



Article taken from <http://www.anglicanschoolsbz.com/>

Belize is a beautiful country in Central America with a Caribbean coastline. It has a population of around 360 thousand people, and over 50% are 18 years old. The management of education in Belize is a partnership between the churches and the government. Most schools are church run, with the government funding salaries, primary school textbooks, and some elements of capital funding.

The Anglican Church runs twenty four schools in Belize ranging from Preschool to High School. We take pride in high educational standards combined with strong Christian teaching. **But most of all, our aim is to reflect the love of Jesus Christ our Lord in all we do.** Children who are loved and nurtured in an environment where they are sure where the boundaries are, are children who will learn and thrive.

In Belize, education is a partnership between Church and State. The various denominations operate the schools with government paying for teachers' and principals' salaries, some elements of training, primary school textbooks and some capital projects. There are also some schools operated entirely by the Government.

Education accounts for approximately 25% of the Government of Belize's expenditure. The school leaving age is 14 years. High school admission is by examination. Many children never make it to High School.

Most schools charge a fee each term to cover expenses such as cleaning, photocopying, electricity (where it's available), water, chalk and so on. This fee is typically about US\$25 a year per child, with reductions for large families. No child is turned away from school because the parent cannot pay the fees. In poor areas, many parents are unable to pay fees, exacerbating the problems of the local school.

Some children are unable to attend school because they don't have shoes to wear, uniform or school supplies. This is not a rule which school imposes, rather something which parents (and children) see as a barrier.

In common with most Church schools in Belize, we open our doors to children of any or no faith or denomination. Our philosophy is to run our schools in an atmosphere of love and kindness, with an emphasis on self discipline. Although corporal punishment is still legal in schools in Belize, in the Anglican schools we prohibit corporal punishment.

We believe that it is our task to send our children into the world with the tools they will need to have fulfilled lives. This includes the best possible academic education, a questioning mind, a feeling of self worth, a love of country, a respect for the environment, a sense of duty to others and of course, a strong Christian faith.

In common with most schools in Belize, quite a few of the children in our care come from chaotic and unstable backgrounds. Although school has traditionally been the place where you come to be educated, we now find that schools are expected to take on social roles which in the past would have been fulfilled by the family. This puts additional pressure on our teachers and resources.

The Anglican Church in Belize is long established but unfortunately, with many calls on its meagre resources, not rich. Each of our schools has needs, some great, some small. For historical and geographic reasons, some schools are better resourced than others. In particular, our small rural schools struggle.

Our aim is to redress these inequalities so that all our children have an equal opportunity to get the most out of their formative years.

St. Hilda's Anglican Primary School is in the small village of Georgeville, on the Western Highway quite close to the twin towns of Santa Elena and San Ignacio. The school sits on a rise and commands a beautiful view over the valley to the Mennonite community of Spanish Lookout.

The Principal of St. Hilda's, Ms. Ida Bennett, is proud of the school's good academic record, with 100% pass rate for the Primary School Exam in 2010. The school draws children from the surrounding farming and business community, and several ethnic groups are represented. Several children come from very poor families, and we try to provide at least some kind of minimal feeding programme, although we are anxious to do better.

Recently St. Hilda's has received some very nice play equipment from Canadian friends. The school is lucky enough to have its own church, and the same kind donors also recently provided new pews, the old benches are now used for playground seating - nothing is wasted!

The library suffered a serious termite attack during last summer and is in the process of being completely restocked with the help of a Peace Corps worker.



St. Barnabas' is an Anglican primary school dedicated to excellence in education, located in Central Farm, in the Cayo District of Belize