



SAVANNAH PRIMARY SCHOOL



SUMMARY INSPECTION REPORT

2-5 February 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

SAVANNAH PRIMARY SCHOOL INSPECTION

2nd to 5th FEBRUARY 2004

SUMMARY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Information about the school

Savannah Primary is a government school. There are 13 classes in total, with two classes in each year, except for Year 3, where there are three. At the time of the inspection, 281 students, between the ages of 4.9 years and 11.11, were on the school roll. Eleven of the students have English as an additional language. The school reports that there are currently 53 students on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN), 16 of whom have been formally assessed and have individual education plans.

Including the principal, there are sixteen full-time members of teaching staff. There is one newly qualified teacher. The remainder are experienced teachers, with ten having over 20 years experience of teaching. The length of time teachers have been teaching at the school ranges from less than one year to 18 years. Seven teachers were appointed to the school within the past three years. In addition to the full-time teaching staff, there are seven peripatetic specialist teachers. There are three full-time support assistants and one full-time teachers' aide.

Information about the inspection

The inspection took place from 2nd to 5th February 2004 and involved a team of five inspectors including a local occasional inspector. The inspection covered all aspects specified in the *Handbook for the Self-Assessment and Inspection of Schools, 2nd edition*. In addition, language arts, mathematics and science were inspected as well as a sample of lessons in other curricular areas.

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 February 1998, when five key issues were identified. The report recommended that, in order to make progress, the school would need a period of stability and 'the full co-operation and support of all concerned with the students' education'. The post-inspection report of 2001 judged that, although some progress had been made in a few areas, progress overall had been slow, and the key issues remained areas of priority. It recommended that the school should seek outside assistance with the areas it found most challenging.

The findings from this 2004 re-inspection indicate that progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory overall. The school has made satisfactory progress in strengthening students' personal development, and their spiritual development and aspects of cultural development are now strengths of the school. The identification of, and provision for, students with SEN have improved and are now satisfactory. However, poor progress overall has been made in respect of the other key issues.

The challenges facing the school remain largely the same as those at the time of the first and post-inspection. Frequent staff changes, particularly at the most senior levels, have continued to have a destabilising effect upon the school's organisation and management. On its own, the school does not have the capability to overcome the significant problems it faces.

What the school does well

- Most students are confident and competent readers for their age.
- The school has good, productive links with parents and the community.
- Students are developing good knowledge and insight into their own values, customs and beliefs.
- The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities that cater well for students' interests, and enrich and extend learning in the classroom.

What needs to improve

- There is no clear vision for the development of the school, and staff, parents and students do not have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and goals.
- Policies and management procedures do not support the smooth running of the school.
- The effectiveness of the teaching and the quality of students' learning vary too widely across the school.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of all students. It lacks balance and relevance in key areas.
- The school does not have effective assessment arrangements and does not make good use of assessment information to support the teaching and learning.

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 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 language arts, mathematics and science, 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 students' learning varies widely, but is too often unsatisfactory. In 72% of lessons seen, learning was satisfactory or better.
- Students' progress and achievement vary between year groups and between classes in the same year group. In many classes, students are making at least satisfactory progress and working at their potential. However, in a significant minority of classes, students are not making sufficient progress because the teaching is not well matched to their ability or interests.
- The progress and achievement of students with SEN is broadly satisfactory, and they usually make good progress in classes where they are taught separately.
- Most students are developing a range of general learning skills. However, too few opportunities are provided in lessons for students to reflect on, or make choices in, their learning, and students' independent learning skills are not well developed.
- Students generally have positive attitudes to learning. When tasks are unchallenging or the pace of lessons is too slow, some students become distracted and lose interest.

How high are standards at the school?

- In the Education Department's 2003 end-of-year tests, the students in Years 3 and 6 achieved above the national average in language arts, but below in mathematics and science. Girls achieved better results than boys in language arts, mathematics and science.
- In language arts, inspection evidence indicates that standards in both key stages are in line with expectations for the students' age.
- In mathematics, standards in both key stages are broadly in line for number. Students' achievements in the other aspects of mathematics, such as measurement, are lower, as these aspects are not taught consistently.
- In science, standards overall in both key stages are just in line with expectations, but standards are lower in experimental and investigative science.

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

- The quality of teaching varies too widely. Whilst there was some very good teaching and it was at least satisfactory in 76% of lessons seen, there was too much that was less than satisfactory.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach are generally satisfactory. However, teaching approaches and methods are not always appropriate for the students' age or stage of development.
- In many lessons, teachers select activities that motivate students to learn. However, in a significant minority of lessons, students spend too much time copying from the board or completing mundane tasks, which fail to capture or sustain their interest.
- Teachers of the same year groups usefully work together to plan lessons. However, it is often not clear from the planning what the teachers want the students to learn in a lesson, which makes it more difficult for teachers and students to judge whether progress has been made in the learning.
- Most teachers make satisfactory use of the resources available and organise their classrooms to provide attractive and stimulating learning environments. Lesson time is used effectively in many classes. In a significant minority of classes, however, lessons do not begin on time and the pace is too slow. In these lessons students do not complete enough work for them to make good gains in their learning.
- Relationships between teachers and students are mostly positive. Generally, teachers maintain discipline procedures that are firm but fair. However, students' behaviour is not always well managed and in these lessons students' learning and progress are impeded.
- Overall, teachers do not make good use of assessment to support and guide teaching and learning. This leads to students in many lessons being given work that is either too easy or too hard, and they do not make as much progress as they should.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

How well is the school led and managed?

- While there have been some positive developments, the school recognises that leadership and management at all levels are priorities for improvement.
- The school's leaders and managers have not established a sense of common purpose across the school. Many of them are new to their leadership roles and they have had little training, preparation and support to help them fulfil their responsibilities.
- The school's aims have not been reviewed for some time and they do not underpin the day-to-day work of the school or guide the education the school provides.
- There are some useful strategies in place for sharing information but, overall, staff, parents and students do not have a good understanding of the school's priorities.
- Whole-school policies for key areas of the school's work, such as assessment, and teaching and learning, are not in place. Other policies, for example, those in relation to discipline, are not consistently implemented throughout the school.
- Some monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and standards take place, but they are not systematic, and do not result in a clear picture of the school's strengths or areas for development.
- The school has rightly given a high emphasis to making staff, students and parents feel valued. Teaching and non-teaching staff have had the opportunity to take part in good professional development. However, as the school acknowledges, further work on establishing a positive ethos, with a clear focus on raising standards, remains a priority.
- Overall, some of the day-to-day routines, administrative procedures and the organisation of the school day do not always enable the school to run as smoothly or effectively as it should.

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

- The school has significantly improved its provision for students' **personal development**. Students are developing a good knowledge and insight into their own values and beliefs. Their spiritual development and aspects of their cultural development are now strengths of the school.
- The **curriculum** is suitably broad, but lacks balance and relevance in some key areas. For example, not enough time is given to the teaching of art or to the teaching of elements of some subjects, such as measurement in mathematics.
- The school has a satisfactory rate of **attendance**. Most students attend regularly.
- Overall, the **punctuality** of students is unsatisfactory. There are some habitual latecomers at the start of the school day and a significant number of students arrive late for classes after break and lunch times. This affects the start of lessons and the

amount of time given to teaching. The systems that are in place to address tardiness are not effective.

- The school's **links with parents and its local community** provide good support for students' learning.
- Overall, the school provides satisfactorily for students' **health, safety and welfare**. Some procedures, however, such as the supervision of students when they return to lessons after break and lunch times, are not effective. In addition, the school is correct in expressing its concern over potential safety risks when students are picked up at the end of the school day. The school provides its students with generally good support, advice and guidance.

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
Children are happy and making good progress.	The way in which the school listens and responds to parents' views and suggestions.
Teaching is good at the school.	The poor behaviour of some students.
Teachers' grades and comments help parents understand how they can help their child to improve.	Greater consistency in the use of sanctions and rewards.
Children have opportunity to take part in a good range of extra-curricular activity.	The curriculum more closely following that set down by the Education Department.
The school is helping their child to become mature and responsible.	A reduction in the number of students in some classes.

The inspection team agreed with most of these views. However, the inspectors judged that the quality of teaching was variable and ranged from very good to poor. The number of students in the classes was not judged to be the main reason why students in some classes are not making the progress of which they are capable. The quality of the teaching was a more significant factor.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL AND THE INSPECTION TEAM

THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Government
Age range of pupils:	4.9 to 11.11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	281
School address:	SAVANNAH PO, Grand Cayman
Telephone number:	947 1344
Fax number:	947 8871
Email address:	
Name of Principal:	Mrs Lorna Blackman
Date of previous inspection:	9th – 13th February 1998
Post-inspection:	15th – 17th May 2001

THE INSPECTION TEAM

Lead inspector:	Ann Coker, Schools' Inspectorate
Team inspectors:	Ivan McNally, Overseas inspector
	Patricia Pryce, Overseas inspector
	Pachent Smythe, Local Occasional Inspector
	Monica Timmis, Overseas inspector
Administrative Assistant:	Carmen Levy, Schools' Inspectorate