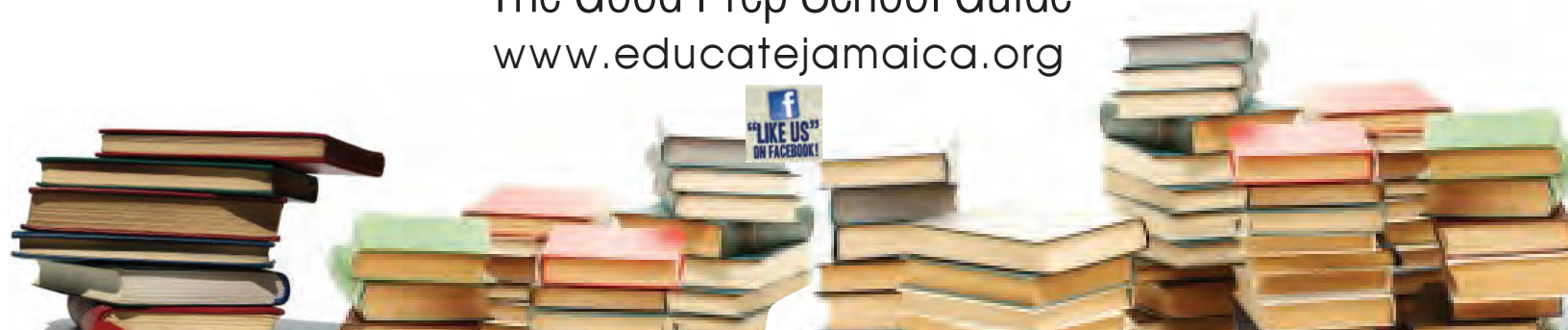


P R E P   S C H O O L S

# THE GOLD STANDARD

2 0 1 4

The Good Prep School Guide  
[www.educatejamaica.org](http://www.educatejamaica.org)



# INTRODUCING THE GOLD STANDARD

We spoke to 300 parents (The 300 parents were from a mixture of high costing, middle costing and lower costing prep schools) and educatejamaica.org discovered that parents on average were spending in excess of \$1.1 million dollars to finance their children's prep school education over 6 years and this sum did not include books, lunch money, extra-curricular activities etc. This is a lot of money to spend on financing a child's education especially when some parents are struggling to find it. Parents do it because they want what is best for their children and they want their children to get a good education.

In our first publication we introduced a ranking system for all secondary schools across the island who participated in CSEC exams. We received a lot of positive feedback from members of the public and parents who told us that they loved the ranking system and they would like to see it annually. We also had parents presenting questions to us via telephone calls and emails asking about the performance of Prep and Primary schools.

We pondered about the Prep schools and Primary schools and the team at Educate Jamaica made a collective decision to prepare a Prep school publication for parents. In deciding to do it we made the decision to do it in a completely different way from the secondary school issue.

The secondary school publication looks at the most available CSEC results and rank schools according to how they did in the exams (for that given year). The Prep School Gold Standard publication is different, in that it tracks each prep school over 5 years (The most recent 5 years) and it looks at how each school has performed in those 5 years (In this case 2009-2013). It looks specifically at a school's ability to maintain a consistent performance over the 5 years, which we believe is a good performance indicator for a school and looking at data over 5 years allowed for deeper analysis as well the identification of trends.

For the 5 years, the measure we looked specifically at was the performance of each school in the GSAT examinations (2009-2013).

This publication is only a guide. It's a platform on which parents should build. We advise all parents selecting a school for their children that they should think about holistic development of their children and when examining schools to look at other areas such as extra-curricular activities as well as specific curriculum areas such as foreign languages and Information Technology.

We accept that performance focus is not the only focal point; however, we believe that it is vital and a school that is delivering excellent extra-curricular activities and does very little for a child in helping him or her get placed into a good secondary school is no good. We believe that a school should be prepared to deliver on the performance expectation of parents as well as deliver excellent extra-curricular activities and a broad and balanced curriculum.

We strongly urge parents to do their 'homework' when selecting a school for their children. Parents know their children and you know the type of school, class and environment in which your child will thrive.

In creating this publication, our only aim is to give you an additional tool to use to aid you in making that right choice for your child.

## GOLD STANDARD CRITERIA:

For a school to be considered a gold standard school, it has to achieve the following annually in the GSAT exams:

1. An average of 80% or more in Mathematics across the entire GSAT cohort.
2. An average of 80% or more in Language Arts across the entire GSAT cohort.
3. An average of 80% or more in Social Science across the entire GSAT cohort.
4. An average of 80% or more in Science across the entire GSAT cohort.
5. An average of 10 or more in Composition across the entire GSAT cohort.

## The Gold Standard & other schools:

There are other prep schools out there that may have been around less than 3 years and are doing really well, however our tracking would not capture them. There are also schools out there that aren't doing poorly, however they may lack consistency. There are also schools out there that are extremely close to the mark but not exactly there. In our analysis we excluded schools that had fewer than 5 students being submitted for GSAT sittings.

For us at Educate Jamaica we placed a heavy emphasis on consistency when we were preparing this document.

## The GSAT data Used:

The GSAT data we used in the preparation of this publication is the same GSAT performance data that is sent to each prep and primary school by the Government. The only difference between the copy we received and the ones sent to the schools is the information on the individual pupils. We did not receive any information on any individual pupil.

# Why did we feel the need to create **'THE GOLD STANDARD'** guide?

In 2011 (2 years ago) there was an article in the Jamaica Observer (see article below) that raised a number of questions and concerns and our organisation felt the need to address it because it hadn't been addressed.

## **Article in Jamaica Observer 2011:**

Prep School: A good investment or expensive gamble?

BY PETULIA CLARKE Sunday Finance writer [clarkep@jamaicaobserver.com](mailto:clarkep@jamaicaobserver.com)  
Sunday, April 17, 2011

There's one popping up on every corner, much like the ubiquitous church or bar that landed Jamaica in the Guinness Book, there's a prep school for every pocket; for every social class; for every knowledge base; each one supposedly filling a gap left by the Government school system.

Kingston mother of two and communications professional Klao Bell-Lewis said her family decided to go with a school which had values that were in keeping with theirs.

"Through meeting with the principal, and talking with parents and past employees of the school, we were convinced that the school was consistent in delivering values-based teaching that created confident leaders. And that's what we wanted for our children," she said.

"We remember cringing after meeting with the principal of a top prep school when we saw how focused she was on winning. We didn't need our children to be pressured and hammered about academic performance at the expense of other important characteristics. We also saw where some schools were all about gearing up for good GSAT grades. We chose a school that includes special needs children; and the option of sitting or not sitting GSAT; as they have a high school to which kids can matriculate seamlessly."

Caleb Brown, a Mandeville dad, said he enrolled his two daughters in a prep school in that parish, because he said that was where they would have the best opportunities.

"The older daughter was already far advanced for her age when she entered pre-school, so no way was I going to hold her back by enrolling her in a primary school," Brown, an architect said. "With prep school she gets individual attention, she gets to channel her creativity into any activity she wants, and she gets to be challenged by peers whose parents have the same goals for her that I do."

Karlene Bisnott, principal of Vaz Preparatory School in Kingston said the prep school positives are many.

"The smaller class size, let's begin there. Children get more individualised attention and you offer a host of extracurricular activities to provide a more-rounded individual. You offer the main core curriculum, but prep schools, based on their emphasis, would have additional subjects that are offered that would not be offered in the public schools as a part of the curriculum, like the languages," she said.

"We offer chess as a subject, for instance, while other schools will offer other things. And because of the nature of the schools, they have very strong intervention programmes where they pick up on problems children are having, because the class sizes are smaller. It also generates this type of family environment -- a very strong parent-school relationship is established."

The Ministry of Education acknowledges, in its independent schools government policy, the need for private schools. The Independent Schools Unit of the ministry said last April that there are nearly 500 registered independent institutions of various types, and that new applications are being received by the unit every day.

"The existence of private educational institutions reflect a demand for educational opportunities in excess of those which the public system can now provide," the independent schools policy, available on the ministry's website, said.

It also pointed to the establishment of an Independent Schools Section in the Educational Services Division of the ministry, which reports directly to the chief education officer. The division registers and monitors the operation of independent schools, ensuring that students attending these institutions "are exposed to quality teaching/learning experiences to enhance their development according to abilities and that adequate preparation is given to these students for the various national and overseas examinations".

The ministry monitors independent schools from pre-primary to vocational. But the ministry doesn't monitor fees, nor does it publish individual private school results so parents can view school performance.

It's this failure by the ministry, that has led some parents and educators to wonder if private schooling is indeed, an expensive gamble.

Why is there such a wide disparity in fees? Is something missing in the schools which charge less? Is there more on offer from the schools which charge more? Is it all a business?

**There's one popping up on every corner, much like the ubiquitous church or bar that landed Jamaica in the Guinness Book, there's a prep school for every pocket ; for every social class.....**

**The independent School Unit of the ministry said last April that there are nearly 500 registered independent institutions of various types, and that new applications are being received by the unit every day.**

"There are schools whose fees go up based solely on whether another prep school raises fees," said the principal of a St Andrew-based kindergarten which feeds most of its students into prep schools. The principal, who asked not to be named, fearing backlash from her peers, said most can afford to charge less but don't. "Many have no teaching standards, no grade four (Grade Four Literacy/Numeracy Test) high marks or GSAT passes to claim glory — indeed many are glorified primary schools," she said.

She made reference to one particular Kingston school which had got "so high and mighty", doubling its fees based solely on one of its students getting a GSAT scholarship in the 2009 exams.

"That school has no tradition of excellence; no tradition of producing great students... but that one brilliant student gave it credibility, and now parents are clamouring to get in," the principal said. But, she admitted, the schools can do it because there is demand.

"Government recognises the vital role that independent schools are playing but feels that some amount of control should be made to bear on these institutions," the independent schools policy reads. "The Government considers that it has a duty to ensure that these institutions are operated for the benefit and welfare of the pupils who attend them."

"But how do you choose a good school, really," asked Patrick Campbell, a dad to a six-year-old who is entering grade one in September. "Sure I understand that the Government cannot provide spaces for every Jamaican child, but why is the search for a good, affordable prep school so hard? Where are the statistics to help me?" He said he wanted to go with a traditional prep, but was overwhelmed by the fees.

"No way can I afford that kind of investment. But traditional preps at least have a record of distinction, what can I say for the others?" He said that he, a banker, and his wife, a nurse, took turns calling schools beginning in February, to get a feel for the figures and he was dumbstruck. "First of all, I found out about schools I'd never even heard of before; then the disparity in fees was amazing; then one told me they would probably be raising fees in September so I should call back... and it was all so confusing." Not only that, but he had no idea, save for visiting the schools and requesting results, how the schools were performing. His next best bet was to dig for information on past GSAT scholarships published in the media and rely on word of mouth from other parents.

Ministry statistics show that only 84 per cent of prep school students achieved mastery in the Grade Four Literacy Test for 2010, down from the previous year's 93 per cent. So how do you know whether your school falls in the 84 per cent?

"Parents are left to guessing and hoping that their particular prep school won't fail them," Campbell said. "They're left to question which one is just in it to scrape through and make money, and which ones are actually performing."

So knowing that there's a demand by parents and a need from government, do some prep schools abuse the power and milk parents for fees? And with extra lessons and bake sales and seemingly endless contributions to the 'building fund', can prep school parents expect to always be paying through the teeth, even with no assurance that the investment will land their children in a coveted traditional high school spot?

Calvary Prep's Acting Principal Karen Dillworth showed that it's no money-making venture at her \$20,000 per term school, which continues to place students in traditional high schools.

"It was founded by the church but I wouldn't say funded by the church...We depend heavily on school fees and contributions from parents," she said. "We offer all JCDC [activities], we are in music, speech, drama and dance...certainly we make it as affordable as possible, but we are not slackening on the quality. We even have situations where students leave so called big prep schools and come to Calvary."

Last year, the school had 140 students over eight classes — an average of just over 17 students per class. Bisnott, who is also the former president of the Jamaica Independent Schools Association, said she doesn't know that schools which charge more are in the money-making business.

"I'm not sure that that is so in this economic climate. Right now, most of the schools are having financial challenges trying to keep the school doors open because the cost of everything has gone up and our main income is school fees which we can't push beyond what the parents are able to pay," said Bisnott.

"I don't think that (financial benefits) is the driving force these days but rather (persons are) looking for ways to help to arrest the problems that people are seeing out there in the public schools. We also have to be registered with the Independent Schools Unit of the ministry to make sure the facilities are up to standard."

Indeed, it's the government's policy to insist "on the maintenance of standards of education that are consistent with national requirements". The Independent Schools Regulations 1973 and the Education Act 1965 also give the minister of education the power, authority and responsibility to, among other things, evaluate the quality of the educational experiences being offered in independent schools and exercise control over the establishment and termination of such schools.

"All independent schools are required to use the national curriculum developed as the base of their programmes..." the policy said.

But how do parents choose when there seems to be a prep school on every corner? Bell-Lewis said choosing a school does not have to be a gamble if you treat it as carefully as shopping for a house.

"My husband and I visited and met with principals of six schools; following hours of discussions with friends about their kids' schools; and consultation with contacts in government agencies about school performance," she said.

Another mother, an auditor who switched prep schools because she wasn't satisfied with her daughter's performance at her original choice, warned parents to be wary.

**"Many have no teaching standards, no grade four (Grade Four Literacy/Numeracy Test) high marks or GSAT passes to claim glory --- indeed many are glorified primary schools," she said.**

**Not only that, but he had no idea, save for visiting the school and requesting results, how the schools were performing.**

**"Parents are left guessing and hoping that their particular prep school won't fail them," Campbell said. "They're left to question which one is just in it to scrape through and make money, and which ones are actually performing."**

"Some of the cheaper prep schools don't offer a variety of extra-curricular activities," the auditor said. "Based on my audit experience, some teachers are well paid, others are paid based on the government salary scale. Some schools that are church based are subsidised by church and social events. Prices also are zoned; for example, those in Spanish Town stay within a range. They basically watch each other's prices."

She said qualification is also a factor: "The cheaper ones may employ trainees while others have college training."

Factors like those listed by the auditor are what concern many parents, and make others at least make a try to get into a good performing primary school

"I really wanted my children to go to a primary school because I had a grand plan for a big experiment," Bell-Lewis said. "I figured that for at least 25 per cent of the quarterly prep school fee, I could help transform whichever primary schools my kids attended by either fitting a white board in every class in which my kids were placed; paying for a teaching assistant; galvanising parents to construct additional classrooms or blocks; sponsoring a special education teacher to help and sponsoring a laptop and projector each year. By these initiatives, which would cost a fraction of the annual prep school fee, I hoped to leave the school a little better off when my children left." But, she said, she was dissuaded.

"I was strongly discouraged by so many people from sending my kids to a primary school. The main reasons people spoke of were the coarseness and violence. Few people spoke of lower quality education, because the fact is, most Jamaicans are educated at primary schools and some of our best teachers are there. However, these great, committed men and women, simply do not have all the resources they need to be successful, and struggle to make the most of what they have. I tip my hat to them."

Added Joy DaCosta, a St Andrew mother of two: "No one wants to pay \$60,000 per term for a child, but you have to, because of the problems in the government system. Do I want my son in a primary school with the 35:1 ratio? Can my slow learner survive in this environment? Or am I forced to sacrifice with the prep because I want a better future for him?"

"I am doing a diploma in early childhood education and at least six out of a class of 23 [in the primary system] do no work on a daily basis," the auditor revealed. "This is the government system!"

**But how do parents choose when there seems to be a prep school on every corner?**

# LIST OF PREPARATORY SCHOOLS THAT MEET THE "GOLD STANDARD".

Ardenne Preparatory and Extension  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Avondale Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Creative Kids Learning Academy  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Dunrobin Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Emmanuel Christian Academy  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Hillel Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Holy Childhood Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Hopefield Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Immaculate Conception  
Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

King's Gate Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Kingsway Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Liberty Academy at the Priory  
Preparatory School  
Kingston St. Andrew

Mavisville Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Meadowbrook Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Mona Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Morris Knibb Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

One Way Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Our Lady of the Angels Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Porter Centre for Knowledge Kingston &  
St. Andrew

Quest Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Richmond Park Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

St. Andrew Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

St. Hugh's Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

St. John the Baptist Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

St. Theresa's Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Stella Maris Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

St. Peter and Paul Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

The Queen's Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Vaz Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Wolmer's Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Columbus Preparatory School  
St. Ann

The Glen Preparatory School  
St. Ann

Mar Jam Preparatory School  
St. Ann

Tomlinson's Christian Academy  
St. Ann

United Learning Centre Preparatory School  
St. Ann

Cornwall Kindergarten &  
Preparatory School  
St. James

Heinz Simonitsh Preparatory  
School  
St. James

Hosanna Kindergarten & Preparatory School  
St. James

The Junior Plus Kindergarten &  
Preparatory School  
St. James

Montego Bay Preparatory School  
St. James

Mount Alvernia Preparatory School  
St. James

New Horizon Preparatory School  
Westmoreland

Paradise Preparatory School  
Westmoreland

St. James Kindergarten & Preparatory School  
St. James

St. Mary's Preparatory &  
Kindergarten School  
St. James

Supreme Preparatory & Kindergarten School  
St. James

Black River Preparatory School  
St. Elizabeth

El Instituto De Mandevilla Preparatory School  
Manchester

Hopewell Preparatory School  
Hanover

Belair Preparatory School  
Manchester

Mount St. Joseph Preparatory School  
Manchester

Munro Preparatory School  
St. Elizabeth

Santa Cruz Preparatory School  
St. Elizabeth

Bread of Life Christian Preparatory School  
St. Catherine

Bright Beginnings Educational Centre  
St. Catherine

Harrison's Preparatory School  
St. Catherine

Portmore Missionary Preparatory School  
St. Catherine

St. Catherine's Preparatory School  
St. Catherine

Alvernia Preparatory School  
Kingston & St. Andrew

Covenant Christian Academy  
Kingston & St. Andrew

St. Jago Cathedral Preparatory School  
St. Catherine

Montego Bay Christian Academy  
St. James

Glenmuir Kindergarten & Preparatory School  
Clarendon

Hanover Pre & Preparatory School  
Hanover

# It's coming in 2014!!

# CSEC RANKINGS



Mr. Blake - Chairman



Campion College has been dethroned as the top performing CSEC school on the island.

## There is a new school in town!

## Who is it?

A preview of what is coming Inside Academic Championship 2014:

### **Jamaica College: 'A School as Old as the French Revolution.'**

Parents fear not, they are coming back. The transformation is paying off. "We have been able to attract much better quality students and resources to JC over the last few years. We intend to compete with all the top schools head on by 2016.

We expect to deliver over 90 % of all grade 11 cohort gaining 5 or more subjects with Mathematics and or English A starting 2016. We now have one of the best school environment in Jamaica today. We are hoping to re-establish limited boarding too." (Ruel Reid Principal of Jamaica College).

**155 years and still going: More than 3 times as old as independent Jamaica.**

**Mr. Blake (A Chairman of the finest class) sounds the alarm:**

" Education is my passion and having served on two other school boards before, when Mrs. Donna Parchment Brown, then chairman of the board, asked me in 1990 to join the board I gladly accepted, thinking I would serve probably five or six years. I joined in 1991 and 22 years on I'm more passionate about education in general and Hampton in particular. In these years we have moved enrolment from just over 700 to 1,250, maintained the high level of discipline for which Hampton is known, as well as significantly improving academic excellence. Our 2020 vision is for no young lady to leave Hampton with less than 8 CSEC, at least 5 1s and the rest 2s (3 is not a grade on Hampton's radar), matriculating for 4-year degree courses. If she returns to 6th form, no less than 8 units of CAPE, grades 1-4, as (5 is also not a Hampton grade). We are progressively implementing strategies to achieve this vision in even years."

# Introducing... Complete SMS 2013

*School management made simple!*

Focus on creating brilliant minds and let Complete SMS 2013 manage your school.

- Monitor Students Progress
- Inform Instructions
- Determine intervention strategies
- Inform teaching staff development needs

Report

**Busea's High School** (Founded 1777) **END-OF-YEAR REPORT**  
2005-2006

ALLEN NOLICA  
Surname First name Middle Initial Name  
JERICHO  
Address  
Linstead Address ST. CATHERINE Telephone  
10 years 2 month (s) Average age of class: 11 years 5 month (s). NUMBER IN CLASS: 48

ATTENDANCE: Total possible sessions 380 No. of sessions Absent 2 No. of sessions Late 0 No. of sessions Excused 4

SUBJECTS	TERM	EXAM MARK %	RANK	COMMENT	Conduct in Class	SUBJECT TEACHER'S NAME
ENGLISH LANGUAGE	B	58.0	6	3	G	CLIFFORD, DENISE
ENGLISH LITERATURE	C	35.0	3	13	S	GORDON, NATASHA
GEOGRAPHY	B	24.0	9	7	S	DALEY, GAIL
HISTORY	B	18.0	7	20	S	BINGHAM, BERTHA

**Key to Comments**

1. Minimum score worthy high standard of work
2. Demonstrates well-developed practical skills
3. Shows exemplary behaviour
4. Willingly participates in class activities
5. Regularly completes assignments on time
6. Is always on time for class
7. Works at a generally satisfactory standard

### RATE OF SUCCESSES BY GRADE LEVEL

YEAR: 2008-2009  
SUBJECT: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Grade	Female (%)	Male (%)
7	38.38%	21.96%
8	36.21%	47.17%
9	31.97%	11.32%
10	19.63%	24.47%

Grade	Female (%)	Male (%)
7	33.04%	12.38%
8	12.17%	7.55%
9	13.33%	2.78%
10	9.23%	2.25%

Grade	Female (%)	Male (%)
7	50.89%	23.87%
8	42.84%	42.84%
9	27.50%	6.64%
10	54.05%	31.31%

TERM: GradeLevel

Nick Name: Sex: MALE Parish: HANOVER Telephone: 3894152 Date of Birth: 28/02/1991 e-Mail: Nationality: JAMAICAN

Parent/Guardian Admission/Attendance Fees Scanned Documents Grades Other

**Admission**  
Admission date: 01/09/2003  
Select Source: GSAT  
Last School: SANDY BAY PRIMARY & JUNIOR F  
Last Average:

**Attendance**  
Select Term: CHRISTMAS  
Session/Period: Morning  
Status: Present Absent Late Excused  
Aggregate Ratio (%):

**Bulk Text Messaging**

**Web Enabled**

**Timetable**

⇒ **Students Record Keeping**

⇒ **Report Cards & Transcripts**

⇒ **Electronic Mark Books & Attendance Register**

⇒ **Fees & Accounts Receivable**

⇒ **Graphical Assessment**

MANY MORE FEATURES....

PRESENTATION DATE & TIME,  
AT YOUR CONVENIENCE



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