



2ND FOLLOW-THROUGH **INSPECTION REPORT** 

**SIR JOHN A. CUMBER PRIMARY SCHOOL** 

**OFFICE OF EDUCATION STANDARDS** JANUARY 2019

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## Introduction

In academic year 2014-15, the Minister for Education commissioned inspections of all government schools. The purpose of the inspections was to provide a baseline assessment of the quality of teaching and its impact on students' learning. Inspectors checked the progress students made and the standards they achieved, the effectiveness of the leadership and management of each school, and the academic standards, notably in English and mathematics. The reports were published during the same academic year and are available on the government website following the link below.

http://www.education.gov.ky/portal/page/portal/mehhome/education/baseline-inspections-reports

In academic year 2017-18, the Office of Education Standards commenced follow-through inspections to report on the progress made by each school since the initial visits in 2014-15.

#### **Follow-Through Inspections**

During the follow-through visits, inspectors focused upon the recommendations that had been made at the time of the initial baseline inspections. They evaluated whether the school had made sufficient progress in addressing the areas requiring improvement. Inspectors used a four-point scale to comment on progress, with evaluations ranging between excellent, good, satisfactory or weak.

Follow-Through Inspection of Sir John A. Cumber Primary School

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Follow-Through Inspection of Sir John A. Cumber Primary School took place from 30<sup>th</sup> January to 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019. The inspectorate gathered evidence through lesson observations and discussions with staff and students. School documents and, where applicable, examination and assessment data were also reviewed.

#### 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

In the period between the first and second follow-through inspections there had been a number of changes to the staffing arrangements at Sir John A. Cumber Primary School. There were ten new teachers and support staff appointed, including a new Deputy Principal. Overall, there had been a number of improvements to the work of the school and, although standards of achievement remained too low, the Principal had provided effective leadership to address weaknesses in teaching and the rate of students' progress in English and mathematics. Importantly, the previously high rate of staff absence had improved and students' attendance had also increased. Classrooms were, in general, more effectively organised and teachers' management of incidents of poor behaviour was also more consistent and appropriate. Despite these improvements there remained inconsistencies in teaching quality, particularly across Key Stage 2 classes. At most stages of the school, students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics remained well below local and international standards.

Follow assessments through into teaching, by identifying specific weaknesses and paying attention to these in the planning of lessons.

The school had made **weak** progress in addressing this recommendation.

There had been a number of improvements in teachers' planning and in the rigour with which senior leaders monitored the curriculum across the school. Most teachers used a common format and this required the incorporation of references to the different groups of learners and the various levels of ability to be addressed in classes. The Principal had introduced a comprehensive marking and assessment policy, which ensured that both internal and external tests were used on a regular basis to check students' progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Despite these improvements there remained a number of weaknesses in teaching and assessment practices across the school. For example, when teachers planned lessons they did not have sufficient regard for the achievements of students in recent work and in previous assessments. This led, at times, to students unnecessarily repeating work. In the case of higher achieving students, the introduction section of certain lessons was, at times, insufficiently challenging because they were already confident and knowledgeable about the content. As a consequence, the pace of lessons for a significant minority of students in Key Stage 2 was often too slow.

Furthermore, in both Key Stages 1 and 2, at the start of the academic year, inspectors noted that all of the students in classes would often repeat work from the previous session and did so regardless of their evident knowledge and skills and regardless of their performance in recent assessments. In individual lessons also there were too many examples in which the students were required to listen to lengthy explanations by the teacher when it was evident that they had a confident grasp of the topic being taught.

It was recommended that teachers' plans should be reviewed to include reference to the broad attainment levels of different groups of students. In monitoring lessons and teachers' plans, the senior leaders of the school should also check the implementation of plans because there were a number of occasions where important aspects of lessons were planned, but not actually delivered. For example, in several mathematics lessons teachers did not follow their plans and did not include time to teach mental calculation skills. Also, during the inspection, it was noted that certain Key Stage 2 teachers did not follow timetables and planned lessons were not delivered as stated within the curriculum documents.

## Track the progress of year groups over their time in school to monitor and accelerate the overall pace of progress.

The school had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation.

The Principal had continued to develop systems to track students' progress and had extended the arrangements further to make notable improvements. The new system was introduced at the start of the academic year and made use of the school information management system. This meant that the information gathered could be shared easily and regularly with individual teachers and could be updated throughout the session. This was an important step because the Senior Leadership Team met each term with every teacher and reviewed the progress of each student in English and mathematics to check that sufficient progress had been made over time. As the new tracking arrangements had been introduced at the start of the academic year 2018-19, it was too early to evaluate whether the impact upon students' progress had been significant. Importantly, the Principal had reviewed the performance management arrangements for teachers and had included the data from the tracking systems to hold teachers accountable for the progress of students in their classes.

In the past, students' progress had been adversely affected by staff absence. During the last inspection it was noted that support staff covered a significant number of classes when teachers were absent due to illness. Students' behaviour deteriorated in such contexts and the intervention programmes were too often cancelled because the support staff delivering the programmes were needed to cover classes. In this second follow-through inspection overall staff attendance had increased by ten per cent and there were no examples in which unqualified teachers taught full classes. Intervention programmes ran as planned and incidents of poor behaviour were less frequent.

Students' attendance had improved when comparing data from 2017-18 with the current academic year. The senior leadership team had worked effectively with parents to emphasise the importance of good attendance and had devised a number of positive strategies to reward students with improved or full attendance. In the last term attendance across the school had increased by over two per cent and was good during the inspection period.

State plainly what students are expected to learn by the end of each year and take speedy action if students are falling behind.

The school had made **weak** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Staff had developed curriculum plans for each academic year, for each term and for every lesson in English and mathematics. Consequently, there were clear expectations in place for every year group although these were not always sufficiently demanding compared to international standards. The curriculum was currently under review as part of the Ministry of Education programme for improvements to government primary school provision.

The senior leaders had developed a common format for planning and the Principal and Deputy Principals met each week with teachers in their relevant year groups and this helped ensure sufficient consistency and rigour in the content of lessons. However, starting from a very low baseline in previous years, students' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics remained well below expected levels and had declined from 2017. Tracking arrangements had yet to have the required impact on students' progress in key areas of the curriculum.

#### Plan the use of time in lessons to maximise learning, and teach at a brisker pace.

The school had made **weak** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Inspectors observed fifty-one lessons during the second follow-through inspection. All homeroom teachers and a number of specialist staff and intervention classes were visited. There were improvements to the quality of teaching since the last follow-though inspection. For example, overall, classes were more orderly and effectively managed. Classroom environments and shared areas, such as the library, had been improved and the revised marking policy had assisted in ensuring a more consistent and regular approach to reviewing students' work. In Reception and Year 1 classes there were more frequent opportunities for students to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. However, practice remained variable and was less effective in Key Stage 2 classes.

In summary, inspectors judged twenty-nine per cent of lessons to be good or better. However, around one third of all observed lessons were found to be weak. Most of the weak lessons were in Year 5 and 6 classes, including those lessons at that stage taught by specialists. Weaknesses in these sessions included teachers' poor subject knowledge in mathematics. Furthermore, at this stage of the school, lessons were too often characterised by excessive teacher talk and insufficient opportunities for students to be active in the learning. Teachers' planning included an appropriate range of tasks for different levels of ability but plans were not always followed and time management was not always fully effective to ensure completion of set tasks within the lesson.

In the weak lessons observed in Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers spent too long revisiting content that had already been understood by students. The unnecessary repetition of content reduced the overall pace of students' progress.

Develop a school-wide marking and feedback policy to ensure that students learn from their mistakes and are guided in improving their work.

The school had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Subsequent to the Follow-Through Inspection of 2018, the Senior Leadership Team had reviewed the school's assessment and feedback arrangements and had developed a coherent marking policy to ensure that the teachers provided constructive and accessible feedback to students about the quality of their work. In addition, senior leaders had also developed a comprehensive range of guidance documents and checklists so the teachers could better support students to measure their knowledge and understanding against learning objectives and to identify where they needed to target their efforts to improve. Inspectors noted that across the year groups, the majority of students made use of writing checklists and rubrics displayed in their work books but this reflective practice was not yet sufficiently embedded in the culture of the school. As a result, there were too few instances where the students effectively used the checklists to monitor the quality of their work to make required improvements.

To help embed the feedback mechanisms in practice, senior leaders had implemented a staff monitoring feedback form which assessed the extent to which the staff promoted the students' consistent use of the writing checklists.

Take account of different abilities in the planning of lessons, and raise the level of challenge for more able students, building on from what they already know.

The school had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Effective lesson planning was a feature of the majority of lessons. Most teachers used engaging starter activities to stimulate the students' interest in the lesson and to create purposeful learning environments. In the better lessons, the assessment tasks were closely aligned to the learning objectives and were designed to challenge students' thinking. Most teachers assisted students by modelling what they wanted students to do. Almost all teachers were aware of the varied learning needs of their students and carefully planned tasks to accommodate the students' mixed abilities.

The grouping of students was suitable and in the majority of lessons, almost all students remained engaged and worked purposefully on assigned tasks. Notwithstanding, a few teachers still required additional support in adapting lesson content and tasks to effectively meet the needs of all learners.

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#### Train and deploy teaching assistants so that they support students' learning.

The school had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation

Over the last school year, the teaching assistants benefitted from several training opportunities to refine and improve their practice. Senior leaders had deliberately incorporated the teaching assistants in planned training and enrichment activities for staff and as a result they participated in the training sessions offered to the classroom teachers.

During the inspection, the inspectors noted that in the majority of lessons observed in Reception and Key Stage 1 classes, teaching assistants were effectively deployed and provided good support to the class teachers and the students. For example, in a phonics lesson in a Reception class, the teaching assistant ably supported students in developing their phonetic skills by modelling letter sounds and structuring multiple opportunities for students to practise letter sounds. In later stages of the school, however, support was more variable and, at times, there was insufficient initiative shown to support students' engagement in lessons.

The school offered a number of intervention programmes aimed at supporting students at risk of falling behind in key areas of the curriculum, including reading and mathematics. Staff leading the programmes followed a set curriculum and used detailed lesson plans to structure the sessions. As a result of the careful planning and small group arrangements, most students made satisfactory progress in the various programmes.

Plan professional development focused on what makes a good lesson, and increase opportunities for teachers to observe and learn from the most effective practice.

The school had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Senior leaders demonstrated strong commitment to the professional development of the staff in order to develop their knowledge and skills. The school's professional development summary report indicated that throughout the school year there were numerous planned opportunities for the staff to participate in a range of training opportunities to improve their practice. These included whole school activities as well as targeted training in areas such as guided reading, writing moderation, curriculum planning, data and target setting and mental mathematics skills. Capacity building was also incorporated in the training initiatives as the staff had the opportunity to learn from their teaching colleagues in house as well as from other schools and external experts. The support staff were well integrated in the training opportunities. Senior leaders reported that almost all staff had responded positively to the professional development opportunities and most had acknowledged that the training added value to their practice.

#### Ensure that new initiatives are rigorously evaluated for their impact on learning.

The school had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Following the last inspection, the Principal had introduced a number of effective steps to improve the quality of teaching and support the more effective day-to-day management of the school. These had helped establish a more purposeful learning environment and all initiatives had been reviewed as part of the school improvement and self-evaluation strategies overseen by senior managers.

The staff had worked creatively to improve levels of parental engagement and had offered a number of workshops after school for interested parents. For example, meetings for parents in each year group had been held explaining the content of the core curriculum including mathematics. The strategies used by teachers to guide the students were outlined. The school reported that in total around half of the parents in each year group had attended. In addition, parents' support had been gained in helping address poor student attendance in the previous academic year. Parents had responded favourably, recognising the link between achievement and regular attendance. As a result of strong links with parents and also with support from the Ministry of Education truancy officer, there had been a notable increase in the students' levels of attendance in the first term of 2018-19.

Students from Years 1 to 6 had made weak progress in English and mathematics in 2017-18. To address this, the Principal had revised the arrangements to track progress and hold teachers accountable for the rate of progress from one term to the next. The tracking process was relatively new at the time of the inspection and was to be used in 2019 to provide an agenda for meetings with teachers every term and thereby identify those students at risk of not achieving the required rate of progress in their reading, writing or mathematics skills.

Ten new staff joined Sir John A. Cumber Primary School at the start of academic year 2018-19. This relatively high turnover offered further challenge to the Principal and to the Department of Education Services in order to establish a more consistent profile of good teaching, particularly at Key Stage 2. From the start of the session, staff attendance had improved and the learning environments across the school reflected a dedicated and hardworking staff team. However, to ensure ongoing improvements to the quality of teaching and a reduction in the number of weak lessons, the Department of Education Services and the Principal will need to collaborate further and ensure that any future changes to staffing lead to an improved pace of improvement in teaching quality.

In English, ensure that every student reads daily in school, and encourage daily reading at home, monitoring what students read, and matching books to reading level.

The school had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Across all year groups, guided reading was an established feature of lessons. The majority of the students in Key Stage 2 were able to use reading strategies such as inference and prediction to support their understanding of reading materials in lessons. In addition, reading initiatives such as Reading Buddy and DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) provided regular inclass opportunities for students to read books matched to their assessed reading levels. In lessons, many students were able to access on-line reading resources such as 'Raz Kids'. Class libraries were also a notable feature of the school, although some were more attractive and better organised than others. Of note, the newly reorganised library provided an attractive and inviting learning environment for the students which cultivated their love of reading and broadened their imagination. In addition, the library reflected a well-planned learning environment with reading, activity and research centres organised throughout with attractive and comfortable seating to encourage the students to use the available resources. These centres supported the development of the students' reading, comprehension and research skills. The school had also established effective partnerships with the Ritz Carlton Hotel and LIFE which served to promote the students' love of reading through guided interactions with reading volunteers.

The full impact of these initiatives had not yet been realised as students' attainment in reading was below national and international standards. Senior leaders should continue to strengthen the partnerships with parents so children are provided with regular opportunities to read at home to further develop their reading fluency and comprehension skills.

## In English, teach students how to apply their phonic knowledge in reading and writing.

The school had made **satisfactory** progress in addressing this recommendation.

In Key Stage 1, phonics lessons were timetabled and these provided regular and structured opportunities for the students to develop their phonics knowledge. For example, in the Reception classes, the children were taught letter sounds in meaningful ways such as looking at a word and thinking about the sound the letter started with and then saying the sound aloud. The teachers used interesting strategies such as alliteration chains to help students practise saying beginning letter sounds. Moreover, teachers supported activities appropriately as the children were then able to consolidate their learning of lesson sounds. Through the use of centre activities children completed alphabet puzzles, sorted objects and pictures according to their beginning letter and learned how sounds are represented by letters. Many children were able to identity a letter and then say the sound it represented out loud. These activities effectively supported the children's decoding skills. In addition, some children were able to practice letter formation by writing on mini-white boards. In one of the Year 1 classes, many students used Jolly Phonics work books to support them in blending letter sounds to pronounce words, and many students were learning encoding skills as they practised to write simple words. In a Year 2 class, the students had learnt about consonant clusters and the majority were able to spell and write a range of CVC, and CCVC words.

#### Build students' skills in reading for information.

The school had made **weak** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Across the year groups, the students engaged in a range of guided and shared reading activities to build their skills in reading for information. In many instances, the teachers ably supported the students to increase their understanding of reading materials by exploring how the material connected with their real lives. This was evident in a guided reading lesson in Key Stage 2 where the students related their parents' experiences of devastating hurricanes that affected the Cayman Islands in the past and used that information to make meaningful self-totext connections. In the majority of lessons, students appropriately responded to reading stimuli to make inferences and predictions and most teachers satisfactorily guided students in using context clues to aid them in making inferences. These activities supported the development of the students' critical thinking skills. In an effective lesson in Key Stage 2, the teacher read an extract from a story in dramatic tones which supported the students' visualisation of the main events in the story. As a result of the dramatic appeal, almost all the students were later able to read handouts of the story and make reasonable inferences and predictions about key events in the extract, which they represented in sketches. Similarly, the teacher in a Reception class effectively supported the students in age-appropriate ways to make predictions about a story. The students were actively encouraged to think through and explain their predictions. Furthermore, in a Year 2 'Reading Buddy' activity, the students explored creative ways to build their independence in reading. For example, the students used 'stuck on a word' checklists which included strategies such as 'eagle eyes' (looking at pictures for clues) and 'stretchy snake' (stretch the word out sound by sound and snap together) among others to develop their decoding and comprehension skills.

Notwithstanding, across the year groups, opportunities for students to find out information for themselves were limited. Only in a few lessons did students use dictionaries to locate the meanings of unfamiliar words or used laptops to research information. There was scope for expanding opportunities to promote inquiry based approaches to learning in reading. The new initiatives developed by the school showed promising signs of supporting the development of the students' skills in reading but required concerted effort to raise the students' attainment in reading. The school's progress data indicated that the students' performance in reading remained below national and international levels.

## Provide opportunity for writing at greater length in English and within PYP inquiries.

The school had made **weak** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Inspectors observed twenty-four English lessons and also reviewed samples of the students' writing. Generally, the inspectors noted that there were planned opportunities for students to write about interesting topics in lessons. In many lessons, the students wrote in response to interesting stimuli such as information on hurricanes. In addition, a review of the students' work books in Key Stage 2 also indicated that students had identified the main and supporting ideas in excerpts on the water cycle. In one of the better lessons in Key Stage 1, the students learned about procedural writing in meaningful and authentic contexts. For example, the students had planted seeds in cups a week prior and watched them grow. As a result, almost all the students were able to confidently explain the steps involved in growing a bean plant and could competently write about the steps while reflecting on their experiences. In the majority of the lessons that the inspectors observed, there was a greater emphasis on a trans-disciplinary approach to writing and the majority of teachers planned lessons with imaginative and scientific content that stimulated and sustained students' interest in the writing process.

Although writing was a structured feature of all lessons and the inspectors noted good practices to promote improvement in the students' writing, in some instances, the teachers spent far too much time on introductory activities, often recapping information that the students already knew. As a consequence, the time allotted for writing tasks was reduced and in some lessons this resulted in the students' inability to start or complete assigned writing tasks. In addition, the samples of students' writing across the year groups were of variable quality and there was little evidence to indicate that most teachers consistently communicated clear presentation expectations to students or actively guided them to produce writing in which the development and organisation adhered to high expectations. Students' attainment in writing remained well below local and international standards.

Audit teachers' subject knowledge and expertise in teaching mathematics and continue to support them in improving their teaching.

The school had made **weak** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Teaching and support staff had attended training that had been provided by the school from September 2018. The content had been related to the implementation of mathematics intervention programmes for lower-achieving students and to the promotion of students' mental calculation skills. In addition, individual teachers had received support from the Department of Education mathematics coaches. Assessments in mathematics had been moderated by the Deputy Principal to ensure consistency in practice across classes and between schools.

Teachers' professional practice in mathematics required further development, particularly at Key Stage 2. It was noted, for example, in Year 6 classes, that teachers' explanation of concepts was, at times, imprecise, leading to inaccuracies in students' mathematical knowledge and understanding. In other classes in Key Stage 2 there were also incidents observed during the inspection where teachers did not follow their lesson plans and, in deviating from the content, provided incorrect or inaccurate information to students. Further attention was required to teachers' consistency in practice and effectiveness in delivery.

In mathematics, introduce frequent 'quick fire' practice to improve recall of number facts, and set goals for the learning of number bonds and multiplication tables.

The school had made **weak** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Teachers' plans for mathematics lessons had improved and, in most cases, included more detail and appropriate reference to the range of expected outcomes for different groups of students. In most lessons therefore, following an initial introduction, there was time assigned for students to work in groups to practise the main skill being taught in the session. In Reception to Year 4, and also in a few Year 5 classes, there were appropriate practical mathematics tasks, which required students to solve problems, practise and demonstrate their skills in meaningful contexts. For example, in one Year 2 class, students were required to measure a number of classroom objects using non-standard units. When the students reached different answers, the teacher skillfully promoted their critical thinking skills to help them understand the importance of consistency regarding the unit of measure being used.

In most lessons, teachers incorporated time which they referred to as a 'mental starter'. In this short period at the beginning of the lesson, the aim was to promote students' mental agility and speed in their recall of mathematical facts. In too many lessons, however, it was observed during the inspection that this element was missed and not included at the time of the actual delivery of the session. Furthermore, in a number of Key Stage 2 classes, the content of the 'mental starter' encouraged students' problem-solving skills but did not offer an opportunity for the students to improve their mental calculation competency nor their skills in recall of multiplication facts.

At all stages of the school, students' mental mathematics skills were weak and further work was required to reinstate the planned mental mathematics curriculum and ensure completion of tasks as planned.

Develop greater facility in mental calculation as a basis for problem-solving in mathematics.

The school had made **weak** progress in addressing this recommendation.

Across all stages of the school, students' mental calculation skills were weak and there was insufficient challenge and low expectations in a large proportion of lessons. In Reception, the children were learning about numbers to 10 and were beginning to solve simple addition problems to five. In Year 1, this had progressed to 'tricky teens' where students were encouraged to count on from 10 to complete addition to 20. For a few, however, there was scope for a faster rate of progress and greater emphasis upon mental agility. In the later stages of the school, similarly, the pace of progress was often too slow as the main content was covered for the benefit of the full class and teachers did not introduce the group tasks for different levels of achievement at an early point in the lesson.

Students at Year 6 struggled with basic computation tasks and their recall of multiplication facts was slow and often imprecise. Although older students were provided with textbooks in which they recorded their solutions to mental calculation problems, lessons did not always include sufficient focus upon the strategies that should be used to increase speed and accuracy. For example, when students made errors within mental calculation tests, their individual misunderstanding was not sufficiently reviewed by teachers to avoid further mistakes.

Inspectors observed twenty mathematics lessons during the second follow-through inspection. All lessons in Key Stage 1 and Reception classes were satisfactory or better and more than half were good. Teaching quality was more variable in Key Stage 2 because all of the lessons in Year 6 were judged to be weak and in Years 4 and 5, lessons varied from excellent to weak. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, the teacher made very effective use of scales to illustrate the importance of 'balance' in number calculation and this helped students grasp concepts of algebra in a way in which they found engaging. In a significant proportion of other lessons in Key Stage 2, teachers imprecision in their instructions and their explanations meant that students' understanding of new concepts was not always secure.

#### What happens next?

As overall progress has been judged as **weak**, there will be a further Follow-Through Inspection of Sir John A. Cumber Primary School within six months following the publication of this report.

The school will continue to receive follow-through inspections until it either satisfactorily meets all of the recommendations from the baseline inspection of 2014/15 or is inspected as part of the full cycle of inspections, which commenced in September 2018.

## Office of Education Standards

#### 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

You can contact us using the following e-mail address.

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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.

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