



EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION CENTRE INSPECTION REPORT

CAYMAN BRAC DAY CARE CENTRE

OFFICE OF EDUCATION STANDARDS
APRIL 2018

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Health and Safety.....	4
Curriculum.....	6
Leadership	7
Recommendations	8
What happens next?	8
Office of Education Standards	9

Introduction

This inspection was undertaken in April 2018 at the request of the Ministry of Education. As specified within the Education Law (2016) Section 18 (3), 'the Minister shall require the Director of the Office of Education Standards to carry out independent assessment, monitoring and reporting of educational institutions at intervals of not more than four years, and at such other times as the Minister may consider necessary and expedient'.

The concerns raised by the Ministry of Education related to matters of health and safety, curriculum quality, staffing and leadership.

Context

The Cayman Brac Day Centre has been in operation since 1989. Originally, the Centre served staff employed by the District Administration, but in 1993 admissions procedures were revised to open enrolment also to children from the wider community. A number of management aspects of the Centre are overseen by the District Administration. The District Administration Department manages the appointment of staff, site maintenance and also the administration of fees.

At the time of this inspection there were 62 children on roll, from age twelve weeks to four years. The majority of the children are Caymanian.

Inspection of Early Childhood Care and Education Centres

Two inspectors from the Office of Education Standards visited the Centre from Tuesday 3rd April to Wednesday 4th April 2018. Inspectors spent time observing in the different playrooms and met with the Centre Manager and a senior manager from District Administration.



Consistency in quantitative terminology

Inspectors use quantitative terms in reports, as follows.

	Definition	Numerical
All	The whole – as used when referring to quantity, extent, or duration.	100%
Almost all	90% and more	90% to 99%
Most	Three quarters or more but less than 90%	75% to 89%
Majority	Half or more but less than three quarters	50% to 74%
Minority	15% or more but less than half	15% to 49%
Few	Up to 15%	0% to 14%

Summary

Inspectors evaluated the quality of provision in the areas of concern raised by the Ministry of Education. These included health and safety, the quality of the curriculum, staffing and leadership.

The inspectorate concluded that there were important weaknesses in the quality of provision at Cayman Brac Day Care Centre.

The Ministry of Education has expressed concern regarding a number of matters relating to the care and welfare of children and staff.

Inspectors noted important weaknesses in the quality of provision, particularly with regard to health, safety and hygiene.

At the time of the inspection, the number of children on roll in the three to four year old class was 29. Although there were fewer children actually present, the room size did not meet regulation requirements for the number of children on roll. Space was very limited in this class area and throughout the Day Care Centre. The area immediately adjacent to this classroom had previously been available as a breakout space. The area had been redefined for use by younger children and this significantly constrained the curriculum and learning opportunities available to the three to four old children.

There are a number of bathrooms available for children's use in the centre. However, there are none allocated specifically for use by boys or girls as indicated within Education Council Guidelines. The number of toilets available for the three to four year children to use was insufficient for the number of children on roll.

There were a number of cots in use within the main infant area. It was noted that the Education Council requirement to ensure these were a minimum of 30 inches apart was not met.

Two rooms used by children in the Day Care Centre had no natural light and, as a result of the revised designation of the learning areas, there was no specified sick-bay area for children who become unwell during the day.

There had been annual safety checks during which the children and staff had practised routines in the case of a fire. There were no records of more regular drills and management documentation pertaining to fire safety was incomplete and insufficiently detailed. Fire routines were posted in most rooms, though not all. The displayed information, however, did not specify the required exit routes or meeting points. Fire drills had taken place at different times over the two years but issues identified on those occasions had not been satisfactorily resolved to ensure improved evacuation arrangements.

Early Years staff from the Ministry of Education visited the Cayman Brac Day Care Centre to offer training and support. Despite this regular guidance, arrangements to ensure full compliance with Education Council guidelines required improvement. The Day Care Centre lacked consistent, comprehensive and informed professional guidance. Such support was necessary to ensure full compliance and effective decision-making particularly with regard to the steps that should be taken to improve the quality of provision.

The area at the entrance to the Day Care Centre was used by staff working with the infant children. It served as a breakout area with some facilities for changing and for play. However, adults also frequently used the area as a thoroughfare and almost all did not wear any protective covering to their footwear. Consequently, this organisational arrangement presented some risk in terms of managing hygiene and establishing good routines for cleanliness.

Staff spent time throughout the day helping to ensure that good hygiene routines were followed. Charts were used in each playroom to record daily cleaning practices. In the afternoon, an appointed member of staff cleaned the main rooms and all floor areas. Despite these efforts, however, policies and practices were not effectively managed and routines were still not yet sufficiently rigorous.

Numerous areas in the Day Care Centre were cluttered and this was reportedly due to the shortage of storage space for resources. The staff base was inaccessible due to the storage of large wooden cots and other equipment in the room. Similarly, adult toilet facilities were used for the storage of items, including play equipment. In both cases the arrangements presented a health and hygiene risk for staff and for children. In addition, the building was poorly maintained and there were a number of minor repairs both inside and outside of the building which required attention and which had previously been reported to the relevant authorities. In a significant number of play areas and in the dining area and main office, large cracks in the walls, particularly near to window areas had been reported to District Management for investigation. At the time of the inspection, there had been no resolution or planned action communicated to the Child Care Manager regarding the matter.

Inspectors checked two of the first aid boxes in the Day Care Centre and noted that a significant number of required items, as specified within Education Council guidance, were not available for staff to use in the case of an injury or accident.

The Ministry of Education has expressed concern regarding the quality of the curriculum programme in the Day Care Centre.

There were important weaknesses in the quality of the curriculum delivered in the Day Care Centre.

Inspectors observed sessions in all of the playrooms as well as outdoor play and lunchtime routines. Relationships between staff and children were positive. Adults working with all ages were attentive to the children's needs and were knowledgeable regarding each child's personal preferences and their achievements. In each area the childcare assistant planned the learning activities focussing upon the four areas of learning as required within the Cayman Islands Early Years curriculum. The Child Care Manager monitored the plans. Overall, activities were appropriate to the age and stage of the relevant children. There was, however, considerable scope to improve the range of activities across the day to include, for example, a better balance between adult-led and child-directed tasks. Too often, it was noted, the activities were restricted by the space available, particularly in the infant learning areas. Space constraints for the three to four-year old children resulted in the absence of established learning centres to encourage the children's independent learning as well as opportunities for exploration. Inspectors noted a limited range of age-appropriate books in the Day Care Centre to support the children's emerging literacy skills. Over the two days of inspection, no opportunities were provided for the children to interact with books. Furthermore, while the toddlers engaged in spontaneous play with balls, blocks, and other learning resources there were limited structured activities to support the development of their fine and gross motor skills.

In all stages from toddlers to four-year old children, the spacious outdoor area was not used effectively to promote children's physical and social skills. Staff did not consistently promote children's achievement in communication and early mathematical learning. Overall, the quality of intervention by staff required improvement at all stages of the Day Care Centre to more effectively promote the children's communication skills.

Assessment strategies were underdeveloped in the Day Care Centre and were a notable weakness in the quality of provision. Information regarding individual children's interests and achievements was not well managed and observations from day to day were not used well to inform planning for learning. Files including example pieces of work had been developed but these needed to be reviewed to include more meaningful links to the appropriate stages of development relevant to each phase of learning.

Reporting arrangements to parents required improvement to include a more detailed and comprehensive account of each child's achievements against developmental goals.

The Ministry of Education has expressed concern regarding aspects of leadership and management at the Day Care Centre. In particular, the Ministry sought improvement to current staffing and admissions arrangements, requiring the appointment of a qualified teacher to the Day Care Centre to meet Education Council requirements.

There were important weaknesses in the staffing arrangements for the Day Care Centre.

Education Council Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education Centres (2013) state that there should be at least one person holding a certificate of license to teach in the Cayman Islands on site in each licensed Early Years institution. The Cayman Brac Day Care Centre has no such member of staff although arrangements for such an appointment are currently in process.

In addition, the Centre is not yet registered with Education Council and therefore is not yet subject to the requirements and best practice directives associated with the registration of all Early Years Centres in the Cayman Islands.

Inspectors reviewed the attendance records kept by staff for the current and last academic sessions. Although attendance figures fluctuated from week to week, it was clear that the number on roll at times exceeded Education Council requirements for the physical space available. The playroom attendance registers also indicated variation in the ages of children within each area of the Day Care Centre. This required further review by staff to ensure equity in terms of curriculum delivery for all children.

Recommendations

In order to improve the quality of provision at Cayman Brac Day Care Centre, the Child Care Manager, staff, District Administrator and Ministry of Education should address the following four recommendations.

- The Child Care Manager and staff should review the organisation of playrooms in the Centre and adapt admissions arrangements accordingly to make more effective use of the available space and ensure full compliance with all relevant Education Council requirements.
- The Child Care Manager, in partnership with relevant officers from the Ministry of Education, should improve curriculum delivery and the quality of staff interactions to support children's learning.
- The Child Care Manager and District Authority should meet registration requirements identified within this report, including the appointment at the earliest opportunity of an appropriately qualified teacher to the staff team.
- The Child Care Manager, staff and other relevant authorities should improve health and safety arrangements as identified within this report

What happens next?

As the quality of provision in key aspects of leadership, curriculum and health and safety are judged to be weak, Cayman Brac Day Care Centre is required to develop an action plan to address the recommendations stated in this report. This action plan must be sent to the Office of Education Standards within 40 working days from the publication of this report.

The Office of Education Standards will monitor the progress made by Cayman Brac Day Care Centre and will undertake a further inspection within six months.

Who are we and what do we do?

The Office of Education Standards is part of the Portfolio of Civil Service within The Cayman Islands Government. Our function is to inspect early childhood care and education centres, public and private schools and report upon standards in all educational institutions in The Cayman Islands.

How to contact us

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Where to read our reports

Our reports are published regularly and are currently available on the Portfolio of Civil Service website. Please use the following link to read our latest publications.

www.pocs.gov.ky

