
- The teaching was slightly better overall in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3, with less unsatisfactory teaching and more that was good or very good.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise and usually have high expectations for work and effort. Many teachers make good use of prompts, praise, humour and feedback to build students' self-esteem and encourage them to perform to high standards.
- Some of the most effective teaching occurs when the students are actively involved in the lesson. Some, but not all, teachers match activities effectively to students' different needs.
- Teachers make good use of diagnostic tests to help them identify weaknesses and to plan lessons. Students' work is marked regularly but not always in a way that shows how it can be improved.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

How well is the school led and managed?

- The school is very well led and generally managed effectively.
- The leadership is very good in many respects, particularly in promoting a clear vision and in establishing a cohesive team of staff who work hard and strive to do their best for the students and the school. There is a positive ethos and purposefulness about the school.
- Many aspects of management are good. For example, the day-to-day running of the school works well and the management team is developing a range of policies, which are generally clear and supported by guidelines. There is, though, insufficient monitoring and evaluation to identify inconsistencies in practice.
- Teachers are reflective and want to improve their practice, as indicated by their positive response to the self-assessment prior to the inspection. However, senior managers have not yet devised a formal system for planning the school's future development.
- The school has made good use of opportunities afforded by the ITALIC² initiative to enhance teachers' skills in using ICT. There has also been some very useful training on other whole-school issues, but few opportunities for subject-specific training. More could be done to plan ahead for in-service training based on whole-school and individual teachers' priorities.
- The school has a strong team of well-qualified and experienced staff, and a good range of resources for learning, particularly for ICT. Subject departments are generally well led and managed; the leadership and management of the science department are exemplary.
- The accommodation is generally satisfactory, although it is showing signs of deterioration in a number of places. There are serious concerns over health and safety in the craft workshop area, and facilities for music are also inadequate. The school's lack of an indoor space for physical education severely impedes the range of activities that can be undertaken. The school and community continue to raise concerns over pollution from the nearby power station.

How effective are other aspects of the school's work?

- The school has strengthened its provision for **students' personal development** since the last inspection and it is now good overall. Students are developing appropriate values and beliefs, taking into account the views and opinions of others. Their cultural development is good. The opportunities provided for students' social development are satisfactory and for the most part students make good use of them. However, there is a small group of students (mainly low-attainers) who rarely get involved in the full range of school activities, despite teachers' efforts.
- The **curriculum** is good and is enriched by an impressive range of extra-curricular activities. Students are offered a wide choice of examination courses. The recent curriculum review has led to a more efficient use of the school's resources. The school's procedures for **assessment** are generally effective.

² *Improving Teaching and Learning in the Cayman Islands*

Good use is made of testing and examination data to track students' progress. However, too few teachers use their day-to-day assessments of students' performance to adjust their teaching and learning. Students are also rarely asked to evaluate their own progress and achievements.

- **Attendance and punctuality** are good overall, although there is a small group of older students who are frequently late for school in the morning.
- The school cares for its students well and has generally good procedures for ensuring their **welfare, health and safety**, although there are serious concerns about safety in the woodwork area. There is a good programme of careers education, including work experience for older students. The system of sanctions and rewards is appropriate and generally effective, although not all students feel that their views are taken into account and some perceive the sanctions as punitive.
- The school promotes its **links with parents** well on the whole. There are regular opportunities for parents to meet with staff to discuss their child's progress, but the written reports could provide more useful information. **Links with the community** are strong. Parents see the school as being at the heart of the community.

Parents' and guardians' views of the school

(Based upon questionnaire returns and discussions at the meeting for parents/guardians)

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That their children attend the school and make good progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The poor behaviour of some students
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teaching is good and teachers know the students well	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The timeliness and quality of feedback to students about their homework
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities to become more involved in the school and to express views and opinions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school is generally well-equipped, particularly for ICT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school is at the heart of the community	

The inspection team agrees with most of the views above. However, the behaviour of the students was generally good during the inspection. In a small number of lessons, some students became restless or inattentive but this was generally because the teaching failed to engage them. The team found that the school has introduced a number of effective strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL AND THE INSPECTION TEAM

THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Government
Age range of pupils:	10 to 17 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	155
School address:	PO Box 251 SPO, Cayman Brac
Telephone number:	948 2226
Fax number:	948 2254
Email address:	cbhs@candw.ky
Name of Principal:	Mrs Shirley Hurlstone Wahler
Date of previous inspection:	17- 21 November 1997
Post-inspection:	5-6 May 1999

THE INSPECTION TEAM

Lead inspector:	Helena McVeigh, Schools' Inspectorate
Team inspectors:	Stephen Crowley, Schools' Inspectorate
	Mary Bowerman, Schools' Inspectorate
	Christine Agambar, Overseas inspector
	Mollie Sayer, Overseas inspector
	Terry Turner, Overseas inspector