



**Cayman Islands Government**

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February 17, 2022

Ms. Carrie Patraulea  
Smith Road  
George Town  
Grand Cayman

Dear Ms. Patraulea,

### **OES thematic visit to Cayman Learning Centre**

Following my visit to your school on February 16, 2022, I write on behalf of the Chief Inspector of the Office of Education Standards (OES) to confirm the findings. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the time you made available to discuss how the school has prepared for and reacted to the recent pandemic related issues.

Following the publication of Ministry of Education guidelines and the constraints of COVID-19 the OES devised this 1 day thematic visit to reduce the pressure on the school.

OES visits to schools 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 school regarding leadership and wellbeing since September 2021.

During the visit, we spoke to you, your leadership teams and staff. We did not speak to students.

### **Context**

As we move towards learning to manage community transmission, the OES will undertake a 'thematic visit' program and will visit:

- A sample of 31 schools.
- Both government and private sector schools.

The information from this visit will feed into OES' 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 would be published on our website available to parents and carers.

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

- Senior Leaders and staff placed an emphasis on student well-being; embedding social-emotional programmes and mindfulness activities throughout the school day, encouraging healthy lifestyles and creating a positive, supportive ethos within the school.
- Staff worked collaboratively to support each other and to cover staff absences. The intimate setting of the school lent itself to more seamless coverage as all teachers knew each student and were in close proximity to them. Staff in isolation who were well enough to teach did so online while the students were monitored by the other staff in the school room.
- Senior Leaders reported that a Receptionist will join the school in the near future and this would alleviate them from much of the administration duties so that they will have more flexibility to help cover staff absences during the pandemic if needed.
- During the pandemic, additional time for daily planning and professional development had been scheduled to help alleviate some pressure on teachers. However, staff absences and facilitating one to one online lessons with students in isolation is now negatively impacting the time.
- Parent meetings were now held online as a safety protocol.
- Parents were asked to email the school in the event of absence. In the event that an email was not received, a Senior Leader contacted the parent via phone. Extended, unexplained absences were reported to the Department of Children and Family Services for welfare checks.
- All staff and students at the school followed COVID-19 safety protocols such as proper mask wearing, physical distancing and sanitisation. The school had been arranged so that students were separated a distance of 6 feet while seated at their desks and moving around the school.
- A one way “traffic” direction system through the school was implemented to avoid congestion and ensure proper distancing. Marks on the floor indicated the appropriate distance and students often supported each other to observe the protocols. Signs were placed around the school to remind persons of the COVID-19 requirements.
- The staff and students sanitised the working areas throughout the day, and janitorial staff cleaned the school at the end of each day.
- All students who required mental health support had this provision available through mental health service providers outside of the school. Structured programmes were offered daily at the school to help students to have a growth mindset and to support their socio-emotional development and self-regulation.
- While teachers reported that they felt supported to have time off to seek out mental health support if needed, they would have appreciated more information regarding their options of mental health service providers.
- All staff had access to COVID-19 policies and procedures via email and a staff folder on Microsoft Teams. These policies were also discussed in weekly staff meetings to help ensure all staff understood any new requirements regarding health and safety or learning plans during the pandemic.
- Students in isolation accessed assignments via online platforms such as Microsoft Teams. Teachers also used these online platforms during in school lessons to help ensure the students continued to be familiar with the programmes in the event the student had to isolate. The staff also found the platforms useful for learning support.
- There was an expectation that students in isolation who are well enough to participate in learning activities would have “live” sessions during the day. In some of the classes, these were synchronous lessons, and in other it was one on one sessions with their teacher. At times, staff was not always able to provide the daily session due to staff absences or other demands in the school.

- The school had a bank of laptops and other technological devices such as MP3 players which were used in lessons, remediation programmes and a lending programme in case students in isolation required a device. Past students of Government schools who had recently transitioned into the school on Government scholarships retained their Government issued free devices to support learning. Responses to the surveys indicated that all students had appropriate technology to participate in online learning.
- Data collected from remediation programmes and lessons informed the next steps for students' learning and interventions. All staff were experienced in remediation and catering to students with additional learning needs and therefore an effective system of identifying and addressing gaps in learning was already in place prior to the pandemic.
- The school had a strong focus on healthy lifestyles to help support the student's health and well-being during the pandemic. Healthy eating was a priority, and the school had worked with parents on healthy eating. Students who had recently transitioned to the school from a Government primary school on Government scholarship continued to receive the free meal provision.
- COVID-19 and related topics were openly discussed at the school, and teachers reported that the students displayed much less anxiety regarding COVID at this time. All students at the school had recently created projects where they repurposed the packaging from the lateral flow kits to create a display of their happy place to symbolise finding happiness during challenging times.
- While staff and Senior Leaders expressed that each person collaborated to cover staff absences, only 20% of the staff responded positively to the survey regarding the school having sufficient staff to deliver the curriculum effectively during the pandemic. Staff also expressed this sentiment during discussion.
- As community links were an integral part of the school's project based learning approach, the field trips continued. Staff shared that the trips were more productive during this time, as venues were less crowded and the students were able to have focused time with venue staff. Technology was also used to research and contact venues and specialist, such as health care providers, which they could not yet visit.

### **'COVID Keepers'**

The school shared a wide range of practices that had been put in place either as a direct or indirect consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The practices that the school would look to continue in a post-COVID "normal" situation include:

- The use of **online learning platforms** to support learning and reduce anxiety for students who may have been away from school for an extended period.
- **Safety measures** such as the directional movement system in the school and school layout to help alleviate congestion and help students be aware of personal space.
- The option of **online meetings** for parents and multidisciplinary teams to allow for more convenient access to meetings.
- **Online professional development** which makes training more accessible and cost effective.
- **Provisions for well-being** throughout the day to help develop students' ability to self-regulate and achieve inner calm.
- **Focus on healthy lifestyles.**
- **Transition arrangements of teachers moving to the various groups** which has provided smoother transitions between classes.

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 Ministry of Education and the Chair of the Education Council. This letter will be published on the Office of Education Standards website.

Yours sincerely,

*Carol Bennett*

Carol Bennett

Senior Inspector | Office of Education Standards  
Portfolio of the Civil Service

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