



*Office of Education Standards
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21 March 2022

Mr. Devon Bowen
941A Dennis Foster Road
Cayman Brac

Dear Mr. Bowen,

OES thematic visit to Layman E Scott High School

Following my visit to your school on 16 March 2022, I write on behalf of the Chief Inspector of the Office of Education Standards to confirm the findings. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, for the time you made available to discuss how your school's leadership team is managing and leading the school 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 school 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 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, the senior school improvement officer and members of staff. We did not speak to students.

Context

As we learn to manage community transmission and continue to support the school family, 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's national reporting so that the insights can be shared with the government and the education sector. I 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:

- School leaders and staff exhibited a clear desire to support the safety and wellbeing of all stakeholders.
- There were clear protocols in place with respect to mask wearing and hand sanitizing. Social distancing was adhered to where possible although relatively large classes in small rooms, and queueing at certain times throughout the day, such as when queueing for lunch, made this practice difficult.
- Attendance was managed through SIMs and the school was able to report on overall attendance and Covid-related absences. Attendance (excluding Covid-related illnesses) stood at 96.4% for term 1 and was currently 97.4% for term 2.
- The school further recorded absences due to 'fear of Covid', whereby students remained home worried about attending school in fear of catching Covid-19. The number of such students has now dropped to zero as ongoing initiatives and protocols had given parents and students greater confidence in the school's ability to manage the situation as safely as possible.
- The school's centralized tracking of attendance in Teams informed teachers of the students out with Covid so that more deliberate attempts could be made to engage them in remote learning where possible.
- Absence was swiftly followed up, on the same day, by the executive office or principal.
- Absent staff's lessons were covered by other members of staff, including support staff who had stepped up to take the role of teacher within the class. Staff reported this exercise as taxing, particularly psychologically, but were determined to ensure a continued education for the students.
- The school and Ministry of Education had invested in the school's infrastructure in response to Covid-19. The school had installed additional outside benches to ensure social distancing whilst eating lunch or working outside, hand sanitizers throughout the school, outside wash basins to support regular hand washing, masks and water coolers.
- The school had also increased the number of cleaners from two to six to ensure all accommodations are regularly sanitized. The cleaning staff worked in three shifts.
- The school continued to run field trips and also extra-curricular activities. Leaders reported these events had had a positive effect on students' wellbeing.
- Leaders and staff communicated with parents through a range of platforms during the pandemic. Platforms included Teams, Everest, InTouch, WhatsApp and Facebook. The school's website remained out of date but the school were endeavouring to work with appropriate providers to address this.
- Leaders had ensured an ongoing programme of professional development throughout the pandemic and tried to address the needs of the staff and students. Events had included upskilling staff in all areas of IT and associated issues to deliver online learning.

Additionally, wellbeing and mental health seminars were delivered through DES webinars, an educational psychologist and the school's counsellor.

- Leaders and the School Based Support Team met on a monthly basis to share concerns and information regarding all students' behaviour, mental health and wellbeing. The counsellor and wellbeing leaders described a clear protocol to address issues included an electronic round robin system that ensured all staff are aware of relevant issues.
- Heads of departments had a very clear awareness of student progress across the school against internal assessments undertaken. Heads of department reported an initial loss of learning during the pandemic.
- Heads of department produced data evidencing that learning gaps had now been closed to the effect students were now progressing above expected levels in core subjects.
- Senior leaders and heads of department identified areas of learning loss and ensured curriculum coverage through a number of initiatives, including postponing certain elements such as the science fair that enabled other areas to be taught, and extra lessons had been held in the afternoons before the second run of the buses. The school also extended the school day by one hour for a term after the students returned from lockdown to ensure curriculum coverage.
- All staff and students reported being confident and competent in the use of IT to support teaching and learning during the pandemic, although poor connectivity in some areas of the island had made some sessions less effective.
- Senior leaders were extremely appreciative of the government laptop scheme but surveys noted that if machines had become faulty, replacements or repairs had taken a long time to complete.
- The Senior School Improvement Officer checked in with senior leaders on a regular basis to support their wellbeing and this was appreciated by all concerned.
- Students with special educational needs were well supported and the school's SENCo monitored their progress and wellbeing regularly.
- The SENCo reported that the SEN students had not been significantly affected by the pandemic. This was attributed to close monitoring and the relatively small community on the island that enabled close communication with all stakeholders and thus the ability to address issues swiftly and effectively.
- The senior leaders supported staff wellbeing through a series of events, including Coffee and Conversation days, wellbeing CPD events, early release during the day where possible and teacher resource packs.
- The school's executive officer collated and distributed lateral flow test kits to all students and staff. This was a significant task that required a substantial amount of the working day to complete. Detailed records of test requirement and distribution were kept on an excel spreadsheet.

'COVID Keepers'

- **Regular hygiene and hand washing protocols** support general health of all stakeholders across the school.
- **The use of online applications, especially Teams** to complement teaching strategies.
- **Continued use of WhatsApp** to maintain the strength and quality of communication with parents.
- **Virtual meetings with parents to support engagement with the school.**

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, 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,



David Baldwin

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

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