



Cayman Islands Further Education Centre

Inspection

January 2013



Education Standards and Assessment Unit

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Introduction

The aim of the Cayman Islands' Education Standards and Assessment Unit (ESAU) is to promote the raising of standards of achievement in schools, pre-schools and further education institutions in the Cayman Islands through rigorous and independent inspections and the provision of sound professional advice to the Ministry of Education and the Department of Education Services.

Inspections identify the school's strengths and the areas that need to be improved. They provide schools, parents and the community, the Department of Education Services and the Ministry of Education, Financial Services and Employment with an external and impartial inspection of the quality of a school's work and its impact on students' learning and the standards they achieve. Through the publication of reports, inspections contribute to accountability, transparency and openness within the education system.

The Education Standards and Assessment Unit hopes that this inspection report will prove helpful to the Cayman Islands Further Education Centre and will contribute in a positive way as it seeks to improve its provision and practice.

Favourita Blanchard

**Senior Evaluator
Education Standards and Assessment Unit**

Information about the Centre and the inspection

Centre contact information

Type of institution:	Government Further Education Centre
Age range of students:	16 - 18 years
Gender of students:	Male and Female
Number on roll:	284
Centre address:	515 Walkers Road PO Box 1368 Grand Cayman KY1-1108 Cayman Islands
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Email address:	admin@cifec.edu.ky
Name of Principal:	Mr Robin Kyne

General information about CIFEC

The Cayman Islands Further Education Centre (CIFEC) was established in 2010 as part of the reorganization of secondary education, which created two Years 7-11 High Schools in Grand Cayman and a new mandatory Year 12 programme at CIFEC.

Three programme pathways are offered:

- Dual Entry: This is an accelerated programme, for students who have completed all of their high school academic requirements, and have attained five or more Level 2 passes (including English and mathematics). Students study Level 3 programmes off campus, at the University College of the Cayman Islands, or in non-Government schools. This includes A' Level studies.
- Technical/Vocational Education (TVET): Students study an internationally accredited programme of vocational subjects, based at the CIFEC campus. Programmes on offer during the 2012/13 school year include: Motor Vehicle Repair (IMI) and the following BTEC subjects: Creative Media Production; Business; Information Technology; Children's Care, Learning and Development; Travel and Tourism; Hair & Beauty Therapy; Hospitality; Horticulture; Art & Design; Health and Social Care (with The Health Services Authority (HAS) certified Health Aide qualification); Workskills.
- Academic Completion: Students have opportunities to retake L2 mathematics and English if needed, to complete the core academic competencies to ensure work readiness and access to further education upon graduation. (Note: the academic studies are generally undertaken in combination with TVET studies).

In addition, all students take the BTEC Deloitte Certificate in Employability Studies and the BTEC L2 Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

Students also spend two days a week in an internship with a local employer. CIFEC works with over 150 employers and students are placed in multinational companies such as KPMG, Ritz-Carlton, Maples, Appleby and Deloitte, across a range of areas such as tourism, retail, broadcasting and banking.

The inspection

Lead:	Favourita Blanchard	Senior Inspector, Education Standards and Assessment Unit
Co-Lead:	Helena McVeigh	Overseas Inspector
Team:	Cetonya Cacho	Local Inspector
	Alfred Gordon	Local Inspector
	Joe Wallace	Local Inspector

This inspection of Cayman Islands Further Education Centre (CIFEC) took place from 22nd to 23rd January, 2013 and involved a team of five inspectors. The following aspects of the Centre's work were looked at:

- Outcomes for students
- The quality of teaching and learning
- The effectiveness of leadership and management

The inspection team gathered evidence in the following ways:

- Twenty-three lessons, or parts of lessons, were observed in most of the subjects offered
- Documents, including teachers' planning, curriculum statements and guidelines, were reviewed and students' work was scrutinized
- Inspectors observed assembly, morning registration, tutorials, breaks and lunch times
- Inspectors spoke with students and also took their views from the questionnaires into account
- Inspectors listened to students read
- Discussions took place with teachers and senior managers
- Comments from parents at the meeting before the inspection and from questionnaires were taken into account
- The inspectors took account of the Centre's self-evaluation report

Commentary on inspection findings

Introduction

CIFEC is a young institution, in its third year of operation. It serves a valuable function in providing a range of new educational opportunities for students of all abilities, to help prepare them for the next stage of their education and the world of work. The Centre has experienced several changes of leadership, but is developing well and is on course to make even greater progress.

Outcomes for students

Students make good progress in their personal development. The vast majority are developing as mature young adults who want to learn. They are respectful of each other, their teachers and other adults. They cooperate well and willingly support each other and so there is a positive climate for learning in classrooms.

Generally students have responded well to the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) way of learning which is very different from what they experienced in high school, for the most part. They are expected to work independently and they make good use of laptop computers to research and record their findings. BTEC results have improved and were good in 2012 with over 80% passes. Results in Level 2 business were particularly good, with a 97% pass rate. Over 80% of students were also successful in BTEC level 2 creative media, travel and tourism and automotive courses. However, very few students achieved merits and distinctions.

Although Level 2 passes in English and mathematics dipped in 2012 compared to 2011, 54% of the students added either English, mathematics or both in Year 12. Further improvement in mathematics is a priority for the Centre. The Centre leaders have taken action to provide a different option for those students who are unlikely to attain a 'pass grade' in mathematics and English by providing the more appropriate Level 1 and Level 2 Certificate in adult literacy and numeracy courses. The outcomes in mathematics are a particular concern as relatively few students who sat CXC mathematics in June 2012 achieved a grade 2 or 3 result. The current cohort appears to be making better progress than the last and signs are that results should improve with the good quality of teaching that they now experience.

Many students who have not succeeded previously in mathematics lack confidence. Their understanding of numbers (for example, negative numbers) is often weak and carelessness is hindering their progress. Students are, though, very keen to succeed in mathematics and some expressed concern about their lack of progress and asked for more lesson time. The teaching is currently good, but some of the classes are large so that the teachers are not able to devote enough attention to all students' individual needs. Some teachers offer an extra class after school which is appreciated by students.

The Centre is aware that girls are outperforming boys and has attempted to redress this through, for example, 'boy-friendly' materials and activities. In some lessons, boys were less engaged than girls and not always encouraged enough by teachers to participate. The gap between results for boys and girls closed slightly in 2012, but is still very wide, especially in English.

Students who passed seven or more subjects in high school, but failed to gain a pass in English or maths or both, are grateful for the opportunity to improve their grades. They would however, appreciate being able to study subjects that would prepare them for higher and further education. Some students complained that they are not following courses, or work experience of their choice.

The Level 2 BTEC Deloitte employability course and work experience support the development of vocational skills and preparation for the world of work. Teachers need to ensure that they apply practical approaches to delivering the courses and not rely on over-use of teacher talk and power point demonstrations, with little student involvement.

The students on vocational programmes are aware of the course expectations and what they need to do to improve. The Level 2 BTEC Extended Project provides a good opportunity to develop research, planning, advocacy, presentation and literacy skills but not all students can see the value of it and need to be challenged more to produce high quality work.

The careers service has done a good job in identifying work placements for all students, with good cooperation from a wide range of employers. There is a good link between work experience and BTEC courses in some cases, for example, the IMI Automotive, where students can have their practical work experience validated during that period. There are also good success stories, with some students' work experience resulting in full time employment, for example, at Vampt Motors, Automotive Art, Appleby. Businesses have given good support to CIFEC and this enables students to spend two days a week in an internship with a local employer. Many students have secured part-time or full time employment as a result of their work experience.

Attendance has improved, but is still too low for some students and punctuality remains an issue. This needs to be addressed as it is not helping students prepare for the expectations they will meet when they are in employment. Attendance during work experience is not always being monitored effectively. Employers would appreciate better monitoring by Centre staff as this is not happening on a regular basis. There needs to be more frequent checks on students and feedback on their attendance and punctuality. The careers service is over-stretched as it offers services to both high schools on Grand Cayman as well as to CIFEC, and due also to the amount of time for which they are timetabled. These commitments severely limit the time available to monitor and visit students in the workplace.

Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching is good at CIFEC. A significant number of good lessons were seen and several had outstanding features. In those good lessons, students made good progress, were actively engaged and, particularly in BTEC courses, were aware of what they had to do and got quickly on with the tasks. Teachers in these lessons had high expectations of what the students could achieve and planned work that challenged all students. There was a positive ethos in these classrooms and teacher-student relationships were outstanding.

Overall, teachers are planning lessons appropriately and there are some consistent practices such as the sharing of learning objectives with students.

In lessons that required improvement, the work was not well matched to the needs of students' different abilities and prior attainment. Not all students were as engaged as they could have been, and teachers did not always do enough to encourage them to be involved. In these lessons, teachers' expectations of what students could achieve were not high enough and the standards of work were low. Some students also commented that their courses are too easy.

Some subjects are timetabled in three consecutive lesson blocks. Students cannot always sustain their concentration for this length of time, particularly when the activities do not vary much over the three lessons.

Motor vehicle classes suffer from a lack of adequate facilities and equipment. Teachers and students expressed dissatisfaction with the conditions of their learning environment. This hinders students' progress and has limited the amount of practical work that they have been able to do since moving to the new CIFEC site.

Teachers incorporate technology well in their lessons and in many classes students make good use of laptop computers.

Relationships between students and teachers are very positive. Most students display good attitudes in lessons and strive hard to reach their targets. They know what they must achieve and set about completing assignments, asking for help or clarification where needed.

Not all students arrive promptly for lessons but when they do arrive, they tend to settle quickly.

The Centre has begun to take steps to track students' progress. This was evident in some lessons where teachers completed tracking sheets as soon as students handed in assignments. These sheets also outlined targets for improvement and were shared with students. This good practice is, though, not yet consistent throughout the Centre.

Students and parents expressed concern about the lack of physical education. They would like the Centre to include a range of after-school physical activities. The Centre is keen to develop this and plans to participate in the Inter Schools' Athletics Championships again this year.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The Centre leaders have managed to instill a calm and purposeful ethos across the campus. Students believe that they have good relationships with their teachers and this was witnessed by the inspection team. Students appreciate the opportunity for a second chance to succeed in their academic subjects and most students demonstrate an admirable level of maturity.

The Director has begun to expand the leadership team by appointing staff as division leaders, which is a good step towards more distributed leadership, although finances have not enabled these posts to be remunerated. There is a clear need to provide leadership in subject areas as well so that progress can be more rapid and less reliant on the small senior leadership team. It is to the credit of CIFEC teachers that they have taken on additional responsibility on a voluntary unremunerated basis.

Students' physical safety is looked after well on the Centre campus. Their welfare is also catered for effectively by an inclusion specialist, who also serves as the special educational needs coordinator, and a counselor who is assigned to the school on a part time basis. However, the safety and welfare of students on work experience is not monitored rigorously enough.

The Director has an ambitious vision and clear plans for further developing the Centre which include:

- broadening the course choices to enhance training for employment opportunities
- partnering with international higher education institutions to introduce pre-college and college courses
- making available adult education courses that would meet the educational needs of the broader community.

The Director has begun a rigorous programme of performance management, including lesson observations of every staff member. There are appropriate plans to involve the two senior members of staff more in sharing responsibility for performance management.

The Director's self-evaluation is thorough and linked well to the school improvement plan. This plan outlines the priorities and objectives for the 2012-13 academic year, but it is not clear how involved stakeholders were with the development of the Centre's vision and plans for advancement. Some parents and students felt that communication with them could be improved. Students would welcome the opportunity to be given more responsibility across the Centre and greater involvement in decisions.

What the Centre does well

- There is a calm and purposeful ethos, where students want to learn and achieve.
- Teaching is often good.
- The staff care about students and relationships are very positive.
- Students are given good opportunities to learn about the world of work through their work placements and employability lessons.

What needs to improve

- Communication with parents and students
- More regular monitoring and evaluation of students on work placement to ensure their safety, attendance, punctuality and progress
- Mathematics examination results

General Recommendations

The following are some suggested ways that the Centre could try to improve further.

Outcomes for students

- Targets and expectations of what students can achieve need to be higher in some cases - for example, for distinction and merits in BTEC rather than passes.
- Continue to find ways to improve examination results in English and mathematics.
- Improve the punctuality of students to lessons.

Teaching, learning and assessment

- Ensure that all students, including boys, are engaged and involved in lessons.
- Provide an extended programme at Level 1 to specifically help those students who enter with no qualification, to gain some success and at Level 3 to stretch and challenge higher level learners.
- Where possible, increase the number of mathematics teachers so that classes can include fewer students who can then be given more individual assistance.
- Include a greater variety of activity in lessons taught in three consecutive blocks.

Leadership and management

- Create a robust database on student progress and attainment to allow for:
 - identification of baseline student performance
 - target setting
 - examination results achieved in CIFEC, to ascertain the value added by the Centre
- Encourage the sharing of good practice as part of professional development plans. This could include peer observations and collaboration with the high schools.
- Improve the monitoring of students on work placements in order to ensure their safety, attendance, punctuality and progress.
- Where possible extend the range of work placements and ensure that all students' placements are linked to their career aspirations or interests.
- Improve communication with students and parents. Involve students in decision making and listen and act on their concerns.