GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Ivan Dawson Primary School Students Celebrate Opening of New Playground

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Students of the Ivan Dawson Primary School are recipients of a new playground as part of the Ministry of Education’s ongoing initiative to upgrade playground facilities across public primary schools throughout the Territory

Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports Honourable Sharie B. de Castro in remarks during the dedication ceremony held on Monday, April 20, said the playground reflects the ministry’s commitment to listening to students and ensuring that schools provide spaces that support both learning and healthy development.

Honourable de Castro said, “I remember visiting the school late last year and being asked directly by students when they would finally receive a playground.When my team and I reviewed the school’s needs, we made a commitment that during the Easter break we would ensure that this playground was installed so that students could return to school with a surprise.”

The minister emphasised that play remains an important part of childhood development and encourages cooperation, respect and positive interaction among students.

Honourable de Castro also highlighted that Ivan Dawson Primary School is the ninth school to receive a playground under the ministry’s playground initiative, with one remaining project left to complete.

“We have one more playground to construct at the Enid Scatliffe Pre-Primary School,” the minister said, adding that the final project will feature a sensory playground designed to support students with exceptional needs, including those from the Eslyn Henley Richez Learning Centre.

Principal Mrs. Shaniqua Henley-Vanterpool expressed excitement and gratitude for the completion of the playground and the positive impact it will have on students at the school.

Student respondent Jereiny Sanchez, representing the Class of 2026, also spoke on behalf of the student body, expressing appreciation for the new recreational space.

Second District Representative Honourable Melvin Turnbull congratulated the principal and staff on the school’s new playground, as well as the Ministry of Education for its provision. He encouraged students to enjoy the space safely while practising sharing and looking out for one another.

Following the remarks, Pastor Cline offered a dedication prayer over the playground and students were then invited to enjoy the playground.

The Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports continues to prioritise improvements to school infrastructure across the Territory, recognising that safe recreational spaces play an important role in supporting students’ wellbeing, physical activity and overall school experience.

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