



Office of
Education
Standards
Cayman Islands
Government

A review of home learning in Cayman Islands private schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

July 2020.

START



Parents



Teachers



Students

No place like home?





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Introduction

On Friday 13th March 2020, the Honourable Julianna O'Connor-Connolly, Minister of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands announced the closure of all educational institutions in the Cayman Islands with effect from Monday 16th March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was implemented in accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Law (2016) and, on Wednesday 15th April 2020, the Honourable Minister directed the Office of Education Standards to conduct a review of home learning in schools. A framework for the review was developed by the Office of Education Standards. The review of home learning in government schools was completed on 29th May 2020 and a report entitled, 'No Place Like Home?' (bit.ly/NoPlaceLikeHome1) was published on 12th June 2020.

This report is focused on provision in private schools and is organised into three sections, as follows;

1. The strategies developed for home learning as devised by school and government leaders;
2. The arrangements for monitoring home learning as devised by private schools and government leaders, and;
3. A review of the quality of teaching within the home learning provision.

Inspectors from the Office of Education Standards conducted a review of home learning provision in 18 private schools listed in the table below. The 18 schools are all full or 'associate' members of the Cayman Islands Private Schools Association (PSA). Established in 1981, the PSA serves to;

- promote and preserve private education in the Cayman Islands;
- provide a unified voice on matters involving private education;
- promote mutual encouragement;
- share ideas, resources and solutions, and;
- provide a link between the Association and the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands, and the Department of Education Services.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Introduction

Institutions included in the Cayman Islands private schools home learning review	
Calvary Baptist Christian Academy	Island Montessori
Cayman Academy	Montessori By The Sea School
Cayman International School	Montessori del Sol
Cayman Learning Centre	Montessori School of Cayman
Cayman Prep and High School	St. Ignatius Catholic School
First Baptist Christian School	Triple C School
Footsteps	Truth For Youth School
Grace Christian Academy	Starfish Village (Village Montessori)
Hope Academy	Wesleyan Christian Academy

The Office of Education Standards review of home learning in private schools included a scrutiny of data and documentation issued by private school leaders. In addition, guidance published by the Cayman Islands Government Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands was reviewed. Inspectors examined home learning timetables, teachers’ lesson plans, assessment information, monitoring records developed by school leaders and a diverse range of communications with parents. Schools submitted, in total, over 800 documents, including video evidence from lessons which had been pre-recorded and delivered remotely. In addition, the Office of Education Standards scrutinised over 2,000 surveys which had been submitted by teachers, parents and students from Grades 10 to 12 (Years 11 to 13).

Inspectors joined a sample of ‘live’ on-line lessons delivered by teachers. Inspectors observed English, mathematics, science, music, art, circle time and social subject sessions, as well as group interventions offered to smaller groups of students. On-line parents’ meetings, school council and morning assemblies also formed part of the review. These included both ‘live’ sessions and recorded meetings.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Introduction

This home learning review was conducted at a challenging time for private schools. Most of the meetings and lesson observations took place towards the end of the final school term when ordinarily schools are engaged in many closing activities such as graduation, end-of-year reports and celebrations. At the time of school closures in March 2020, school leaders were not afforded the luxury of time to devise policies and were often required to action decisions within very narrow timeframes. Furthermore, in December 2019, members of the PSA were advised by the Ministry of Education that the previous purchase agreement which provided regular government funding to PSA member schools would end in July 2020. Criteria for further grant awards had not yet been confirmed or published, leaving private schools in some uncertainty regarding future income. As several of the schools had chosen to reduce fees during the pandemic, budgetary matters were prominent in the range of concerns raised by school principals in discussions with inspectors during this home learning review.

School leaders and teachers in private schools are to be commended for their resourcefulness, adaptability and agility in responding to the demands of remote learning during this unprecedented crisis. School leaders and teachers showed resilience and innovation in balancing multiple roles amidst competing demands.

The purpose of this review is to recognise strengths of the home learning provision in private schools and identify areas for improvement. At the time of the publication of this report, early years centres in Cayman government schools had been given permission to re-open and private schools offering summer camps had also been approved to function following the formal end to the school academic session. All private schools were planning to re-open at the beginning of the new academic year in August 2020. The recommendations in this report do not relate to the provision of individual schools but identify strategic level improvements which would benefit all or most of the member schools within the Cayman Islands Private Schools Association.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

2020 Timeline for the review of home learning by the Office of Education Standards

Monday 16th March

All educational institutions on the Cayman Islands were closed.

Wednesday 15th April

The Minister of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands directed the Office of Education Standards to conduct a review of home learning in schools.

Monday 20th April

Plans for the home learning review were submitted by the Director of the Office of Education Standards to the Minister of Education, Chief Officer of Portfolio of the Civil Service and to the Chief Officer of the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands.

Monday 1st June

E-mail to private school principals was issued explaining the review, including the survey links for staff, parents and students.

Tuesday 9th June

Documents requested from private schools were submitted to the Office of Education Standards.

Tuesday 9th June to Friday 26th June

Inspectors reviewed submitted evidence and participated in on-line sessions with teachers and students from private schools.

Friday 12th June

Publication of the government schools home learning report on the Office of Education Standards website.

Friday 19th June

Surveys for the private school home learning review were closed.

Wednesday 8th July

Completion of draft report and submission to the Minister of Education, Agriculture, Youth, Sports and Lands. The draft report was also issued to Chief Officers in Education and Portfolio of the Civil Service.

Wednesday 22nd July

Publication of the home learning report on the Office of Education Standards website.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Summary findings



The quality of teaching was good in most observed on-line lessons

The quality of teaching observed by inspectors during the home learning review of private schools was good overall. Most sessions were carefully planned with a good balance of teacher-led instruction and time for students to work independently on practical activities. Many of the private school teachers offered on-line sessions for smaller groups and individual students, thereby providing a good match of tasks to the individual needs of the class. However, although most of the sessions observed and most of the lessons that were pre-recorded provided good opportunities for students to learn and make progress, this was not the case in all schools. A few schools offered limited, insufficient or no synchronous sessions for students. There was some variation therefore in the quality of provision across private schools and, where face-to-face teaching sessions were insufficient, students' progress was highly dependent upon the regularity and consistency of the support given by parents.



Good arrangements were in place to track attendance and help ensure students' well-being

Inspectors found that most private schools monitored class attendance appropriately during the time of home learning and had effective arrangements in place to track students' health and well-being. The use of different wellness activities, such as 'Mindfulness Mondays' and 'Fun Friday Quiz Time' and 'Wellness Wednesdays', helped establish an appropriate balance between formal lessons and fun, social learning opportunities.



There was some inconsistency in the quality of home learning strategies deployed by the private schools

There was notable variation in the range of home learning strategies implemented by private schools during the pandemic. Early in the process, certain schools designed a hybrid approach which included a balance of face-to-face teaching on-line, along with pre-recorded sessions and paper-based activities. Higher performing schools implemented this approach but made modifications based on feedback from students, parents and teachers. Most schools provided the Office of Education Standards with comprehensive guidance documents which appropriately delineated their remote learning strategies. A few schools, however, did not provide this level of detail. Other schools formulated a strategy and were too inflexible in their policies and practice. One school, for example, which offered a PACE (Packet of Accelerated Christian Education) curriculum, provided no on-line sessions at all. Students from the primary years to Grade 12 in this school worked through their task booklets independently with occasional 'What's App' messages from teachers. Feedback to those students was irregular and insufficient to help ensure good progress.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Summary findings



Lesson content was well-matched to curriculum requirements in most private schools

A review of the content of lessons and the curriculum plans developed by most teachers over the period of the pandemic indicated a good and close match to the curriculum requirements of the different private schools. New work was introduced as well as planned opportunities for students to consolidate their prior learning. The use of smaller groups in many schools helped teachers to monitor students' grasp of new concepts. Schools made good use of support for learning staff and other team members to reinforce core skills in literacy and numeracy but, in a few contexts, there was scope for more effective deployment of all staff to maximise support for under achieving students.



Most, though not all, private schools offered good value for money during the pandemic

Considering the circumstances, most of the member schools in the Private Schools Association offered good value for money during the pandemic. A few had reduced their fees during this period but not all. Parents expressed concern in their submissions to this review because a few schools did not offer, in their opinion, regular or sufficient face-to-face tuition.



Schools faced budgetary pressures during the pandemic and these will continue causing some risk to continuity of provision across the sector

The COVID-19 pandemic led to significant challenges for many of the private schools in terms of funding and financial management. Several schools reported reduced numbers on roll as family members lost employment or left the islands. This led to reductions in staffing and, for a number of professionals in the private school sector, either reduction in salary, furloughed deployment or even unemployment. Importantly, just prior to the pandemic, there had also been a change in the grant funding mechanism used by the Cayman Islands Government. This led to some uncertainty about staffing levels for the new academic session. This combination of factors led to the closure of at least one well-established early years setting on Grand Cayman as a consequence of financial instability. As a result, provision for working parents whose child-care arrangements depend upon accessible, early years provision may be adversely affected.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Summary findings



A few schools will require closer monitoring and guidance to ensure good provision for all students

Private schools in Cayman are licensed by government and subject to the guidance and policies of the Cayman Islands Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands. During the pandemic, Cayman Islands private schools received directives from the Ministry of Education in relation to school closure. Later in the process, the Ministry also identified a number of educational research papers encouraging private school leaders to consider distance learning in diverse international contexts. Despite this support, schools lacked clarity regarding the best practice suitable for Cayman and there was insufficient specific direction from the Private Schools Association and from the Ministry of Education to help ensure a good and balanced approach in all of the private schools. As a consequence, across private school provision there developed diverse and variable practice. Most private school leaders created and then adapted their strategies in isolation. Although there were some examples of collaboration between private schools, many school leaders reported that they would have welcomed further guidance from the relevant education authorities and the Private Schools Association regarding potentially successful models for Cayman, particularly in terms of effective remote teaching strategies for different ages of students.



There are some technological improvements required

Based on the data submitted by the member schools of the Private Schools Association, almost all students attending private schools had regular access to a laptop or desktop computer to support their learning during the pandemic. This differed to the home learning arrangements found in government schools where the Ministry of Education and Department of Education Services were actively involved in providing hardware for a significant number of students across the islands. There remained, however, by the time of the conclusion of this review, around 150 students in private schools without access to a digital device. These students had been without access from the start of the pandemic. A few private schools had not been successful in ensuring equality of access to home learning for all students. Although almost all students in the private schools did have access to the equipment they needed for home learning, the unreliability of their wireless connections and bandwidth issues did adversely affect the quality of students' learning. Technological support for students and teachers in the smaller private schools also limited the regularity of a few students' participation in remote lessons at times over the period of school closures.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Summary findings



Schools reported good levels of student attendance

Data submitted by the private schools to the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands indicated overall good levels of student attendance to remote learning sessions held throughout during the pandemic. However, inconsistency in interpretation of the data requirements meant that information received by the Ministry of Education regarding other aspects of their provision lacked reliability and rigour.



There remains a need to improve monitoring arrangements to further enhance teaching and assessment

Inspectors found that monitoring of teaching, learning and students' progress during the pandemic was variable across private schools. Only a few school leaders observed 'live' sessions though more decided to do so during the home learning review undertaken by the Office of Education Standards. There was scope for the Ministry of Education to provide further support to private school leaders in this regard. Private schools tracked students' attendance and completion of tasks and, in the best performing schools, students received regular feedback during lessons and following their submission of work. Skilled teachers made effective use of new assessment platforms to engage students and used these creatively to develop greater opportunities for the students to understand how they should improve their work.



Inspectors noted effective arrangements in place to support students prior to examinations

Many of the students from Grade 10 to 12 (Years 11 to 13) in private schools were due to sit important internal or external examinations during the period in which the schools were closed. Inspectors found that teachers in the secondary stages of private schools were, in general, proactive in responding to course and assessment revisions. Wherever possible, assessment arrangements were appropriately adjusted by school leaders to reflect the learning opportunities afforded to students whilst they were learning from home. There was some scope to extend and adapt curriculum content for Year 13 (Grade 12) students in certain schools. Furthermore, internal examinations developed by a few schools during the pandemic were noted by inspectors to be, at times, less demanding than would usually be the case. This was because a few teachers made increased use of multiple-choice or 'true-false' assessments, rather than requiring more extensive and detailed responses.

[Introduction](#)[Timeline](#)[Summary findings](#)**[Recommendations](#)**[Data in relation to home learning](#)[A strategy for home learning](#)[Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes](#)[Teaching and learning](#)[Surveys](#)

Recommendations

- R1** As previously identified in the review of home learning in government schools, relevant government departments in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands, should improve wireless connectivity and bandwidth provision across the Cayman Islands to facilitate effective home learning for all students.
- R2** In order to promote best practice across schools, the Cayman Islands Private Schools Association and the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands should develop clear guidance regarding the characteristics of effective home learning explaining, for example; minimum expectations in terms of on-line provision for different ages of students and various stages of education across all Cayman Islands schools.
- R3** The Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands, Cayman Islands Private Schools Association and the Office of Education Standards should collaborate to organise a post-COVID virtual conference for school leaders and teachers in government and private schools, outlining best practice which could inform distance learning strategies in the future.
- R4** Grant arrangements for private schools require further review and the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands should publish guidance to help ensure equitable access to available funds in the future. In collaboration with the Cayman Islands Private Schools Association, the Cayman Islands Government may wish to consider longer-term budget allocations to help member establishments plan strategically over a number of years.
- R5** The Cayman Islands Private Schools Association should review their constitution and consider extending full membership to all licensed schools with statutory-aged students, regardless of the number of school-age students on roll.
- R6** The Cayman Islands Private Schools Association, in collaboration with the Department of Education Services, should compile an inventory of on-line resources that member schools have found to be effective during the pandemic and this information should be shared across all schools to help teachers across Cayman reflect upon and further improve their practice.
- R7** School leaders, including the governing bodies of Cayman Islands private schools should develop more effective and comprehensive arrangements to monitor the quality of home learning provision, in order to identify and disseminate good practice in teaching.
- R8** The quality of each schools' home learning provision should be referenced as an additional area of focus within the forthcoming revisions to the school self-evaluation and inspection framework, 'Successful Schools and Achieving Students'. Inspection reports published by the Office of Education Standards during the next cycle of inspections should include evaluations and commentary regarding each school's home learning and digital strategy.

[Introduction](#)[Timeline](#)[Summary findings](#)[Recommendations](#)[Data in relation to home learning](#)[A strategy for home learning](#)[Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes](#)[Teaching and learning](#)[Surveys](#)

Recommendations

- R9** Appropriate modifications to existing private school premises are required in advance of the students' return to school, to ensure the health and safety of students, staff and parents. Considerations such as the provision of multiple hand-sanitising stations and signage to reinforce adequate social distancing protocols need to be agreed in each school. A heightened regard for supervision at break and lunchtimes when young children would naturally congregate will be needed. Additionally, innovative timetabling solutions may be necessary at an individual school level to minimise social interactions that could put students and staff at risk.
- R10** Governing bodies and leaders of private schools should, in collaboration with relevant external agencies, develop arrangements to help ensure continuity of specialist provision for private school students with special educational needs during school closures.
- R11** Private school leaders should review the deployment of support staff during school closure to better meet the learning needs of all students, including those with additional support needs.
- R12** Education recovery plans submitted by private schools require review in advance of the students' return to school. Governing bodies should receive feedback and educational direction from the Ministry of Education or relevant educational agencies to address gaps in planning and ensure the inclusion of comprehensive 'catch-up' and health and safety arrangements, as directed in the guidance published the Ministry of Education in June 2020.
- R13** Private schools should make use of external, benchmarked assessments to check students' achievement at key points in their education and in core areas of the curriculum on their return to school in the new session. This will be necessary to make sufficient adjustments to the content of the programme and thereby meet the educational needs of all students. Appropriate 'catch-up' plans may be necessary for certain groups of students and private school leaders should publish plans explaining their strategies and proposed timelines for implementation, as necessary.
- R14** In order to facilitate equality of opportunity for students, the governing bodies of private schools should arrange for all students on roll to have use of a digital device in order to support their age-appropriate levels of participation in home learning and, when necessary, in synchronous lessons along with their peers.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Data in relation to home learning

The table below includes data collected by the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands, from private school principals regarding aspects of their home learning provision.

	Calvary Baptist Christian Academy	Cayman Academy	Cayman International School	Cayman Learning Centre	Cayman Prep and High School	First Baptist Christian School	Footsteps	Grace Christian Academy	Hope Academy	Island Montessori	Montessori By The Sea School	Montessori del Sol	Montessori School of Cayman	St. Ignatius Catholic School	Starfish Village	Triple C School	Truth for Youth School	Wesleyan Christian Academy
Roll on 12th June 2020 (*)	65	285	621	11	983	139	28	100	103	9	102	4	1	598	38	467	168	107
% daily attendance/contact with students	97%	98%	93.8%	100%	98%	100%	96%	98%	95-100%	100%	94.7%	100%		100%	88%	97.6%	95%	76,58%
% accessing on-line learning	10%	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%	93%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%		100%	98%	100%	95%	100%
% students accessing paper-based learning	100%	0%	0%	100%	0.5%	0%	0%	5.4%	0%	100%	65%	100%		100%	80%	100%	100%	100%
% students needing access to a digital device/computer	100%	< 5%	0%	9%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%		100%	0%	2%	15%	0%
% students needing access to the internet	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%		5.9%	0%	0%	20%	0%
% students 'unaccounted for'	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.33%	0%	0%	0%	0%		1.03%	0	0	0	0
Number of students receiving school/PTA meals and/or care packets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0		10	0	0	0	0
Comments and trends between 1st May and 12th June 2020.	Increase in attendance from 90% to 97%.		Decrease in attendance from 100% to 93.8%.	Increase in attendance from 90% to 100%.	Roll decrease from 1,005.	Increase in attendance from 98% to 100%.	Decrease in attendance from 100% to 96%.	Increase in attendance from 96% to 98%.			Increase in attendance from 92.4% to 94.7%.		Data for this school is not published, as the student would be potentially identifiable.		Decrease in attendance from 90% to 88%.	Decrease in attendance from 99.9% to 97.6%.	Increase in attendance from 90% to 95%. Roll decrease from 176.	Decrease in attendance from 81.3% to 76.58%.

* Students on roll from Year 1 (Kindergarten) to Year 13 (Grade 12). The Ministry of Education did not require private schools to include data for Reception-age students in their submissions.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

Technological support to assist staff and students

Students' access to information technology

Best practices that are emerging

The main challenges experienced by teachers and families during home learning

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

On 22nd April 2020, the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands announced that the closure of schools would be extended to the end of the academic year 2019/20. On 12th May 2020, around three weeks later, private schools were issued with policy guidance by the Ministry regarding distance learning during schools closure. This information directed school leaders to research findings from different educational contexts, including Australia and the United Kingdom. This documentation provided limited support to schools at this time as many had already been required to devise a working strategy for home learning. The importance, furthermore, of a hybrid approach was not clearly stated in seeking to establish best practice across the islands.

Nevertheless, following the announcement regarding school closures, most private schools responded quickly and devised a home learning strategy pertinent to the age, stage and academic needs of their students. An example of proactive leadership was evident at Cayman Prep and High. Two weeks prior to the Ministry of Education's announcement of school closure in the Cayman Islands, leaders at this school had prepared for the transition to remote learning in the event of school closure. Although their home learning strategy evolved over time, this timely intervention had ensured that adequate preparations were in place to support students' transition to remote learning immediately following school closure.

In almost all cases, schools' remote learning strategy incorporated timely communication to parents and updates as the policy was revised. Most schools developed approaches which stated explicitly the schools' plans for training, technological platforms, communication with parents and students, as well as the balance of time allocated to different subjects and between synchronous and asynchronous learning.

For example, at Montessori By The Sea School, managers published a framework for home learning which outlined the expectations of staff in terms of the number of 'live' and 'pre-recorded' sessions to be prepared and delivered. The extent of specialist lessons was also incorporated and revised in response to feedback from surveys completed by parents and also separately by the Parent Guild. Similarly, at St. Ignatius Catholic School, following an initial COVID-19 plan published in February 2020, further policies on safeguarding and well-being were developed and timetables for each stage of the school were introduced.





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

Technological support to assist staff and students

Students' access to information technology

Best practices that are emerging

The main challenges experienced by teachers and families during home learning

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

At Montessori del Sol School, staff communicated with parents to seek clarity regarding stakeholder 'expectations' and these were used to determine curriculum content and the most appropriate teaching strategies for the different ages of students. At Cayman International School, there were clear and explicit requirements outlined for students, parents and staff regarding the number of lessons to be delivered synchronously and the time to be allocated for such. Hence, from Grades 6 to 10, for example, students were required to join two 45-minute sessions for each core subject (English, mathematics, science, history/social subjects and Spanish). There were additional classes provided in other subjects. Teachers tracked attendance and submissions of work using on-line tools and this helped staff to monitor students' progress over time.

Overall, private schools had also developed effective strategies to track attendance and ensure equality of access to home learning by all students. Inspectors noted that schools were quick to contact parents where students' participation to individual sessions was irregular. When necessary, poor attendance or irregular responses from parents were also communicated to the Ministry of Education through appropriate channels to help track students who were considered to be 'unaccounted for'. Data required by the Ministry of Education was submitted each week by private school leaders but the different interpretation of requirements and lack of feedback regarding the submissions meant that the data had minimal impact upon the development or improvement of private school home learning strategies.

The content of lessons in private schools was noted to be engaging in most cases. Although work sheets and web links were used at times to provide lesson tasks to students, more often than not, the content of lessons and the resources used were home produced and of good quality. In one science session observed in Cayman International School, for example, the teacher made reference to a recent environmental issue reported in the local press and this helped engage students. All students were required to produce their own project presentation outlining a current Cayman-related environmental topic and required to devise their own solutions to a current environmental issue. Overall, across all private schools, most teachers encouraged students to take age-appropriate responsibility for their own learning and consequently, during the time of distance learning, most students demonstrated a broad range of critical thinking and independent learning skills. Interestingly, several school principals reported that a few students made better than expected progress during the period of home learning. They attributed this to the more extensive and regular support those students received from parents as part of their home learning programme.

All private schools were required to submit a COVID-19 Education Recovery Plan to the Ministry of Education by 26th June 2020. The plan template directed schools to outline their proposed changes to the school schedule and to the curriculum. Arrangements to ensure the social and emotional well-being of students and the professional developmental needs of staff were also to be identified. Inspectors received access to a number of the plans towards the end of this home learning review.





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

Technological support to assist staff and students

Students' access to information technology

Best practices that are emerging

The main challenges experienced by teachers and families during home learning

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

The inspectorate judged that certain schools would benefit from feedback and direction from the Ministry of Education to ensure that proposed arrangements were sufficiently comprehensive and would be fully effective in meeting the educational and health-related needs of students on their return to school in the new academic session.

Financial matters were raised by several private school principals during this review. Up until June 2020, private schools received grants from the Cayman Islands Government and these were distributed to member schools through the Private Schools Association. Smaller private schools had no access to grants from the Private Schools Association because they were only given full membership depending on the number of students on roll. This meant that several of the smaller institutions were unable to access the grant awarded to the Private Schools Association in the period just prior to and during the pandemic. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education informed member schools that the grants would end in June 2020 and advised that future awards would be made through a bidding process. School leaders were unclear about the basis by which the relevant appointed committee would agree to make an award. A COVID-19 grant had been announced which offered short-term assistance to any private school wishing to make an application.





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

Technological support to assist staff and students

Students' access to information technology

Best practices that are emerging

The main challenges experienced by teachers and families during home learning

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

At the time of the closure of schools, decisions regarding examinations were announced by external international assessment organisations. Private schools in Cayman follow a range of curricula and therefore different strategies were developed to address the impact of school closure on examination schedules. For example, private school students writing the Caribbean Examinations Council examinations were informed that assessments were to be postponed and would be rescheduled for July 2020. Most paper-based International Baccalaureate, A-level, I/GCSE and BTEC examinations were cancelled altogether, requiring teachers and students to develop evidence for internally assessed grades which were to be assigned based on coursework and internal tests. In schools offering an US-style curriculum, most on-line and internally administered assessments proceeded and College Board assessments were available for interested students to complete at home.

Inspectors found that teachers in the secondary stages of private schools were proactive in responding to course and assessment revisions.

Wherever possible, assessment arrangements managed by schools were appropriately adjusted by school leaders to reflect the learning opportunities afforded to students whilst they were learning from home. There were effective tracking arrangements

in place in a majority of private schools which helped monitor submissions of required assessed pieces and this helped ensure that students achieved their potential examination grade. School leaders ensured continuity of curriculum provision in examination subjects. In the International Baccalaureate Diploma classes, for example, at Cayman International School, teachers used an on-line tracking tool which was completed by all subject teachers after each lesson and this provided a useful overview to the curriculum co-ordinator and to students and this helped with deadlines and task management. Despite these efforts, a majority of students in Cayman private schools preparing for examinations expressed concern regarding their level of preparation for examinations later in the year.

Teachers preparing students for examinations had developed innovative and creative remote learning tools to support students' independent study. Several teachers, for example, had created their own 'YouTube' channels and recorded approaches to specific topics and explained previous examination paper questions to allow students opportunities for independent learning. Good practice was noted during this review where secondary teachers made use of voice notes to provide individualised feedback to students about their submitted work. Through reference to examination rubric and assessment criteria, students were helped to identify what they needed to do to further improve their work.





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

Technological support to assist staff and students

Students' access to information technology

Best practices that are emerging

The main challenges experienced by teachers and families during home learning

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

In the primary or elementary phases of the private schools, planned assessments to check students' achievement in core subjects were implemented as originally planned. The tests were delivered on-line and were part of the normal practice of effective schools. At Montessori By The Sea School and First Baptist Christian School, for example, teachers and school leaders made use of 'Star' reading and mathematics tests to indicate the progress made by Grade 2 to 6 students and compare their relative achievement to international benchmarks. This information was central in helping staff understand any potential gaps in knowledge and understanding that required attention when the students did eventually return to school. At the primary phase, at Cayman Prep and High School students completed assessments which teachers used to check students' relative achievement in key subjects and identify important learning gaps. Not all schools had such robust arrangements for assessment.

Students in most private schools benefited from access to on-line textbooks and, despite some ongoing issues with connectivity and access to the internet, these resources offered students access to key information to revise and complete tasks regularly and independently. There was, in most cases, good support for students preparing for examinations to receive support from teachers to refine work submissions and seek assistance, as required.

However, in a few private schools, particularly those offering a PACE (Packet of Accelerated Christian Education) curriculum, the support provided for students preparing for internal assessments was less effective. Assessments were noted to be adjusted at times and, by aiming to support remote access, adaptations of examinations over simplified content. In addition, students in Year 13 (Grade 12 equivalent) in UK-style curriculum private schools reported that their lessons had effectively ended in March 2020 and, with the cancellation of external examinations, they received insufficient tuition after that date to help prepare for their chosen college course.





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

Technological support to assist staff and students

Students' access to information technology

Best practices that are emerging

The main challenges experienced by teachers and families during home learning

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Technological support to assist staff and students

Almost all teachers in private schools had access to necessary hardware, such as a laptop or desktop computer. As was the case in the review of home learning in government schools, staff were provided with technical support to access a range of platforms that they were required to use to support digital learning.

In a majority of private schools there were established arrangements already in place in the school to facilitate digital learning.

Consequently, a proportion of teachers and students had some pre-knowledge and confidence using common platforms for use, including, for example, 'Zoom' and Microsoft 'Teams'. Almost all private school teachers reported in their survey submission that they were competent in the use of on-line learning platforms.

In a few schools, however, provision was more variable and teachers did not always demonstrate sufficient technological competence to provide effective synchronous learning early in the term after the Easter break. In such schools, there was an over dependence on paper-based tasks and students' progress was not as effective due to cumbersome process of work submission and feedback which was dependent upon the use of 'What's App' or photographic evidence.

Most private schools had developed appropriate professional training plans which helped broaden the skills and competencies of teachers over the period of school closure. For example, at Cayman International School, the information technology team had worked in collaboration with all staff to identify resources, including video

materials and websites which could help engage learners and meet curriculum objectives. A comprehensive resource list and training schedule were devised and accessed by teaching and support staff. Similarly, at Montessori by the Sea School and also in other Montessori curricula institutions, software programmes were introduced which modelled the use of Montessori resources.

Most private schools provided guidance documentation and information sessions for parents regarding the platforms to be used during home learning. At Montessori del Sol School, for example, parents were issued with security of information policy documents and code of conduct guidance to help all students and adults participate fully and effectively in the home learning programme. At Montessori By The Sea School, two surveys issued to parents helped guide adaptations to the home learning provision and aided leaders in their efforts to tailor the schools' provision and technological requirements more effectively to the needs of parents and students.

Teachers working in private schools reported, in general, good levels of technological support during the pandemic. Most teachers reported they had received training which equipped them well to deliver on-line learning to students. Larger and high-performing schools had established regular support and training sessions for staff and these quickly addressed arising technological issues and helped maintain continuity in learning. For example, a 'Tech Café' at Cayman International School, was held regularly and staff could join remotely to seek assistance and guidance from experienced colleagues.





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

Technological support to assist staff and students

Students' access to information technology

Best practices that are emerging

The main challenges experienced by teachers and families during home learning

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Students' access to information technology

From 1st May 2020, principals of private schools were required to submit a weekly 'snapshot' of key information to the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands. The purpose of this arrangement was to help the Ministry identify arising trends and pinpoint best practice. Questions related to a range of topics including students' access to information technology. Example questions from the 'snapshot' are included in the table on page 12 of this report. The principals were asked to identify, for example, the percentage of students accessing on-line learning and the percentage of students accessing paper-based learning.

As shown by the data submitted by the schools each week from 1st May 2020, principals interpreted the questions differently. This led to some anomalies in submissions. For example, certain schools stated that there were no students accessing paper-based learning indicating that there were no students accessing only paper-based learning. In other contexts, where schools had introduced a hybrid approach with both on-line and paper-based learning, principals responded to the same question by stating that 100 per cent of students were accessing paper-based learning because all of their students had regular access to different resources, as required by their teachers.

Despite this challenge, it was clear from discussions with principals and from other data submissions made by schools to this home learning review that almost all students in private schools had access to on-line learning and almost all had access to the internet.

Submissions from 1st May 2020 indicated also that almost all students had access to the internet at the start of the period of data collection. There remained, in one school, however, around 25 students who continued to be taught through the use of paper-based resources and the school had not been successful in helping those students gain access to on-line lessons.

The number of students in private schools requiring access to a digital device such as a laptop or desktop computer decreased slightly over the period of remote learning.

On 1st May 2020, schools reported that there were 160 students without access to a digital device. This had reduced to 150 by 12th June 2020. One school had not sought to introduce on-line learning at all and this formed a high percentage of the overall national figure in relation to remote access. A few private schools had not been successful in ensuring that all students in their schools were able to at least borrow a digital device in order to have equal access to the lessons provided.





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

Technological support to assist staff and students

Students' access to information technology

Best practices that are emerging

The main challenges experienced by teachers and families during home learning

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Best practices that are emerging

A number of emerging good practices were identified by school leaders, teachers and inspectors.



Small groups based on students' learning needs

In the most effective sessions observed during the private school home learning review, teachers had developed small group classes prior to and after the main lesson to support individuals and groups of students. These 'supplementary' sessions were short and were well matched to the varying needs of different groups of learners. For example, at Cayman International School, ten-minute individual 'Zoom' appointments were arranged between the teacher and Grade 8 science students to review project submissions. At several schools, teachers shared pre-recorded instructional videos and related digital resources with students and parents. Students were able to access these video clips at times convenient to them and their families to augment their learning. These were all aligned to the weekly remote learning plans that were disseminated to parents. Parents and students were able to access these video clips at times convenient to them. Students then completed assignments which they submitted to their teachers for review and feedback. Several schools utilised instructional videos to augment students' learning. Using 'breakout' rooms in 'Zoom' and 'channels' in Microsoft 'Teams', teachers were able to target lesson content more appropriately to smaller groups of students.



Optimized reassignment of roles

In order to maximise support for students, in well managed schools, staff were reassigned during the pandemic to different roles. For example, at Cayman International School, swimming staff, substitute teachers and library personnel were deployed to diverse tasks including teaching and guidance roles to 'struggling' students. Similarly at Cayman Prep and High School, support staff such as the school nurse, canteen and after school club staff were redeployed to support students' engagement in on-line activities, using different software resources with students. In other private schools there was scope for more effective and efficient deployment of support staff to maximise students' learning.



Effective use of assessment software

Teachers used a range of assessment tools during on-line classes which facilitated quick and positive feedback to students about their work. Teachers reported that their use of 'Seesaw', 'Pear Deck', 'Quizlet', 'Visualizer' and 'Camscanner' were particularly useful during classes because they allowed personalised and timely assessments and prompt feedback about ongoing lesson content.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

Technological support to assist staff and students

Students' access to information technology

Best practices that are emerging

The main challenges experienced by teachers and families during home learning

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Best practices that are emerging



Flexibility in scheduling of curriculum delivery

A few schools were noted to be particularly accommodating and flexible in their timing of curriculum delivery. At St. Ignatius Catholic School, for example, in response to parental feedback, a few teachers hosted meetings after six pm to accommodate family work commitments. This was necessary because the children involved required support in completing their class work programmes. At Cayman International School, teachers made use of 'voice notes' which included video material to provide feedback and guidance to individual students. These were also available to parents to allow families to review the children's achievement and progress at a mutually convenient time. At Grace Christian Academy, staff offered additional on-line sessions after school hours, providing individual support and guidance to high school students.



Students' well-being was a priority

All schools demonstrated due care and concern for the well-being of students. Approaches to supporting students' welfare differed from one school to the next with notable innovation in aspects of curriculum delivery in different schools. A 'Wellness Wednesday' programme at Cayman Prep and High School allowed for the inclusion of a broader range of fun activities for students. Other schools offered 'Mindfulness Monday' and 'Fun Friday' events and quizzes. The addition of 'pyjama' or 'crazy hair' day events helped offer student leadership roles as well as variety to the curriculum. At Montessori By The Sea School, a student council meeting was very effective in promoting student leadership and respect between children and also facilitated open discussion amongst the students about how they were all coping with remote learning. School leaders at Cayman Academy had organised a school-wide growth mindset workshop facilitated by counsellors from the Family Resource Centre. Here students were exposed to useful skills to support their learning during the pandemic. Extra-curricular programmes continued to be offered in a few schools and such enhanced the quality of the curriculum. At Cayman International School, for example, the United Nations event was offered remotely to older students in partnership with students from St. Ignatius Catholic School. Students at Footsteps School performed an end-of-year drama through remote video recordings. Similarly, Cayman Prep and High School hosted a virtual careers week for their Year 11 students. Graduation events were held despite the challenges of social distancing. As had been the case in government schools, private schools made effective use of video and flexible deployment of staff to maintain a sense of achievement and pride at special events such as graduation and end-of-year celebrations.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

Technological support to assist staff and students

Students' access to information technology

Best practices that are emerging

The main challenges experienced by teachers and families during home learning

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Best practices that are emerging



A team approach to professional development

Teachers' valued opportunities for professional development which supported their on-going training needs. At Cayman International School, a 'Tech Café' was in place and this allowed teachers to share good practice, compare useful platforms they had trialed and also allowed technical difficulties to be reviewed and addressed. In St. Ignatius Catholic School and First Baptist Christian School grade level team meetings and department meetings held remotely, helped ensure consistency in curriculum content and assessment practices. The meetings also provided good opportunities for staff to discuss the needs of individual students, track attendance and check work submissions.



Creative approaches to enhance curriculum delivery

Remote learning had presented unique opportunities for staff to acquire a range of digital skills in the delivery of home learning. The range of creativity and talent displayed by staff in creating instructional videos and incorporating technology in lessons to make learning engaging and meaningful should be harnessed and leveraged in regular classroom settings to enrich students' learning. Future professional development for teachers should incorporate opportunities for staff to improve on the skills and knowledge they've acquired during the pandemic. School leaders also reported on the growing level of confidence displayed by students in their technological skills and their ability to manipulate the different on-line platforms.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

Technological support to assist staff and students

Students' access to information technology

Best practices that are emerging

The main challenges experienced by teachers and families during home learning

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

The main challenges experienced by teachers and families during home learning

This review highlighted a number of practical and organisational challenges which presented barriers to learning for a number of students.

In a few private schools the home learning programme provided students with very limited opportunities for face-to-face learning. One school, for example, arranged a fairly full daily programme for students which followed the usual school timetable. However, sessions were pre-recorded or were a series of set tasks which students were required to complete and submit. There was a short 15-minute session with the teacher each day to check progress and submissions. Another school set tasks for every student but offered no on-line lessons at all. Communication between teachers and students was through 'What's App' messages or phone calls. Most students benefited from a hybrid approach incorporating both on-line sessions, opportunities for independent study and paper-based tasks. Not all private schools had achieved an appropriate balance in this regard.

A significant proportion of students and teachers referred to unreliable wireless connectivity as a particular barrier to learning. During observed sessions on-line, it was observed that a few students and sometimes teachers experienced difficulty in maintaining contact and some delay in reception affected sound quality during the 'live' sessions.

In addition, a significant minority of students and teachers reported technical problems which they stated had, at times, required external assistance to remedy. In such circumstances, smaller private schools without the provision of an information technology maintenance team or staff member struggled to provide timely and effective

support for individuals. The restriction of time allowed in 'Zoom' lessons necessitated some adjustment to the length and structure of sessions.

Although most private schools reported almost full student attendance during lessons over the period of the pandemic, it was reported that, in a few households, devices were shared between siblings and adults in the family and this reduced the regularity of participation. To overcome this, many schools recorded 'live' sessions and this allowed students to view content at a more convenient time.

Teachers reported some concern regarding the reliability of assessment practices during the period of time when students were learning remotely. They were not always able to confirm that work was completed independently and a few questioned the use of new and 'multiple choice' form of assessments, particularly in subjects requiring more extended, written submissions, such as English and history. Teachers in private schools made use of a good range of on-line assessment tools during lessons and examples are described in the assessment section of this report on page 36.

There was some lack of clarity across and within schools regarding accepted protocol in relation to communication with students during the pandemic. For example, several teachers reported that they were instructed that they should not communicate with students by telephone. Others stated that they were required to set up 'What's App' communication with individuals and groups of students. Others understood that one-to-one video conferences were allowed and encouraged in order to provide support for individual students and maintain effective pastoral care as necessary.





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

Technological support to assist staff and students

Students' access to information technology

Best practices that are emerging

The main challenges experienced by teachers and families during home learning

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Student health, safety and welfare were prioritised by the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands and by private school staff.

The number of students requiring care support packages or assistance, as identified by school principals, was significantly lower in private schools than was the case in government schools. Nevertheless, during the review, it was evident that staff and school leaders were quick to identify those students requiring practical or emotional support during the pandemic.

Schools were proactive in distributing important information to families regarding the COVID-19 pandemic; issuing documents on-line from the Health Services Authority, Cayman Islands Government and other organisations. During school assemblies and tutor group sessions, teachers frequently reminded students about important safety protocols such as washing hands regularly. School counsellors were available in the larger schools to support students as necessary. Referrals were made in a timely fashion and evidence showed that students requesting support were contacted regularly. Appropriate confidential records were kept in most schools. Pastoral leaders in secondary schools had oversight of students' engagement and their submitted work through the use of weekly pastoral tracking sheets. In most private schools it was noted that guidance and welfare support staff were in regular contact with students and parents to follow up on any aspects of concern. Teachers could make referrals

when patterns of absence were noted or when there were other signs of vulnerability. Nevertheless, despite these arrangements, data submitted to the Ministry of Education from 1st May to mid-June 2020 did indicate a gradual increase in the number of private school students requiring emotional or mental health support from educational professionals.

Inspectors reviewed provision for students with special educational needs. Most of the students had individual education plans and those requiring external specialist assistance, such as speech and language therapy or behavioural support, were overseen by special educational needs co-ordinators who were in place in most of the larger private schools. It was noted that, for a small number of students with ADHD or autism spectrum related needs, the usual programme of support was not as comprehensive or as successful. Remote or pre-recorded therapy sessions were not always as effective as face-to-face support, despite the efforts of staff.

Most private school staff kept comprehensive records of attendance and made sure to check attendance to every on-line session. As a consequence, in almost all schools, students' attendance was at least satisfactory and often good.





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

The strategy to support home learning in private schools

Helping students to prepare for external examinations

Technological support to assist staff and students

Students' access to information technology

Best practices that are emerging

The main challenges experienced by teachers and families during home learning

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Arrangements to support students' health and well-being as part of the home-learning strategy

Students' attendance had increased over the period of the pandemic in a number of schools. The lowest attendance was noted in one of the schools offering a PACE (Packet of Accelerated Christian Education) curriculum and the highest levels of attendance were identified in Montessori-curriculum style establishments and also in other large private schools. In the latter cases, schools reported full attendance throughout several weeks during the pandemic.

Most private schools had successfully adapted the curriculum structure to adjust the programmes and include activities which supported students' health and emotional well-being. Both students and parents commented in their survey submissions regarding the commendable efforts of teachers and senior leaders in supporting students' welfare.





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

The role of school leaders, including governing bodies and government agencies in monitoring the quality of home learning

Arrangements to track students' participation and engagement in home learning

Support for vulnerable students and those with special educational needs

Staff and students' competence and confidence in using the requisite technology and software

Teaching and learning

Surveys

The role of school leaders, including governing bodies and government agencies in monitoring the quality of home learning

Inspectors reviewed the systems in place in the different private schools to monitor the quality of home learning. A majority of private schools used the Office of Education Standards schema which was published on 1st June 2020, to review provision and identify areas of strengths and weakness. Other schools used surveys and on-line meetings as well as documentation reviews to examine the success of their home learning programmes. Many school leaders and staff were diligent in doing so. Leaders at Montessori By The Sea School and Cayman Prep and High School, for example, used feedback from parents and students to report on aspects of home learning that had been successful and also identified those aspects that required improvement.

By seeking feedback from students through the student council and also from the Parents' Guild, the staff at Montessori By The Sea were able to refine provision to better meet the arising needs of students. Similarly, at St. Ignatius Catholic School, primary school leaders conducted daily visits to the on-line platform to view work being posted for each class, including timetables and lesson plans. Data was analysed to check attendance and the support for individual children was also reviewed. School leaders were able to join live 'Zoom' sessions to review lesson content. Senior staff in the secondary phase of the school made good use of tools such as 'OneNote' to ensure expectations of students in synchronous lessons remained appropriately high.

Most private school leaders reviewed teachers' plans and provided feedback. However, overall, there was diverse and variable practice in monitoring the quality of on-line teaching. In a few schools 'live' lessons were not reviewed by school leaders at all.

The reasons given for this included a view that, because the process was new to many teachers, monitoring would not be considered 'fair'. In high performing schools, technological and pedagogical factors presenting barriers to learning were more readily overcome as a response to the comprehensive and incisive self-evaluation undertaken by principals, department and phase leaders and teachers.

The Ministry of Education had a key role in monitoring provision in the private schools. The main tool by which this was undertaken was through the weekly submission of data by private school principals. This information was collated efficiently by relevant Ministry officers. However, the Office of Education Standards found that there was insufficient educational direction and guidance provided to the private schools in the light of the data submitted. Also, this review highlighted some inconsistency in the interpretation of the data request and this meant that information received was not always fully accurate or reliable.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

The role of school leaders, including governing bodies and government agencies in monitoring the quality of home learning

Arrangements to track students' participation and engagement in home learning

Support for vulnerable students and those with special educational needs

Staff and students' competence and confidence in using the requisite technology and software

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Arrangements to track students' participation and engagement in home learning

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Overall, inspectors found that most private school leaders and staff were meticulous in tracking students' attendance and participation in remote learning activities. In fact, prior to the request from the Ministry of Education for the submission of weekly reporting forms that captured attendance data, almost all private schools had appropriate systems and procedures in place for tracking and monitoring students' daily attendance in lessons and activities.
.....

In addition, several school leaders developed policies for monitoring students' attendance and participation in remote learning and these were disseminated to students and parents in advance of the introduction of the on-line learning programmes.

On-line learning platforms also recorded students' attendance and participation data. For example, the 'Seesaw' tool used by several private schools recorded in detail the number of times students had logged in, including the dates and time of participation. The software also generated reports regarding the number of activities the students had completed as well as their progress in core skill development. School leaders at First Baptist Christian School, for example, recorded weekly attendance data and used reports of students with limited engagement to follow-up with senior staff. Such reports were subsequently actioned by the Principal.

In addition, teachers kept in regular contact with students and parents through e-mail and phone calls noting those students with low engagement in lessons and activities. From the attendance data generated across several private schools, leaders reported that students in the early primary phase (Kindergarten to Grade 1 or Reception to Year 2) were the groups who had struggled mostly with work completion and consistent engagement.

Teachers became a regular source of support and encouragement for those parents who experienced difficulty in balancing the demands of home learning with their family and work responsibilities. At Cayman Prep and High School and St. Ignatius Catholic School, managers and teaching staff were vigilant in recording and tracking students' attendance and monitoring their on-line submissions to ensure full engagement. In those schools, where participation was inconsistent, class teachers reported these instances to pastoral heads for follow-up action. Inspectors found that there was timely intervention by private schools to help maximise students' participation and engagement in home learning.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

The role of school leaders, including governing bodies and government agencies in monitoring the quality of home learning

Arrangements to track students' participation and engagement in home learning

Support for vulnerable students and those with special educational needs

Staff and students' competence and confidence in using the requisite technology and software

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Support for vulnerable students and those with special educational needs

During the home learning review, inspectors found that private school leaders had placed an appropriate focus on the health and mental well-being of students as part of their home learning strategy.

Additionally, almost all staff recognised that students with special educational needs were susceptible to greater degrees of anxiety and stress during this time. As a consequence, most school leaders and staff made the necessary modification to curriculum plans and structured remote learning strategies to support those students with special educational needs. Furthermore, most staff utilised appropriate strategies in order to reduce students' frustration and promote their engagement in learning. Small group instruction was also facilitated based on students' individual education plan goals, and staff ensured that the curriculum was accessible to all learners by making modifications to support students in meeting their objectives. Across settings, teaching staff were persistent in their efforts to contact students and families and had established clear lines of communication. These forms of communication included telephone calls and e-mails. Despite these positive arrangements, a few schools reported ongoing challenges maintaining students' participation in on-line sessions and meeting assignment submission deadlines. Notably, this showed gradual improvement overtime.

At First Baptist Christian School, staff had devised effective strategies to support students who found remote learning challenging. The structure of most classes was revised and students were often taught in groups based on their levels of ability and particular learning needs. In addition, school leaders increased communication with parents of students with special educational needs to ensure that those parents took a more active role in on-line sessions and consistently supported their children's learning. Also, for a few students, the number of subjects covered was adapted to allow for greater focus on literacy and mathematics topics. Students also benefited from adapted worksheets and small group instruction. Similarly, at Cayman Prep and High School, in the primary phase, the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and Support for Learning staff worked alongside teachers to assist students with additional needs through the use of adapted lesson plans, daily on-line small group lessons and adjusted instruction and resources for mathematics and English. Of note, at Cayman Prep and High School, an e-learning questionnaire was administered to students with special educational needs to determine the particular challenges they were facing, so they could be supported appropriately. A few schools had developed e-learning guides and instruction guidance documents for parents so they were better able to support their children in the completion and submission of tasks and activities. Staff also provided students with work schedules and offered suggestions about ways to organise their learning goals to ensure structure and consistency.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

The role of school leaders, including governing bodies and government agencies in monitoring the quality of home learning

Arrangements to track students' participation and engagement in home learning

Support for vulnerable students and those with special educational needs

Staff and students' competence and confidence in using the requisite technology and software

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Support for vulnerable students and those with special educational needs

At Starfish Village School, students with special educational needs continued to receive support from therapists via tele-health sessions. Teachers worked directly with therapists to support students' learning goals. In addition, school leaders had organised training for parents facilitated by a trained parenting coach in social and emotional learning. This was designed to support parents who were struggling to balance the demands of home learning with family and work responsibilities. Similarly, at Hope Academy, staff recognised that COVID-19 had exacerbated the social-emotional needs of students with emotional and mental health issues. As a consequence, school administrators ensured that students who required therapy continued to receive those services from specialist staff despite issues relating to payment of services and insurance challenges. Therapists at Hope Academy continued to support students with stress and anxiety reduction and other special education learning needs throughout this period. Certain school leaders, however, reported challenges in effectively meeting the needs of all students through remote teaching. At another school, ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis) therapy for one student was discontinued due to challenges with insurance approval for tele-health sessions. School leaders tried to mitigate this by arranging contact between parents and the Special Education Needs Foundation. School leaders also reported that some students exhibited increased behavioural challenges which staff tried to address through daily social and emotional well-being sessions.

Inspectors observed examples of good practice in private schools' provision for students with additional needs. In on-line sessions, some teachers utilised social-emotional learning strategies to support students' well-being and promote their engagement in lessons.

Staff also incorporated opportunities for students to share their feelings and thoughts at the beginning of lessons, and offered guidance on managing emotions and taking responsibility. Staff actively structured activities that focused on promoting relationships and connections with their peers through means such as telephone conversations, e-mails, voice note messages, on-line resources and social media platforms, such as Facebook and 'What's App'. Students received support from a range of providers including speech-language therapists, counsellors and special educational needs co-ordinators. In addition, school leaders provided parents with on-line and local resources such as mental health guidance, lists of mental health professionals in the local community, and crisis hotline telephone numbers. Overall, there was evidence that most schools maintained deliberate and consistent engagement with parents and involved them in the development of flexible learning plans to promote students' engagement in learning. These strategies resulted in gains in learning for some students with special educational needs.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

The role of school leaders, including governing bodies and government agencies in monitoring the quality of home learning

Arrangements to track students' participation and engagement in home learning

Support for vulnerable students and those with special educational needs

Staff and students' competence and confidence in using the requisite technology and software

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Support for vulnerable students and those with special educational needs

Leaders of a number of schools reported that some students made better than expected progress during remote learning due to a reduction in distractions, which were sometimes more pronounced in the regular classroom environment. A few school leaders also reported improvements to the rate of progress made by students with special educational needs which they felt was partially attributable to increased levels of parental support during home learning.

Most school leaders built opportunities for interaction and differentiated learning into their remote learning strategy to support all students. At Island Montessori and Footsteps schools, for example, weekly 'Zoom' socials each Friday helped students to feel connected to their teachers and peers and reduced students' feeling of isolation. Similarly, activities such as 'Spirit Week' at Grace Christian Academy and weekly chapel sessions at other Christian schools promoted students' sense of connection with the school community. Additionally, some school leaders directed parents and students to resources such as touch-type applications to improve students' on-line learning experience. At Cayman Learning Centre, for example, accommodations were made such as the provision of enlarged texts for visually impaired students and the facilitation of breakout sessions for students with emotional regulation difficulties. Schools should capitalise on opportunities to learn from each other's emerging practice as they refine and improve their own strategies for remote learning.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

The role of school leaders, including governing bodies and government agencies in monitoring the quality of home learning

Arrangements to track students' participation and engagement in home learning

Support for vulnerable students and those with special educational needs

Staff and students' competence and confidence in using the requisite technology and software

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Staff and students' competence and confidence in using the requisite technology and software

The home review in private schools was conducted towards the end of the school term and inspectors found that most teachers were competent in their use of various on-line platforms and were adept at manipulating the tools therein to promote students' remote learning.

As inspectors found in the review of home learning in government schools, a few schools made a relatively seamless transition to remote learning because staff were already using on-line platforms and resources, such as 'Everest', 'Purple Mash', 'Raz-Kids', or 'IXL'. However, for most private schools, the transition to remote learning was unexpected. As a consequence, school leaders reported that many teachers found navigating this new domain difficult at first. All teachers were suddenly faced with the challenge of delivering learning designed for traditional classrooms in on-line or remote settings. Consequently, most private schools refined their remote learning strategies overtime through a process of trial and error as they grappled with the unique constraints of remote learning. Many schools experimented with a range of on-line platforms prior to determining the best fit for their context. Inspectors found that most schools utilised Microsoft 'Teams', 'Zoom' and 'Seesaw' as their key on-line learning platforms. These were augmented by a plethora of additional on-line resources including 'IXL', 'Raz-Kids', 'I-Ready', and 'Oxford Owl'. This ensured that there were common platforms so students could easily access their work and find resources and teachers and parents were also able to track and monitor students' work overtime.

In the teachersurveyalmostallstaffindicatedthattheyfeltcompetent in the use of on-line learning platforms. However, in the student survey, students commented on the loss of teaching time initially in on-line sessions due to some teachers' unfamiliarity with Microsoft 'Teams'. Most staff reported that they had received training which had equipped them well to deliver on-line learning to their students. In the student survey, most students reported that they had a good understanding of the different platforms in use to support home learning. Most students demonstrated satisfactory competence in the use of on-line tools over time, though younger students who were unable to touch type for example, were at a disadvantage using certain software packages. As a result, teachers provided these students with additional ways of uploading and documenting information to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. Most students demonstrated familiarity with tools such as the chat and the 'hands-up' functions. Most were able to follow simple instructions to share their screen or to mute their microphones. Across all private schools, students displayed good behaviour and positive attitudes to their learning during observed on-line lessons.

Many schools recognised at an early stage of the pandemic and in advance of school closures that teachers would require pedagogical and technological support to effectively navigate the new mode of teaching remotely.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

The role of school leaders, including governing bodies and government agencies in monitoring the quality of home learning

Arrangements to track students' participation and engagement in home learning

Support for vulnerable students and those with special educational needs

Staff and students' competence and confidence in using the requisite technology and software

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Staff and students' competence and confidence in using the requisite technology and software

As a consequence, many schools promptly organised professional development sessions for teachers in the use of different on-line resources. Good evidence of peer-to-peer support to cultivate digital pedagogical skills was evident at schools such as Starfish Village, Cayman Prep and High School, Hope Academy, Cayman Academy, Cayman International School, Montessori By The Sea School and First Baptist Christian School. At Cayman Prep and High School, for example, staff made videos that provided guidance to their peers about how to adapt lesson content for remote learning and how to manipulate tools in on-line platforms to improve students' learning experiences. Curation of excellent training videos for sharing across settings would prove useful in upskilling teachers in the use of on-line learning tools.

Almost all students in private schools had access to an appropriate device to support their learning remotely. In the few instances where two or more students in the same household shared devices, school leaders arranged loans of laptops or tablets to students. In other instances, where a device malfunctioned, school leaders also arranged replacement laptops for these students. In addition, schools such as Hope Academy, Cayman International School and Cayman Prep and High School provided dedicated technological support through their technology departments to students and their families. Parents and students had open lines of communication

to members of the schools' information technology staff to support the speedy resolution of technological issues. In observed on-line sessions, a few students' learning experience was impacted by poor internet connectivity issues. This resulted in instances when students needed to log off and back on to sessions.

Over the period of the COVID-19 pandemic Cayman teachers had to integrate multiple delivery modes to facilitate learning continuity for all students. While the pandemic presented unique challenges, the flexibility of school staff in designing curriculum delivery and incorporating new on-line learning platforms created new opportunities that should inform future curriculum delivery.

In the most effective schools, leaders demonstrated their intention to continue to improve and adapt their remote teaching capacity so as to incorporate hybrid approaches in the new school term and thereby improve the curriculum.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Teaching

The educational programme and how it meets the needs of different learners

Assessment

Surveys

Teaching and learning

During the review of home learning in private schools, inspectors observed fifty-three on-line sessions in sixteen schools. In addition, across settings, inspectors also reviewed pre-recorded lessons, students’ digital portfolios as well as videos and podcasts developed by teachers to support remote learning delivery.

During on-line observations, inspectors noted that the quality of teaching in private schools was good in most cases. This was because most teachers utilised a variety of activities that appropriately engaged and challenged students. Additionally, most activities were well chosen to promote students’ understanding of lesson content. Most teachers demonstrated secure subject knowledge and effectively utilised a range of teaching techniques to promote students’ learning. Most schools used a mix of synchronous and asynchronous sessions to deliver learning remotely. However, there was much variation in the number of asynchronous and synchronous sessions across institutions.

This resulted in the need for greater parental engagement for some parents to support their children’s on-line learning needs.

There was careful consideration of students’ varying learning needs in on-line lessons. In classes observed at Cayman Academy, Triple C School, St. Ignatius Catholic School and Hope Academy, for example, inspectors observed several examples of the use of breakout rooms to provide one-on-one or small group support for students of different abilities. In an English lesson at Cayman Academy, for example, local guest poets engaged students in a poetry reading activity and then facilitated two group sessions with students in breakout groups. The smaller group sessions consolidated students’ understanding of the features of poetry. These activities provided engaging and motivating contexts for students to learn. In addition, across schools, many teachers posted lesson objectives prior to the session or at the beginning of the session so students had a context for learning. In the main, lesson content and timing were appropriate, although in instances some synchronous sessions were too short in duration to allow for fulsome exploration or discussion of key learning concepts.

From the review of on-line sessions as well as video recordings, inspectors found that most teachers carefully structured real life experiences for students as part of their remote teaching and learning strategies. Students were able to integrate learning within purposeful tasks.





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Teaching

The educational programme and how it meets the needs of different learners

Assessment

Surveys

Teaching and learning

Students engaged in a range of activities that promoted their inquiry, problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

These included designing and building space rockets and dens, conducting simple experiments with safe household products, taking apart and fixing gadgets and designing activities to reduce waste by recycling and reusing. Students were also engaged in activities that were carefully sequenced to promote students' understanding. For example, at Cayman Prep and High School, students at the primary stage were given opportunities to plan, build, and report on their projects. At First Baptist Christian School and Island Montessori School, teachers used thematic approaches to support students to make links to their learning across different subjects.

Additionally, at Island Montessori, Cayman Prep and High School and several other schools, teachers used games to promote students' learning. By 'gamifying' learning, teachers introduced an element of fun for younger students which reduced the worry and anxiety that many faced in this new remote learning setting. School leaders also showed recognition of students' general well-being in the structure of on-line sessions. At Cayman Prep and High, for example, although high school students' on-line schedules followed the regular timetable, students were given ten-minute breaks to allow students to relax and refresh between sessions, thus promoting better engagement in learning. Most students were able to utilise tools in Microsoft 'Teams' to ask questions, comment on the work of their peers and to complete and submit work.

For the most part, tasks and activities in on-line sessions were well matched to students' learning needs and a few teachers structured extension activities in lessons to provide additional challenge for higher achieving students.

Inspectors observed a few lessons that were characterised by too much teacher talk and poor levels of student engagement. In schools in which there was excessive reliance upon paper-based learning, there was significant variation in the quality of some students' progress.

Conversely, in those private schools where there was a coherent and comprehensive remote learning strategy in place, most students made notable gains in their learning. Overall, inspectors found that most teachers in the private schools were able to design and deliver high quality and engaging learning experiences for students using different modalities. For the most part, teachers adopted flexible and appropriate methods to promote students' learning remotely and effectively supported their transition from traditional to home learning.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Teaching

The educational programme and how it meets the needs of different learners

Assessment

Surveys

The educational programme and how it meets the needs of different learners

Inspectors found that private school home learning programmes were appropriately aligned to curriculum requirements at different stages of education.

From the review of curriculum plans, schemes of work and timetables submitted by schools, inspectors found that lesson content was referenced closely to designated curriculum standards and the curriculum was both relevant and appropriate for each of the year groups.

At First Baptist Christian School, for example, teachers continued to follow the Virginia State Standards and this was evident in their schemes of work. Staff used on-line curriculum maps and school leaders reviewed these to determine students' progress in key areas. This information was also used to identify gaps in learning and thereby determine aspects of the curriculum that needed to be reviewed in September. However, such arrangements were not in place in all schools and progress was not measured as effectively in those private schools where curriculum content was organised largely around booklets or paper-based activity sheets. Additionally, curriculum arrangements in a few settings did not provide all students with sufficient and varied enrichment opportunities.

Despite the necessity to focus on core subjects, most school leaders devised innovative ways to maintain breadth and balance in their curriculum through remote learning.

Several schools structured activities that involved project-based learning or that mirrored students' interests. At Island Montessori School, for example, Year 1 and 2 students created videos that chronicled their home learning experience. Students were able to creatively represent and celebrate aspects of their learning in areas such as mathematics, English, science, geography, art and music. Another class at Island Montessori participated in a time capsule activity and documented their achievements, impressions and feelings about their learning experience during the Covid-19 pandemic. Other schools created learning opportunities that incorporated life skills such as gardening, designing, baking and cooking. A few schools had planned activities that supported students' active exploration of their environment. At Grace Christian Academy, a well-prepared science lesson, for example, allowed Grade 2 students to explore their sense of taste. They were required to predict and record their observations and findings as well as research scientific information and present data. Similarly, in various other schools, teaching staff structured assignments that allowed students to work independently or with some help from family members on open-ended projects. Such activities promoted cross-curricular skill development because students were often required to plan, execute and report on their activities.

Inspectors found that most schools had adapted quickly to the demands of remote learning and teachers had worked effectively to create new teaching materials such as PowerPoint presentations, videos and podcasts aligned to curriculum expectations. Private schools would do well to share the range of digital and media resources based on the curriculum developed by staff for use in the event of any future dislocation to learning. Additionally, these resources can be shared across settings to broaden and enrich students' learning experiences in traditional learning models.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Teaching

The educational programme and how it meets the needs of different learners

Assessment

Surveys

Assessment

Almost all schools had placed an appropriate focus on assessment as part of their remote learning strategy. However, inspectors found that in some schools, assessment mechanisms were more robust than others.

The majority of schools had effective arrangements in place for reviewing and monitoring the progress of individual students, including arrangements for reporting to parents. From the review of samples of students' work including digital portfolios, homework, on-line submissions and projects, most teachers were consistent in marking and giving written feedback to help students improve their work.

During on-line sessions, skilled teachers annotated students' work in real time to highlight the areas of strength and those aspects requiring improvement. A good example of this was observed in an English support lesson at Cayman Learning Centre. Additionally, several examples of students' work with marking, comments and follow-up actions as well as voice notes were viewed on the 'Seesaw' platform used in several schools. Examples of students' homework viewed on the First Baptist Christian School 'Seesaw' platform included detailed comments by both teachers and parents. Across schools, most teachers provided detailed written feedback on students' work. There were opportunities for students to review, edit

and resubmit work following the receipt of feedback from teachers. There were also video clips of students' responses to feedback provided by teachers. Many teachers reported that assessment practices were somewhat time-consuming in the on-line learning environment because of the wait time in having to upload and download assignments. Nevertheless, many teachers made positive comments about the opportunities provided on 'Seesaw' to offer students individual and specific feedback on work submitted.

Of note, some school leaders reported challenges in assessing students' progress accurately given that many students had more assistance with work during remote learning.

As a consequence, some students' grades appeared higher than usual and teachers wanted to have an accurate assessment of those gains in learning. Although students were not penalized for this, school leaders' recognised the need to conduct assessment tests early in the new school term to accurately establish what students know and where learning gaps exist.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Teaching

The educational programme and how it meets the needs of different learners

Assessment

Surveys

Assessment

A few private schools had developed effective guidelines for assessment as part of their remote learning strategy. For example, Cayman Academy had outlined clear expectations for assessment in a school on-line teaching and learning policy. These outlined arrangements to provide students with opportunities to interact with their peers through discussion and group work and the provision of timely feedback in lessons so students were able to reinforce important concepts and skills. Additionally, across schools, most teachers structured learning opportunities so students were able to conduct projects and tasks independently or with the help of family members. Several schools posted videos of students' projects that demonstrated their learning in authentic and meaningful contexts during the pandemic. In an on-line Year 4 science lesson at First Baptist Christian School, the teacher organised students in groups and used 'Nearpod' add-ons to support students to work collaboratively on a PowerPoint presentation during the lesson.

After viewing a video to reinforce lesson content, students had the opportunity to review and improve their work and that of their peers. At Cayman Prep and High School, staff encouraged students' engagement in their learning by awarding them house points for exemplary work. Many schools utilised a range of learning platforms to support ongoing assessment of students' learning. For example, a number of teachers used 'Pear Deck' and 'Nearpod' add-ons to include videos, quizzes and games to on-line lessons which effectively promoted students' understanding of lesson concepts and provided opportunities for students to consolidate their learning.

Other teachers used 'Edpuzzle' to sequence multiple choice and open-ended questions at key points in videos to check for students' understanding.

For the few schools that mainly utilised paper-based activity packets or 'What's App' messaging as part of their remote learning strategy, assessment processes were not as efficient because they were often fraught with issues such as poor quality or sizing of images of students' work, as well as the time lapse for feedback. However, overall, most private schools organised ongoing and consistent feedback to students through learning platforms such as 'Seesaw' and Microsoft 'Teams'. Inspectors viewed several examples of digital portfolios of students' work that documented students' learning achievements over the period of the pandemic. Additionally, most schools had suitable procedures in place for reviewing and monitoring students' progress overtime.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

Teacher survey

Student survey

Parent survey

There were **1,497** parental submissions to the survey. As expected, the number of responses was higher from those schools with a greater number of students on roll. Overall, there was almost twice as many responses from parents of students in private education in comparison to the parental survey response received for the government school home learning review. There was a relatively high percentage return in a number of the smaller schools such as, for example, those offering the Montessori curriculum and also Footsteps. A few parents had children attending different schools. Their responses to individual questions related to the eldest child in the family but comments were also made regarding younger children and their experience of home learning as supported by a different school.

Which private school does your child attend?

Total of 1,497 submissions	Number of responses	Percentage of total
Cayman Academy	98	6.6%
Calvary Baptist Christian Academy	15	1.0%
Cayman International School	248	16.6%
Cayman Learning Centre	8	0.6%
Cayman Prep & HS	275	18.4%
First Baptist Christian School	68	4.5%
Footsteps	20	1.3%
Grace Christian Academy	37	2.5%
Hope Academy	56	3.7%
Island Montessori	31	2.1%
Montessori By The Sea	26	1.7%
Montessori del Sol	26	1.7%
Montessori School of Cayman	21	1.4%
St. Ignatius Catholic School	204	13.6%
Starfish Village (Village Montessori)	27	1.8%
Triple C School	175	11.7%
Truth for Youth School	76	5.1%
Wesleyan Christian Academy	41	2.7%
No private school indicated in submission	45	3.0%



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

Teacher survey

Student survey

Parent survey

Age group of the eldest child currently attending a private school in the Cayman Islands.

Total of 1,497 submissions	%	Responses
Reception (4-5 years) / Pre-Kindergarten	8.04%	120
Year 1 / Kindergarten	8.71%	130
Year 2 / Grade 1	8.65%	129
Year 3 / Grade 2	7.64%	114
Year 4 / Grade 3	7.71%	115
Year 5 / Grade 4	8.04%	120
Year 6 / Grade 5	7.91%	118
Year 7 / Grade 6	8.24%	123
Year 8 / Grade 7	7.04%	105
Year 9 / Grade 8	5.76%	86
Year 10 / Grade 9	5.50%	82
Year 11 / Grade 10	4.56%	68
Year 12 / Grade 11	5.43%	81
Year 13 / Grade 12	3.35%	50
Other (please specify)	3.42%	51
	Answered	1,492
	Skipped	5



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

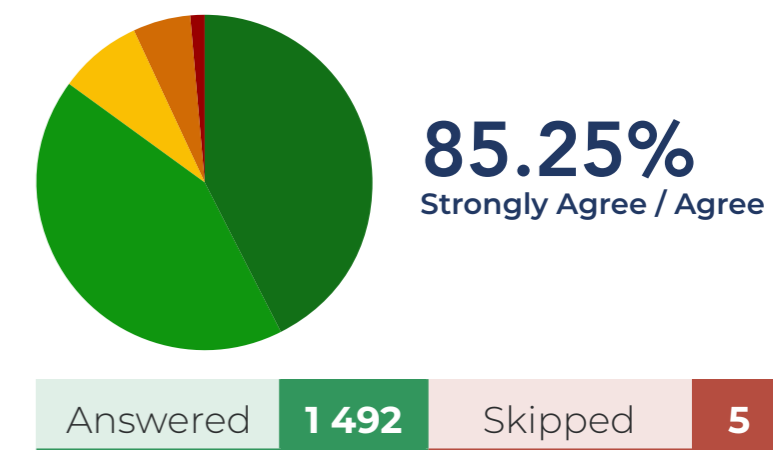
Teacher survey

Student survey

Parent survey

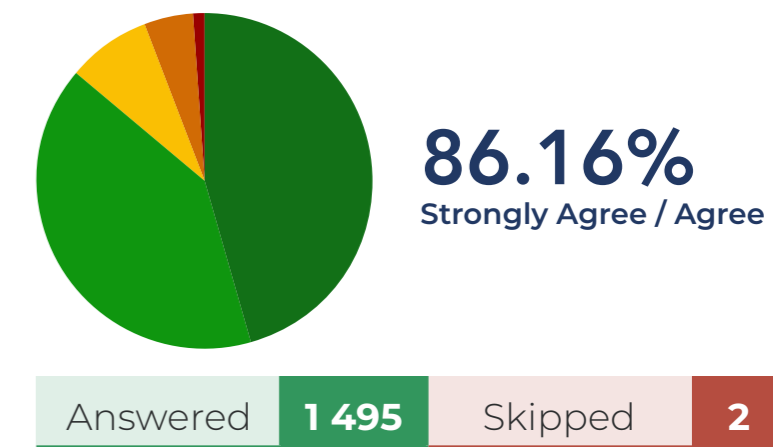
1. There are good arrangements in place to support my child's home learning.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	42.76%	638
Agree	42.49%	634
Neither agree nor disagree	8.04%	120
Disagree	5.43%	81
Strongly disagree	1.27%	19



2. I have been provided with the necessary on-line and paper-based resources to support my child's home learning.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	45.62%	682
Agree	40.54%	606
Neither agree nor disagree	8.16%	122
Disagree	4.68%	70
Strongly disagree	1.00%	15





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

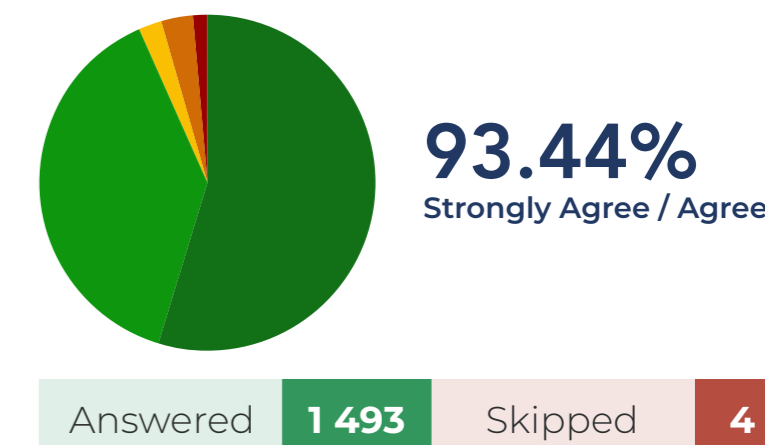
Teacher survey

Student survey

Parent survey

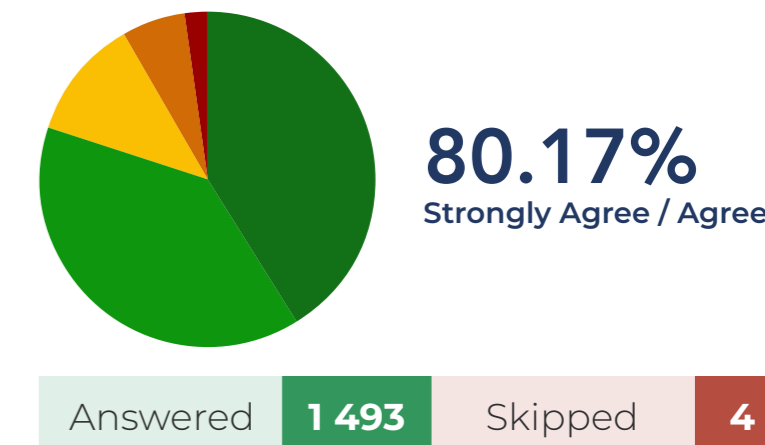
3. When I have needed guidance or information, it has been easy to get in contact with my child's teacher/s.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	54.86%	819
Agree	38.58%	576
Neither agree nor disagree	2.14%	32
Disagree	3.28%	49
Strongly disagree	1.14%	17



4. My child is receiving sufficient and regular feedback about his/her work.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	41.19%	615
Agree	38.98%	582
Neither agree nor disagree	11.65%	174
Disagree	6.10%	91
Strongly disagree	2.08%	31





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

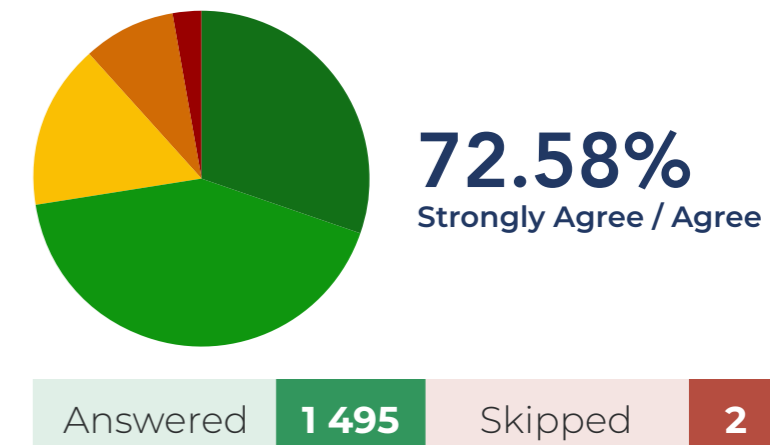
Teacher survey

Student survey

Parent survey

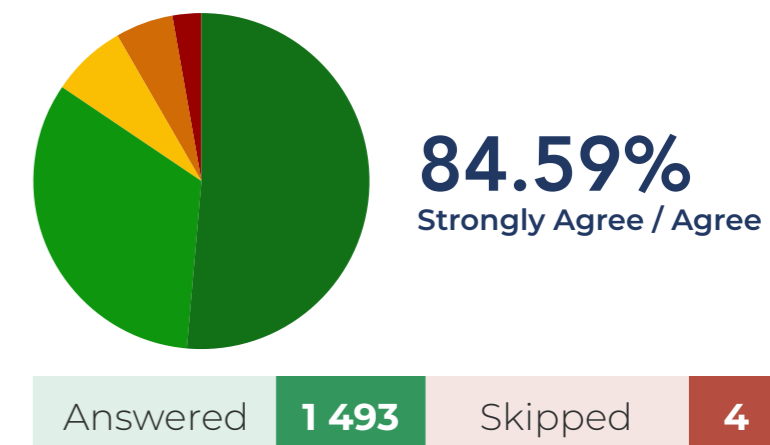
5. I believe that, in the current circumstances, my child is making good progress in their learning.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	30.37%	454
Agree	42.21%	631
Neither agree nor disagree	15.92%	238
Disagree	8.96%	134
Strongly disagree	2.54%	38



6. On-line classes are taking place regularly.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	51.57%	770
Agree	33.02%	493
Neither agree nor disagree	7.17%	107
Disagree	5.56%	83
Strongly disagree	2.68%	40





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

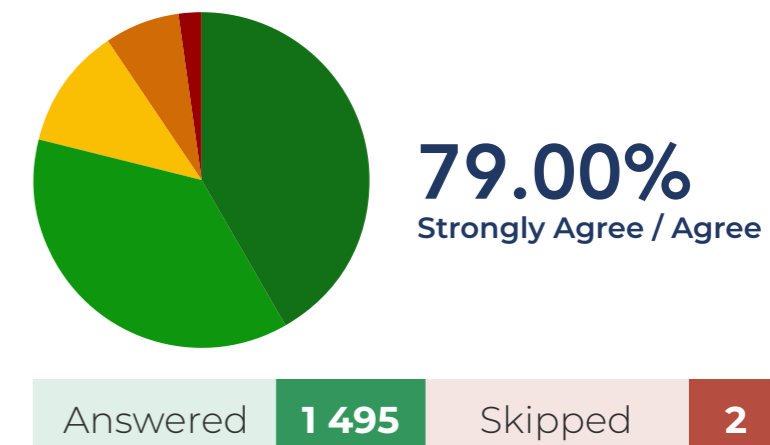
Teacher survey

Student survey

Parent survey

7. There is a clear strategy in place regarding home learning and this has been effectively communicated to parents.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	41.81%	625
Agree	37.19%	556
Neither agree nor disagree	11.64%	174
Disagree	7.16%	107
Strongly disagree	2.21%	33



[Introduction](#)[Timeline](#)[Summary findings](#)[Recommendations](#)[Data in relation to home learning](#)[A strategy for home learning](#)[Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes](#)[Teaching and learning](#)[Surveys](#)[Parent survey](#)[Teacher survey](#)[Student survey](#)

Comments made by parents

Inspectors received **1,497 surveys** from parents. There were also over 800 comments on a range of topics. Overall, most parents were pleased with the home learning provision offered to their children during the pandemic, though this was not always the case. Most parents stated that, in general, communication between school and home had been effective and parents had been provided with the necessary on-line and paper-based resources to support their child's home learning. Most parents were very appreciative of the support provided by teachers and senior staff and were impressed with the way in which certain schools had adapted their strategy for home learning in response to feedback provided by parents. One parent, for example, writing about a small, recently established private school on Cayman stated;

Footsteps is a new school and staff are still trying to get their new building completed. Despite all the pressures they are under they have provided consistency, care, creativity and support for students and parents. They have spent time creating a thoughtful and interesting curriculum, provided extension work, made themselves available for extra one-to-one coaching and extra explanations, and I have also been impressed by their care for the emotional toll this has taken on the children, offering them support in managing their feelings of sadness and anxiety'.

There were similarly positive comments made about each of the private schools.

There were a number of areas of concern, however, some of which related particularly to individual schools. The most common topics included;

- a) **Fees.** A significant minority of parents expressed concern that school fees had not, in their view, been reduced sufficiently during the pandemic. They considered this to be unfair when, in most cases, aspects of the tuition of their children had been managed by the parents themselves. A few schools did reduce their fees during the pandemic but parents did not always consider the provision offered as being 'good value for money'.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

Teacher survey

Student survey



Comments made by parents

- b) **Face-to-face teaching time.** A few schools offered relatively little synchronous teaching time and parents judged the programme offered for certain year groups and stages of education to be ineffective in helping address their children's individual learning needs.
- c) **Provision for students in the upper secondary and post-16 stages of education in private schools.** A few parents with children at various private schools stated that, following the cancellation of external examinations by international examination boards, the provision for students in Year 13 (Grade 12) was erratic and poorly constructed.

Overall, levels of parental satisfaction were higher in Cayman private schools than in government schools. For example, 79 per cent of the 1,497 responders in private schools stated that their children's school had a clear strategy in place regarding home learning. This compared to 68 per cent of parents from government schools. Inspectors found that a majority of private schools had an evolving strategy and the most effective practice had been adapted over time in response to parent and student feedback.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

Teacher survey

Student survey



Teacher survey

There were **375** responses to this survey. All were from teachers working in private schools. It should be noted that the larger schools, such as Cayman International School, Cayman Prep and High School and Triple C School formed more than half of the overall number of teacher submissions to this survey. The total number of submissions represented around three quarters of all teachers employed in Cayman's private schools.

Name of the school in which you are mainly employed.

Total of 375 submissions	Number of submissions	Percentage of total
Cayman Academy	16	4.30%
Calvary Baptist Christian Academy	6	1.60%
Cayman International School	92	24.53%
Cayman Learning Centre	6	1.60%
Cayman Prep & HS	68	18.13%
First Baptist Christian School	11	2.93%
Footsteps	7	1.87%
Grace Christian Academy	14	3.73%
Hope Academy	14	3.73%
Island Montessori	10	2.67%
Montessori By The Sea	17	4.53%
Montessori del Sol	5	1.33%
Montessori School of Cayman	6	1.60%
St. Ignatius Catholic School	33	8.80%
Starfish Village (Village Montessori)	5	1.33%
Triple C School	42	11.20%
Truth for Youth School	8	2.13%
Wesleyan Christian Academy	11	2.93%
No private school indicated in submission	4	1.01%



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

Teacher survey

Student survey



Teacher survey

Which age group/s are you currently teaching in the main?

Answer Choices (teachers may select several year groups, as necessary)	%	Responses
Reception / Pre-Kindergarten	15.78%	59
Year 1 / Kindergarten	14.71%	55
Year 2 / Grade 1	15.51%	58
Year 3 / Grade 2	14.17%	53
Year 4 / Grade 3	14.71%	55
Year 5 / Grade 4	15.24%	57
Year 6 / Grade 5	14.97%	56
Year 7 / Grade 6	21.93%	82
Year 8 / Grade 7	23.53%	88
Year 9 / Grade 8	24.33%	91
Year 10 / Grade 9	26.20%	98
Year 11 / Grade 10	23.53%	88
Year 12 / Grade 11	24.60%	92
Year 13 / Grade 12	20.59%	77
Other (please specify)		54
	Answered	374
	Skipped	1



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

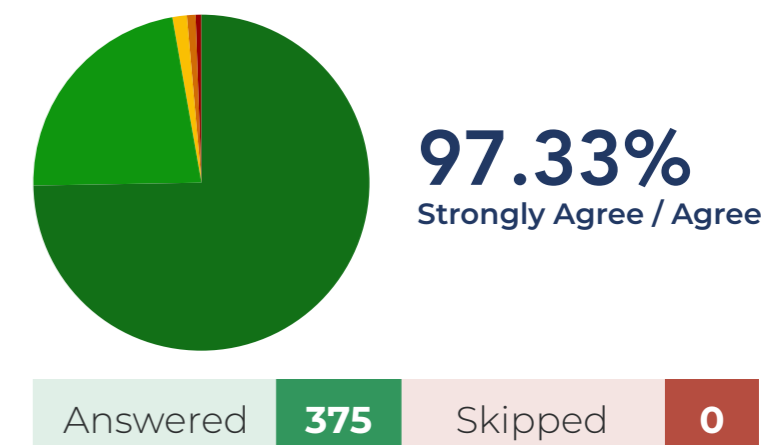
Teacher survey

Student survey

Teacher survey

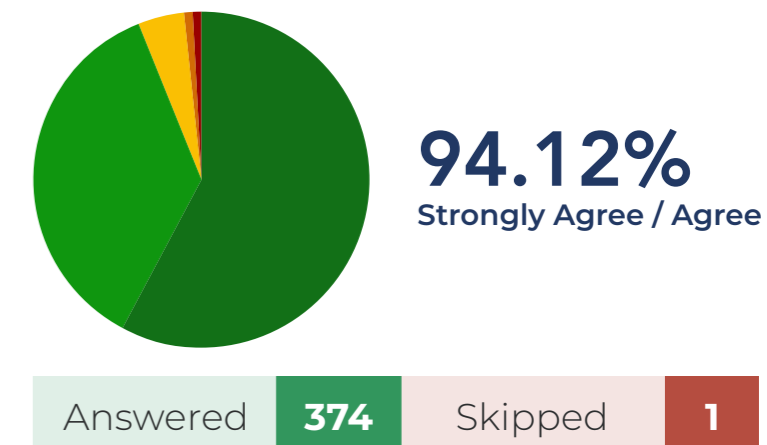
1. The school has good arrangements in place to support students' remote learning.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	74.93%	281
Agree	22.40%	84
Neither agree nor disagree	1.33%	5
Disagree	0.80%	3
Strongly disagree	0.53%	2



2. I feel that I am competent in the use of on-line learning platforms.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	58.02%	217
Agree	36.10%	135
Neither agree nor disagree	4.28%	16
Disagree	0.80%	3
Strongly disagree	0.80%	3





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

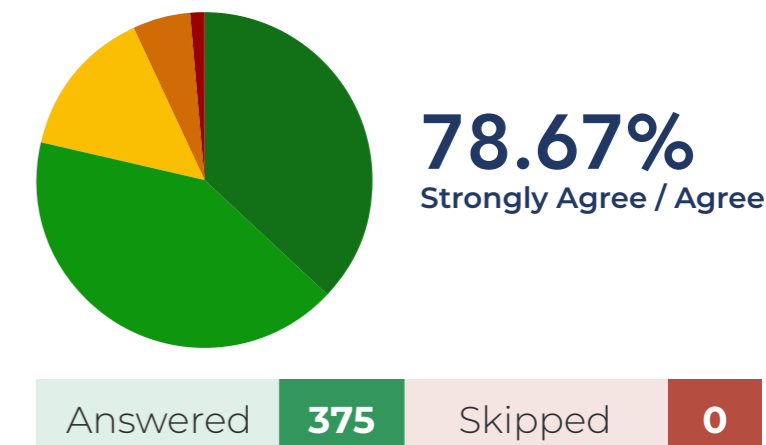
Teacher survey

Student survey

Teacher survey

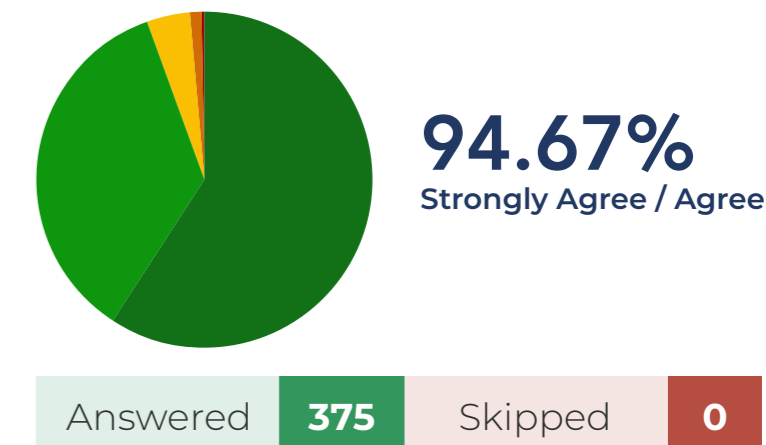
3. I have received training which has equipped me well to deliver on-line learning to my students.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	37.07%	139
Agree	41.60%	156
Neither agree nor disagree	14.40%	54
Disagree	5.60%	21
Strongly disagree	1.33%	5



4. All of my students have access to learning materials or on-line resources which provide appropriate levels of challenge.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	59.20%	222
Agree	35.47%	133
Neither agree nor disagree	4.00%	15
Disagree	1.07%	4
Strongly disagree	0.27%	1





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

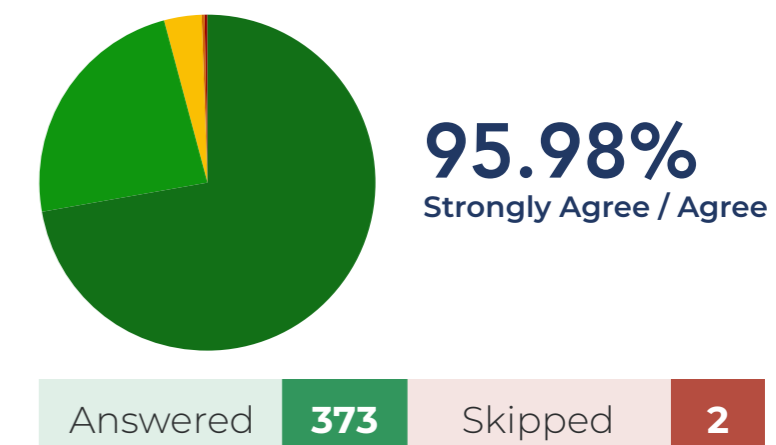
Teacher survey

Student survey

Teacher survey

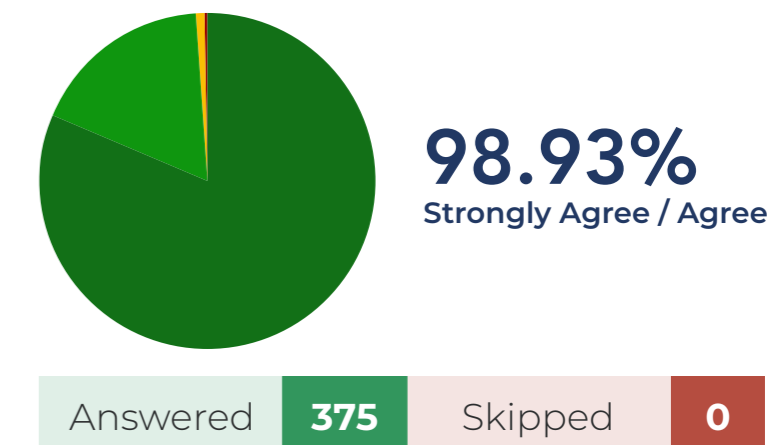
5. I have opportunities to provide regular feedback to students who are learning from home.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	72.39%	270
Agree	23.59%	88
Neither agree nor disagree	3.49%	13
Disagree	0.27%	1
Strongly disagree	0.27%	1



6. On-line classes are taking place regularly.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	81.60%	306
Agree	17.33%	65
Neither agree nor disagree	0.80%	3
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	0.27%	1





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

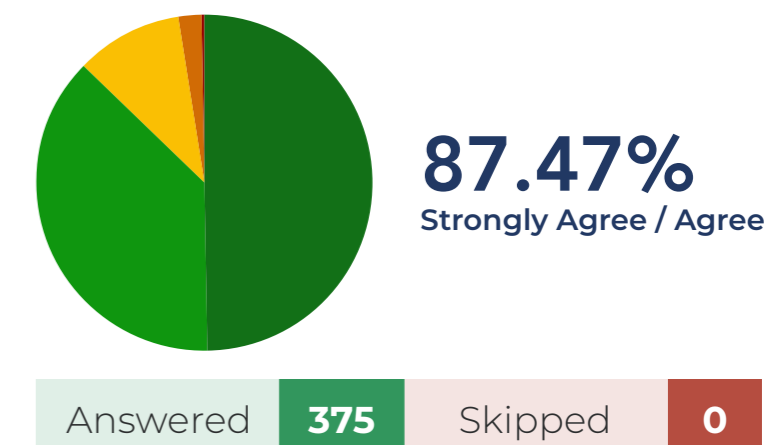
Teacher survey

Student survey

Teacher survey

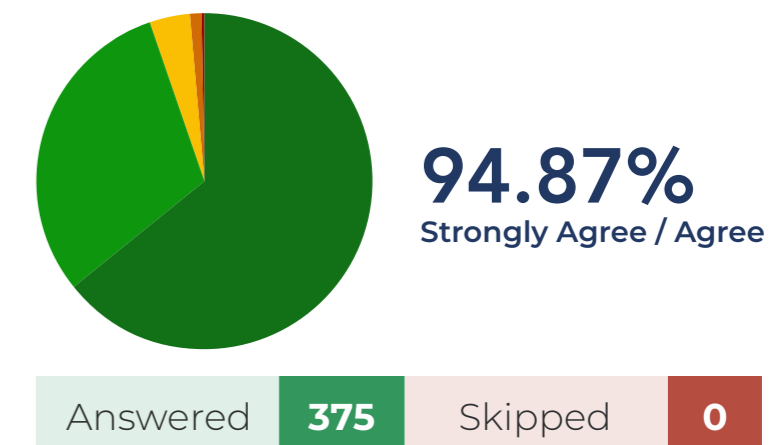
7. There are good arrangements in place to support our most vulnerable students.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	49.87%	187
Agree	37.60%	141
Neither agree nor disagree	10.13%	38
Disagree	2.13%	8
Strongly disagree	0.27%	1



8. There is a clear strategy in place regarding home learning and this has been effectively communicated to parents.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	64.27%	241
Agree	30.67%	115
Neither agree nor disagree	3.73%	14
Disagree	1.07%	4
Strongly disagree	0.27%	1





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

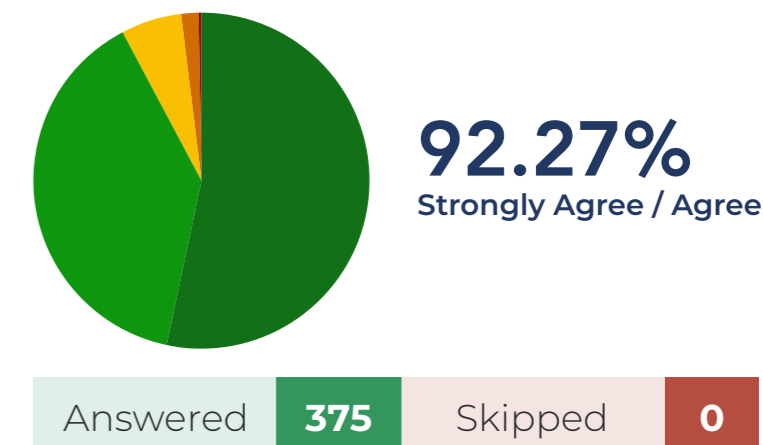
Teacher survey

Student survey

Teacher survey

9. School leaders are able to track and monitor the quality of teaching/support provided remotely to students.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	53.60%	201
Agree	38.67%	145
Neither agree nor disagree	5.87%	22
Disagree	1.60%	6
Strongly disagree	0.27%	1



[Introduction](#)[Timeline](#)[Summary findings](#)[Recommendations](#)[Data in relation to home learning](#)[A strategy for home learning](#)[Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes](#)[Teaching and learning](#)[Surveys](#)[Parent survey](#)[Teacher survey](#)[Student survey](#)

Comments made by teachers

Overall, teaching staff in private schools were positive about home learning. Almost all believed that their schools had effective arrangements in place to support students' home learning. Most felt competent in using the on-line platforms assigned by senior leaders for the delivery of the curriculum. Most stated that on-line sessions took place with sufficient regularity. Vulnerable students were supported well.

Teachers were asked to share information regarding the main barriers they had experienced whilst teaching remotely during the pandemic. Three hundred and seventeen teachers commented. The following areas were raised.

- a) **Unreliable internet connectivity and technical issues.** A significant number of the teachers stated that their own or their students' wireless connection had proven unreliable and this at times adversely affected the quality of teaching and learning.
- b) **Additional demands from senior leaders placed undue pressure on teachers.** Teachers commented upon the extra requirements made by senior leaders upon staff in the period leading up to the Office of Education Standards home learning review. For example, whereas there had been previously no requirement to submit lesson plans prior to the delivery of certain classes, this policy had been changed because school leaders were aware of the forthcoming review.
- c) **Insufficient attention and concern for staff well-being and mental health.** A significant minority of responses made reference to the additional pressures upon teachers related to home learning and teaching. Teachers did not always feel well supported by their school managers. For example, teachers commented about problems associated with excessive screen time and back pain arising from additional time working on-line to plan and deliver lessons to classes.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

Teacher survey

Student survey



Comments made by teachers

- d) **Lack of clarity regarding safeguarding.** A few teachers were unsure about their schools' policy regarding child protection which stated that they were not allowed to telephone students to discuss their submitted class work or set assignments.
- e) **Uncertainty about future e-learning and school re-opening.** Teachers had not received information from their school leaders nor from the Ministry of Education regarding the arrangements for the re-opening of schools. They expressed concern regarding the efficacy of a hybrid approach and staggered starts, because they judged that such would be impractical in terms of teachers' workload and student welfare.

Teachers were also asked to share examples of good practice which had been successful during the period of home learning. Over three hundred teachers provided examples and these are described on page 20 of this report.

Levels of teacher satisfaction were higher in Cayman private schools than in government schools. According to teaching staff working in the private sector, there were fewer challenges for private school students in terms of access to learning materials and on-line resources. Similarly, a greater percentage of teachers in private schools judged the arrangements to support vulnerable children as good. More teachers in private schools considered themselves to be competent in the use of on-line resources. This was because, they stated, they had benefitted from well-co-ordinated and timely professional training opportunities.



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

Teacher survey

Student survey



Student survey

There were **316 responses** to the student survey. Only students from Years 11 to 13 (Grades 10 to 12) were invited to respond because the review was particularly interested in understanding the provision for students preparing for graduating examinations, including those administered through external examination bodies. It should be noted that students from certain larger schools in the Cayman Islands, including Cayman International School and St. Ignatius Catholic School, constituted more than half of all submissions from students. There was a relatively low return from Year 11 to 13 students at Cayman Prep and High School. The 316 responses represented around 50 per cent of the current private school Year 11 to 13 student population.

Which school do you attend?

Total of 316 submissions	Number of submissions	Percentage of total
Cayman Academy	20	6.33%
Calvary Baptist Christian Academy	2	0.63%
Cayman International School	101	31.96%
Cayman Prep & HS	28	8.86%
Grace Christian Academy	9	2.84%
Hope Academy	12	3.79%
St. Ignatius Catholic School	96	30.37%
Triple C School	31	9.81%
Wesleyan Christian Academy	14	4.43%
No private school indicated in submission	3	0.94%



Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

Teacher survey

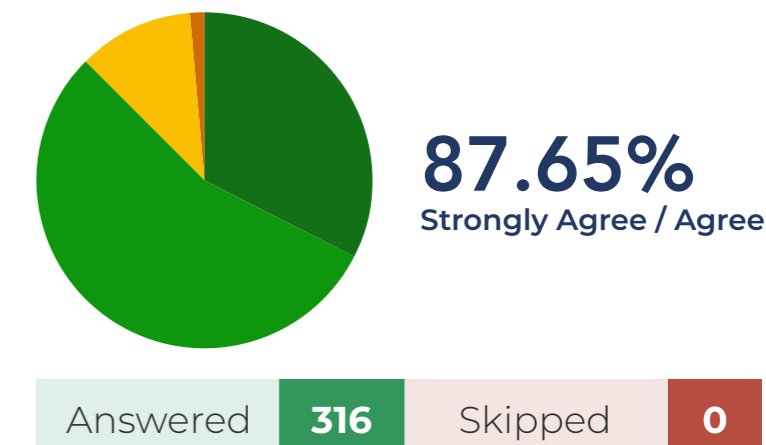
Student survey



Student survey

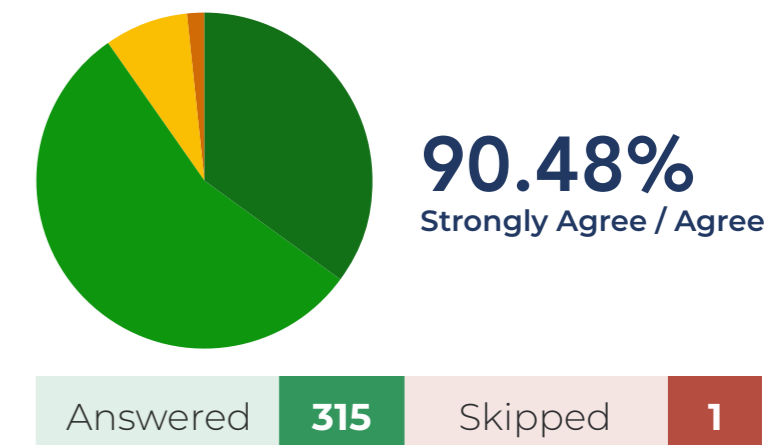
1. There are good arrangements in place to support my learning from home.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	32.59%	103
Agree	55.06%	174
Neither agree nor disagree	11.08%	35
Disagree	1.27%	4
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0



2. I am able to communicate with teachers when necessary to support my learning.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	35.24%	111
Agree	55.24%	174
Neither agree nor disagree	7.94%	25
Disagree	1.59%	5
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

Teacher survey

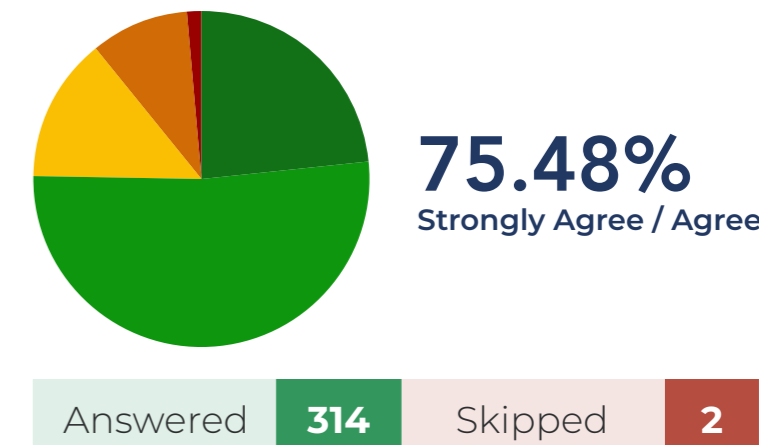
Student survey



Student survey

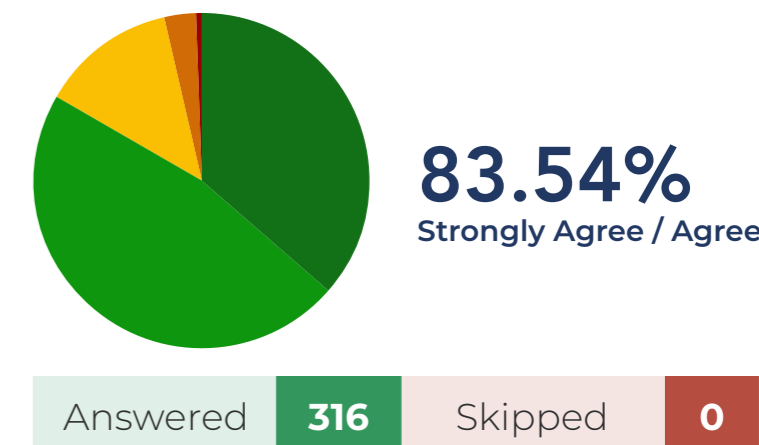
3. I am receiving regular feedback from teachers about my work.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	23.57%	74
Agree	51.91%	163
Neither agree nor disagree	13.69%	43
Disagree	9.55%	30
Strongly disagree	1.27%	4



4. I have a good understanding of the different platforms in use to support home learning.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	36.39%	115
Agree	47.15%	149
Neither agree nor disagree	12.97%	41
Disagree	3.16%	10
Strongly disagree	0.32%	1





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

Teacher survey

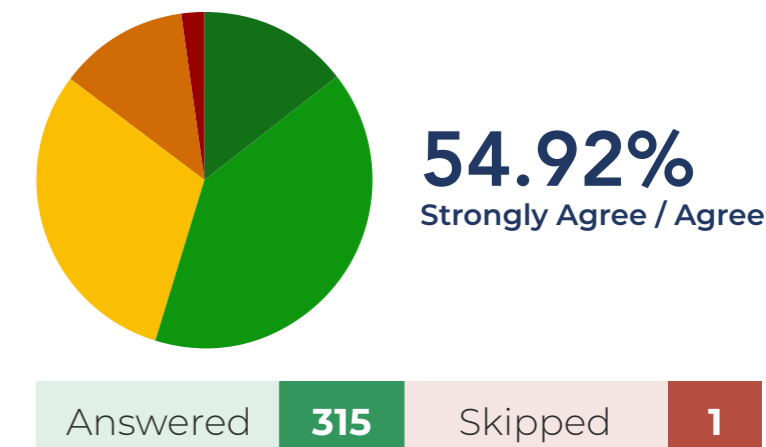
Student survey



Student survey

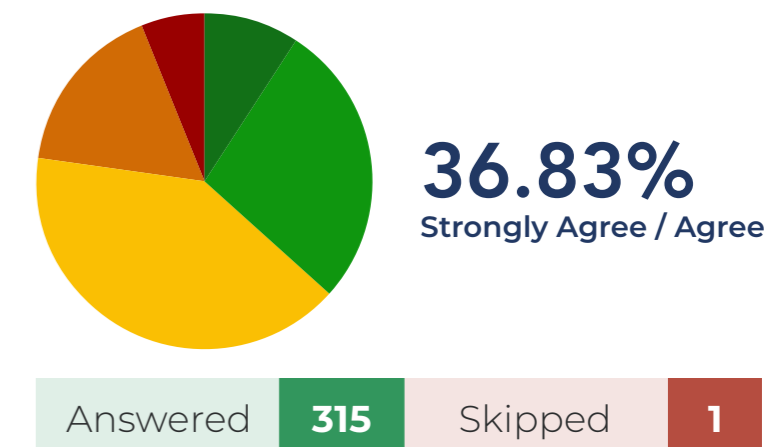
5. When I experience technical problems I have received the necessary support from my school.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	14.60%	46
Agree	40.32%	127
Neither agree nor disagree	30.48%	96
Disagree	12.38%	39
Strongly disagree	2.22%	7



6. I feel well prepared for my examinations later this year.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	9.21%	29
Agree	27.62%	87
Neither agree nor disagree	40.63%	128
Disagree	16.51%	52
Strongly disagree	6.03%	19





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

Teacher survey

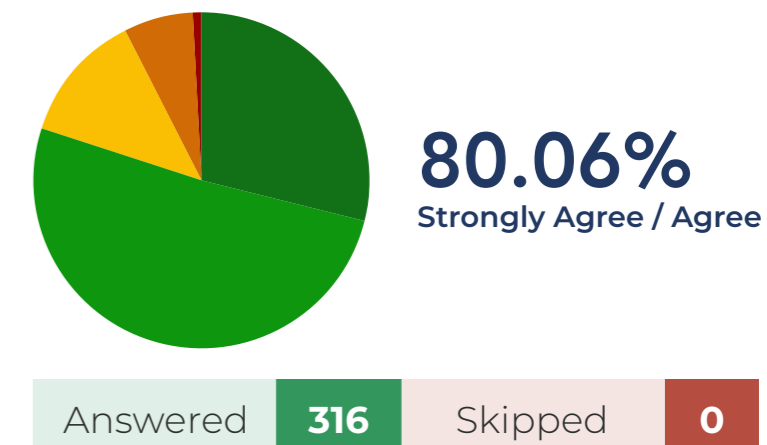
Student survey



Student survey

7. I have all of the resources I need to support my learning at home.

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Strongly agree	29.11%	92
Agree	50.95%	161
Neither agree nor disagree	12.66%	40
Disagree	6.65%	21
Strongly disagree	0.63%	2



[Introduction](#)[Timeline](#)[Summary findings](#)[Recommendations](#)[Data in relation to home learning](#)[A strategy for home learning](#)[Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes](#)[Teaching and learning](#)**Surveys**[Parent survey](#)[Teacher survey](#)**Student survey**

Comments made by students

Students in Cayman private schools were positive overall regarding their home learning experiences. They expressed appreciation regarding the efforts of their teachers and believed that, despite a number of challenges working remotely, they had made sufficient progress in their learning over the three months of lock-down. Almost all students reported that they were able to communicate regularly with their teachers, as necessary. Most felt that they had a good understanding of the platforms used by their teachers to deliver lessons.

Students identified a number of challenges which they considered important whilst reflecting on the home learning programme. In the 147 written comments added by students, the following topics were raised.

- a) **Lack of co-ordinated approach by teachers to work demands and submissions.** A significant minority of students expressed concern regarding the demands made upon them in relation to the completion and submission of work. One student wrote, 'It has been very stressful. I have been in a perpetual scramble to finish outstanding assignments that keep piling on with current demands. It is like a cycle and it has impacted on my mental well-being'.
- b) **Feeling ill-prepared for examinations.** Although a number of board examinations were postponed or cancelled, students in US-style curricula schools and other graduating classes were still studying for end-of-year examinations. More than two-thirds stated that they did not feel well prepared for their examinations and explained that they missed the one-to-one support provided by pastoral and career guidance staff to provide direction and encouragement.
- c) **Absence of direct teaching time in the final term of school.** In a few schools, older students responded in the survey to state that they had effectively left school at the end of March 2020. Their examinations had been cancelled or postponed and there had been limited on-line or remote learning offered. They pointed out that their school fees had been paid but an opportunity to support their preparations for college or for the next stage of their education had been missed.





Introduction

Timeline

Summary findings

Recommendations

Data in relation to home learning

A strategy for home learning

Monitoring the quality of home learning programmes

Teaching and learning

Surveys

Parent survey

Teacher survey

Student survey



Comments made by students

- d) **Reliability of internet, wireless connectivity and absence of technical support.** Students also reported unreliability of signal and poor reception in different parts of Grand Cayman. This meant that time in lessons was frequently wasted because teachers or their peers needed to log-in and out of sessions to gain reconnection. Students felt that time was wasted during on-line lessons as teachers sought to establish a reliable communication link between with their classes. Also, in addition, a minority of students reported a lack of available support from their schools when they experienced technical difficulties accessing home learning. This was most evident in the smaller private schools where there was limited staff available with technical expertise.

Levels of student satisfaction were broadly similar when comparing Cayman private schools with government schools. Although students in private schools had a greater level of access to devices to support their home learning, including laptop and desktop computers, there was some concern expressed by students in private schools about the quality of technical support received when they experienced difficulties. Nevertheless, a much higher percentage of students in private schools judged the arrangements for home learning to be good.



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