



PARLIAMENT
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS



PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO. 39
Answered on 2 October 2026
Second Meeting 2026-2027 Session – Third Sitting

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION
ASKED BY

MR. ROY TATUM
ELECTED MEMBER FOR THE CONSTITUENCY OF RED BAY

TO

THE HON. ROLSTON M. ANGLIN
MINISTER OF EDUCATION & TRAINING

QUESTION:

Can the Honourable Minister say what measures is the Government taking to improve writing attainment among primary school students in response to the findings of the Ministry of Education's Data Report for the Academic Year 2024-2025, and what level of improvement does it aim to achieve, and by when?

ANSWER:

Mister Speaker, the Ministry recognises that writing attainment requires continued and focused improvement. In 2024–25, 45% of Year 6 students met the expected standard in writing. However, the wider data provides an important indication of where the challenge lies. In grammar, punctuation and spelling, 68% of students met the expected standard, an improvement from 58% three years earlier. This tells us that students are increasingly acquiring the technical building blocks of writing, but that we need to strengthen their ability to transfer and apply those skills effectively in independent writing.

Our response is therefore deliberately focused on that area. For 2026–27, Government primary schools are strengthening explicit writing instruction and the literature-based Literacy Tree approach, supported by teacher professional development and coaching, greater consistency in writing moderation, and increased opportunities for students to undertake purposeful and sustained writing across the curriculum.

This work also aligns with my request for a review of the 1:1 device policy, particularly for our earliest learners, to ensure that we are getting the balance right between technology and the development of foundational skills. Technology remains an important educational tool, but its use should complement, rather than displace, essential early learning experiences such as handwriting, reading, speaking and listening, and the development of independent writing skills.

Schools are also using assessment information more diagnostically to identify the aspects of writing with which individual students are struggling. Students who are below the expected standard receive targeted support, including small-group or individual intervention where appropriate, with their progress reviewed regularly to determine whether the intervention is having the intended effect.

Mister Speaker, it is also important to understand the context in which Government schools deliver these interventions. Unlike many private schools in the Cayman Islands, Government schools do not select students through entrance examinations and serve the full range of learners within our community. This includes comparatively high numbers of students with special educational needs and disabilities and students experiencing social and economic disadvantages.

This does not lower our expectations for those students, but it can significantly affect the nature and intensity of support required to enable them to succeed. For some children, educational intervention alone is insufficient. Their needs may require coordinated support across education, health and social services, particularly where schools and families are dealing with complex or longstanding circumstances.

In terms of the improvement, we expect to see, the immediate objective for 2026–27 is to build on the progress already evident through more recent DES monitoring and increase the proportion of students meeting the expected standard in writing by June 2027. At the same time, we expect to see the gap between students' technical knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling and their performance in independent writing begin to narrow.

Over the medium term, the Ministry considers an improvement in writing attainment in the order of 5 to 10 percentage points over a five-year period to represent meaningful system-level progress. This provides a clear direction of travel while recognising that attainment will vary between cohorts and that improvement is unlikely to occur at the same rate each year.

Progress will be monitored annually at student, school and system level. We will look not only at the proportion of students meeting the expected standard, but also at the progress of students who remain below that standard, the gap between technical and independent writing performance, and attainment gaps between different groups of learners.

Mister Speaker, the objective is clear: to build on the improvement already being seen in students' foundational literacy skills and ensure that an increasing proportion of our students can translate those skills into confident, effective and independent writing.