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Director Pedro Lazzari  
Cayman Islands Further Education Centre  
497 Walkers Road,  
Grand Cayman KY1-1507  
Cayman Islands

Dear Mr. Lazzari,

### **OES Thematic Visit to Cayman Islands Further Education Centre (CIFEC)**

Following our visit to your institution on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022, we write on behalf of the Office of Education Standards to confirm the findings. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the time you made available to discuss how centre's leadership team is managing and leading the centre during the Covid-19 pandemic in two key areas of provision:

- Performance Standard 5: Keeping our students safe and always supported
- Performance standard 6: Leading and managing our centre and developing links with the community we serve

Following the publication of Ministry of Education guidelines and the constraints of COVID-19 the OES devised this one day thematic visit to reduce the pressure on institutions.

OES visits to schools/centres/colleges during this spring term are not inspections. We are not giving graded judgements. We did not undertake the usual range of inspection activities and were not always able to gather all sources of evidence, such as visits to lessons. The content of this letter gives an overview of our discussions about what happened in your institution regarding leadership and wellbeing since September 2021.

During the visit, we spoke to you and your leadership teams and a section of your staff.

### **Context**

As we learn to manage community transmission and continue to support the wider education family, the OES will undertake thematic visits to 31 government and private schools/centres/colleges.

The information from this visit will feed into OES's national reporting so that the insights can be shared with the government and the education sector. We did not find any significant concerns. As such a thematic visit report will be published on our website available to parents and other

stakeholders. The Cayman Islands Further Education Centre is a vocational institution that for the purposes of this report includes students enrolled on the Dual Enrolment programme at the University College of the Cayman Islands. This report address the visit to the Cayman Islands Further Education Centre.

**From this visit the inspector noted that:**

- The centre leadership team had created a safe and secure learning environment for students to continue to learn throughout the pandemic. In addition, there was a clear focus on the mental health and emotional support for both staff and students.
- Subject coordinators were focused upon the up and coming CXC second chance exams in English, mathematics and Human & Social Biology with mathematics reporting some learning loss over the pandemic.
- Student workbooks demonstrate that students continued to make progress during the pandemic and were preparing for future examinations through past papers. Student progress was comprehensively tracked.
- The centre followed the required health and safety guidelines consequently mask wearing, hand sanitizing and social distancing were evident throughout the visit.
- The centre had increased the cleaning regime with two separate teams cleaning morning and afternoon, with the latter completing the 'wipe down' ahead of the next day. The centre was deep cleaned following any onsite COVID related incident.
- Water fountains had been switched off with a plan to provide adaptors so fountains could be used to fill water bottles. The centre had purchased bottled water coolers which were strategically placed around the campus.
- The centre reported that PPE logistics from DES ran smoothly and the centre always had the required equipment on time.
- The centre had a significantly high proportion of SEN (85) and ESL (10) students, 55 students registered for 'Centre Action Plus'. SEN staff reported that COVID enforced absence and the large case load had made the management of support for this group of students extremely difficult.
- SEN staff reported that a number of external issues regarding a lack of transition information (ISP/ILP), new policy in November 2021 and limited staff for SEMH had negatively impacted the quality of the record keeping with a number of student interventions not yet reviewed.
- Senior leaders reported that term two was a focus for student wellbeing given the increased incidence of anxiety reported in the student population during term one.
- A supplementary mental health curriculum lasting 10 weeks was delivered through the tutorial system to support the wellbeing of students.
- Centre support staff highlighted a significant increase in cases of student anxiety with a few requiring additional outside professional support. As a result the centre counsellor had created anxiety plans to help students.
- Social distance around the campus was monitored by the security team onsite who organised the flow of students through lunch and ensured the MOE guidelines were adhered to throughout the day.
- Staff wellbeing was supported by the centre counsellor who had provided anxiety workshops. Staff took part in cookouts, a Christmas 'Pot Luck' and a lottery system to have their lesson covered by a senior leader.

- Subject coordinators reported that there were daily check-ins with staff and cover teaching was well managed to ensure managers as well as teachers helped to shoulder the burden of additional cover.
- Senior leaders had conducted lesson observations to ensure that the COVID-19 protocols were in effect for classroom and workshop activities.
- The centre leadership had been able to continue with the 3/2 split between onsite classes and work placements whilst adhering to the issues around COVID protocols and social distancing.
- Attendance was monitored and tracking demonstrated approximately 7-10% of students were absent due to COVID related issues.
- The centre had deployed online versions of programs and subjects where necessary. Vocational subjects had assignment briefs although many had not been internally verified or student marking moderated at the time of the visit.
- The senior leaders had reviewed the centre improvement plan with a COVID-19 update that considered amongst many items, the issue of learning loss over the pandemic and how to prevent and mitigate it.
- Centre leaders reported that whilst additional support was offered, a number of students were still not taking advantage of the help which took place after centre or at the weekend, such as the 'Mathematics Marathon'. The centre cited transport, home access and family commitments as reasons for the lack of engagement for many.
- Centre leaders reported regular contact with parents via a variety of channels for both academic and health related matters.
- The Centre utilized the application 'Parent Booking' to arrange online meetings with parents to discuss student progress. The SEN team reported greater two-way communication with parents over the pandemic.
- All students arrived at the start of the year with government loan laptops from their previous schools that allowed access to the online learning resources used during periods of COVID enforced isolation.
- Centralised IT support provided the maintenance and upkeep of student's devices to ensure the continuation of access to online materials during the pandemic. However, IT reported that many breakages and lost items are related to a lack of equipment care by students.
- Staff retention was high and unchanged during the period of the pandemic. Staff have a number of specialist resources to ensure the delivery of vocational courses throughout the pandemic, although some learning spaces are old and require updating.
- Additional support provision for exam preparation and catch-up was negatively impacted by a lack of transport after centre, resulting in poor uptake of additional support. Leadership had made a request for additional transport to the Department for Education Services.
- The Centre is an old site and requires significant ongoing maintenance fixing leaking rooves, dealing with termites and closing rooms due to HVAC failure.
- Staff received professional development training for Teams and Everest systems moreover, the centre allowed staff to differentiate their requests for training providing a bespoke learning process of upskilling.
- The Centre had utilized a number of third party applications and sites to support the online learning during the pandemic such as MyiMath, Math Rocks, Let's go learn and Geobra.

## **‘COVID Keepers’**

The staff shared examples of strategies and innovations that they had implemented either as a direct or indirect consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and which they planned to retain post COVID-19. These included:

- **Remote Learning** with various platforms- MS Teams/OneDrive etc. Offering students greater interaction opportunities and improve the student learning experience.
- **Health and Safety Protocols** - To continue with the hand washing facilities and expectations to impact any cold and flu future absences.
- **Parents Booking** – To allow parents greater freedom to engage with the centre.
- **Virtual Parent meetings** – To allow parents more flexibility and alleviate the pressures of getting to centre for parents evenings etc.

Thank you again for contributing to this important national work. The views and experiences you have shared will help inform future policy.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Education Services, Acting President and CEO of UCCI, the Chief Officer for the Ministry of Education and the Chair of the Education Council. This letter will be published on the Office of Education Standards website.

Yours sincerely,



Nicholas Sherriff  
Chief Inspector



David Baldwin  
Senior Inspector

Office of Education Standards  
Portfolio of the Civil Service

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Cayman Islands Government