
FOOD FOR THE POOR



LITTLE LONDON INFANT DEPARTMENT



Little London, Westmoreland, Jamaica

***“As often as you did it to one of the least of my brothers
and sisters, you did it to me.”*** *Matthew 25:40*

**SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
LITTLE LONDON INFANT DEPARTMENT
LITTLE LONDON, WESTMORELAND, JAMAICA**

Background/ Impact Stories

Little London Primary School and Infant Department can be found in the town of Little London, which is located at the most westerly point of the island in the parish of Westmoreland.

While the date of its inception is unknown, *Principal, Mrs. Shirlet Craig-Davis* mentioned that, “The origin of the school began at the Little London Methodist Church where it remained until 1976, when they relocated to the present site. During this time, the facility only operated utilizing a ‘primary school’ curriculum.”

Mrs. Craig-Davis joined the teaching staff at Little London Primary in 1995. With an endless passion for children and dedication for teaching, she declared that, “What really makes my day is when a child can say, ‘yes miss, I understand what you have taught me’.”

Primary schools typically start at grade one (1) and goes through to grade six (6), with students ranging between 7-12 years old. Over the years, the administrative team recognized that there was a learning challenge concerning the students who were registered to start grade one classes.

Mrs. Craig-Davis elaborated, “We realized the students being registered were lacking the basic readiness that is required for the grade one syllabus. We were getting students who had never attended school before and grade one was the first time that they were being introduced to some form of education. This was the basis that led to the need for an infant department because we needed an area where we could mold the minds of these children before they moved to grade one.”

The lack of education exhibited by the grade one students affected teaching activities and as such, “We had to put the grade one syllabus aside because the children could not manage and because of that, the children had to repeat grade one. The first year would be spent teaching them (students) the basic literacy and numeracy skills that they should

**SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
LITTLE LONDON INFANT DEPARTMENT
LITTLE LONDON, WESTMORELAND, JAMAICA**

have covered at the early childhood level. For those who repeated, we tried to cover the grade one syllabus in the second year. My teachers had to do overtime, going the extra mile and using their personal laptops because we had to do something to help our children. Approximately 15 – 20 % of our grade one students would repeat each September. At one point, the grade one teachers were saying that they didn't have the space to hold those that repeated in addition to the new ones joining the class, but we still could not move the children to grade two."

Thanks to United States National Football League (NFL) veteran linebacker, Stephen Tulloch, his family and friends, who donated and participated in the construction of the Little London Primary School's Infant Department, things are now different at the institution. Today, the over seventy (70) students, along with their teachers and caregiver have a designated, comfortable, spacious school of their own.



Newly constructed: Little London Infant Department.

**SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
LITTLE LONDON INFANT DEPARTMENT
LITTLE LONDON, WESTMORELAND, JAMAICA**



United States National Football League (NFL) veteran linebacker, Stephen Tulloch visits the children at Little London Infant Department.



**SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
LITTLE LONDON INFANT DEPARTMENT
LITTLE LONDON, WESTMORELAND, JAMAICA**

Mrs. Craig-Davis who, commenced her post as principal for the institution in May 2014, said, “We were in desperate need of an infant department with separate classrooms and teachers to tend to children from the early childhood level. That way, they would hone their basic skills and be ready for grade one whenever the time came. Thanks to Stephen Tulloch, all volunteers and Food For The Poor, we have been provided with much more than we could have asked for.”

She added that, “Having an Infant Department at Little London School will have a great impact on students and teachers alike. I strongly believe that, with this conducive learning environment and the dedicated teachers and caregivers, we will start getting our grade one students ready for the grade one syllabus. In terms of performance, I believe our infant children will perform better because we will be able to monitor the lessons being taught to them. We will be able to identify any learning challenges early on and address them before the students get to grade one.”

If Food For The Poor and donors weren’t able to assist, “I don’t know when a school, such as this, would have materialized. We would have to go out and seek other funding but I don’t think the help would come anytime soon. We have come a far way thanks to community members. However, without Food For The Poor and donors, we wouldn’t have an infant department.”

So great was the need of Little London, “that students and teachers moved into the building even though all amenities were not fully in place. We were desperately in need of the infant department and thankfully, it was built right on time,” Mrs. Craig-Davis commented.

The Administrators are currently in the process of getting certified by the Fire Department and Health Inspectors. “Once we are certified by those two organizations and we have all things in place, inspectors from the **Early Childhood Commission*** will visit to assess the facility. So, we are working to be officially registered as an Early Childhood Department,” Mrs. Craig-Davis added.

**SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
LITTLE LONDON INFANT DEPARTMENT
LITTLE LONDON, WESTMORELAND, JAMAICA**

She expressed appreciation saying, “To the donors, Little London Primary and Infant Department will always be grateful, we are extremely happy that you came on board and saw the need and made this possible. For the rest of our lives we will be forever thankful. It was so awesome to see all the volunteers and team members building and pushing to make this a successful project. I am happy to have been part of this wonderful moment and thanks to you, every child that enters Little London Infant Department, will now have a better chance at education.”

**The Early Childhood Commission (ECC) was established by the Early Childhood Commission Act (2003), in keeping with the strategic goal of the Government of Jamaica to improve the quality of early childhood care, education and development within the early childhood sector.*

Functions of the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) Include:

- *Advising the Education Minister on policy matters relating to early childhood care, education and development in Jamaica, including initiatives and actions to achieve national early childhood development goals*
- *Assisting in the preparation of plans and programmes concerning early childhood development*
- *Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the plans and programmes concerning early childhood development*
- *Coordinating all activities relating to early childhood development*
- *Supervising and regulating early childhood institutions*
- *Convening consultations with relevant stakeholders as appropriate*
- *Analyzing the resource needs and submit recommendations for budgetary allocations for early childhood development*
- *Identifying alternative financing through negotiation with donor agencies and liaising with such agencies to ensure the effective and efficient use of donor funds*
- *Conducting research on early childhood development*

**SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
LITTLE LONDON INFANT DEPARTMENT
LITTLE LONDON, WESTMORELAND, JAMAICA**

Now that there is an Infant Department, certified Early Childhood Teachers are employed to ensure that lessons are taught with an efficiency and effectiveness.

Below, the team expresses how they have been utilizing the infant department to carry-out their daily activities.

Mrs. Althea Ramasar, has been teaching for the past thirty (30) years as an Early Childhood Teacher and joined the Little London Infant Department in September 2017. She currently teaches the five (5) year old students in K3.

She said, “I love this building, everything about it is ok. We have good lighting, modern tiled flooring, proper play equipment and we have a kitchen which we are really anticipating to use. In addition to that, teachers and students have separate bathrooms, which are covered, so even when it rains, we don’t get wet. Each classroom is separate so we don’t have to worry about noise disturbance, which makes it a very good environment.”

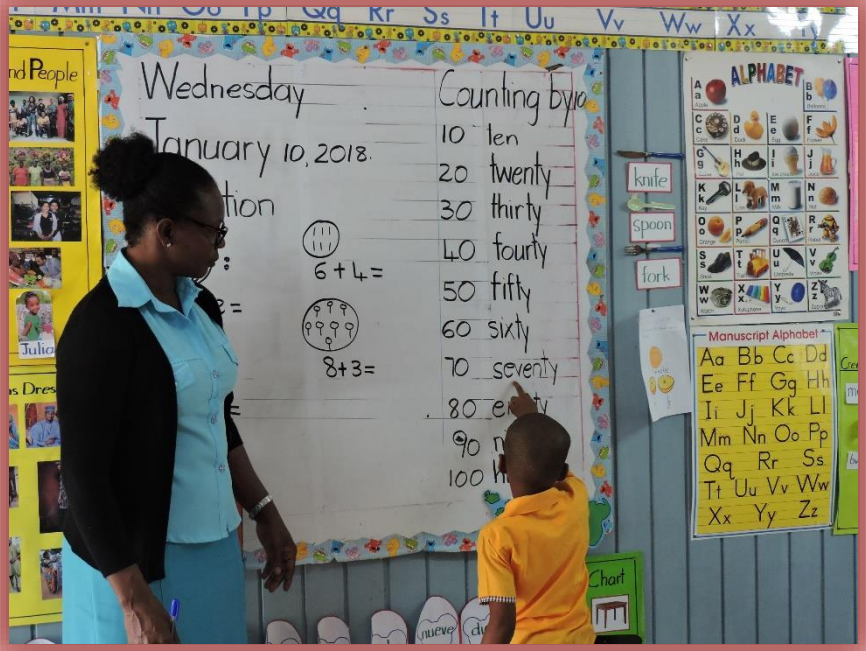
Mrs. Althea Ramasar and her five (5) year-old students have a comfortable, self-contained classroom to promote successful teaching and learning activities.



**SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
LITTLE LONDON INFANT DEPARTMENT
LITTLE LONDON, WESTMORELAND, JAMAICA**

Mrs. Ramasar continued, "Little London Infant is a good school for parents to send their children. It offers proper fencing and a good structure with trained and experienced teachers."

In expressing thanks, she said, "I would like to tell the donors that we appreciate them for choosing Little London to build an Infant school like this. It means a lot and I hope you will continue to help others and that God will continue to bless you."



With Spacious classrooms, teachers can display charts and students get to participate more in classroom activities as seen above.

**SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
LITTLE LONDON INFANT DEPARTMENT
LITTLE LONDON, WESTMORELAND, JAMAICA**

Another teacher, who started working at the school in September 2017, is [Ms. Nicole McIntosh](#). She teaches the K1 students, those considered as the babies (starting from 3yrs and 8mths old).

In describing how the environment positively contributes to her role as a teacher, she said, “The building is age appropriate and child friendly, with bright colours. Even the furniture is ideal for this age group, as it relates to size and being colourful. The rooms are clean and we don’t have any problems with heat because it is well ventilated. I especially love that each classroom has two (2) doors because the previous school I taught in didn’t have a backdoor which was not safe. The facility is properly fenced and we have a play area, which is important for children at this age group. The play area gives them a chance to interact and socialize with other children their age. The overall environment is comfortable and all these components will help to make my job as a teacher so much better.”

Security Fencing installed at the Little London Infant Department.



**SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
LITTLE LONDON INFANT DEPARTMENT
LITTLE LONDON, WESTMORELAND, JAMAICA**



Children enjoying their play equipment which includes, slide, swings, jungle gym and see-saw.

Ms. McIntosh expressed gratitude saying, “I really appreciate getting this building. There has never been an Infant School in Little London. Parents had to send their children to basic schools, which required a tuition fee. When parents cannot afford the fees, the children normally stay home, missing out on their early childhood education. Now that this infant department is merged with the primary school and funded by the **Ministry of Education* (MoE)**, tuition fees are not required and more parents seem to be making use of this opportunity.”

**The Ministry of Education (MoE) is the government entity responsible for the management and administration of public education in Jamaica.*

**SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
LITTLE LONDON INFANT DEPARTMENT
LITTLE LONDON, WESTMORELAND, JAMAICA**

Ms. Karlene Paisley, is the Caregiver at the infant department, who mainly assists in the K1 classroom. Ms. Paisley mentioned that, "I am extremely thankful that we have bathrooms attached to the infant department. When we moved into the building in September, construction was not 100% complete, which includes the bathroom area. As a result, I had to take the children to the primary school to use the bathroom and sometimes, by the time we got to the bathroom, the student would urinate or defecate on themselves. Having the bathroom completed, reduces that likelihood of those situations."



The student's bathroom includes adequate and separate stalls with modern flush toilets, wash basins and shower.



**SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
LITTLE LONDON INFANT DEPARTMENT
LITTLE LONDON, WESTMORELAND, JAMAICA**

Ms. Paisley said, "Thank you (FFP and donors) for this lovely gift, it's certainly making a difference for the children and staff and we are enjoying all the amenities. Continue doing the wonderful job of improving the chances for children to have comfortable schools."

Ms. Carol Wollery, currently teaches twenty-eight (28) four (4) year- old students, those in the K2 class. She also shared similar sentiments when communicating thanks for the infant department by adding that, "The facility also provides sufficient and spacious bathrooms. In addition to the perimeter fence, there is also security grills installed at each window and door to re-enforce safety. My students and I are very comfortable and we have been enjoying the building thus far. I look forward to a successful journey. Thank you (FFP and donors) for your involvement to nation building."

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