EARLY YEARS INSPECTION REPORT

OFFICE OF EDUCATION STANDARDS CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

SEPTEMBER 2023





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INTRODUCTION

INSPECTIONS OF EARLY YEARS CENTRES IN THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

As determined by Education Act (2016), all educational institutions are inspected regularly by the Office of Education Standards. The purpose of inspection is primarily to support ongoing improvement in each school and also to provide rigorous, impartial and comprehensive information to parents, government officers and Ministers regarding the quality of education both in government and private educational establishments.

Inspections are undertaken at least once every four years and will usually involve a team of inspectors visiting each school for between two and five days. Inspectors use an agreed framework to reach their judgements. In the Cayman Islands, the publication 'Successful Schools and Achieving Students 2' (Cayman Islands Government, October 2020) is the tool which is used by schools to review their own work and by inspectors when they form judgements.

Inspection frameworks are a central feature of different school evaluation systems worldwide. They provide a structure within which inspectors make judgements on the basis of evidence of observed practice. They serve a number of purposes:

- Indicators create a **consistent vocabulary and reference point** for a conversation with schools regarding the major determinants of educational success.
- The highest-level exemplar provides schools with a description of educational excellence to which schools can aspire.
- The lower-level exemplar provides schools with a clear understanding of levels of provision that are considered **unsatisfactory** and must be improved.
- The indicators can be used by schools for **self-evaluation purposes** and can be linked to school improvement through effective development planning.
- The use of a common set of indicators encourages **consistency in judgements** across different inspection teams. Inspectors must base their judgements on the evidence of the practice they actually observe, rather than with reference to set norms or by employing relative ratings or referring to personal or individual preferences.
- The publication of inspection quality indicators enables schools to see inspection as a transparent process.



INTRODUCTION

The inspection framework is organised around judgements using a four-point scale.

The four levels are defined as follows:

Excellent - exceptionally high quality of performance or practice	Excellent
Good - the expected level for every school in the Cayman Islands, both public and private.	Good
Satisfactory - the minimum level of quality required for the Cayman Islands. All key aspects of performance and practice in every school should meet or exceed this level.	Satisfactory
Weak - quality not yet at the level acceptable for schools in the Cayman Islands. Schools will be expected to take urgent measures to improve the quality of any aspect of their performance or practice that is judged at this level.	Weak

Consistency in quantitative terminology

Inspectors use quantitative terms in reports, as follows:

All	The whole – as used when referring to quantity, extent, or duration	100%
Almost all	90% and more	90% to 99%
Most	Three quarters or more but less than 90%	75% to 89%
Majority	Half or more but less than three quarters	50% to 74%
Significant minority	A quarter or more but less than a half	25% to 49%
Minority	15% or more but less than half	15% to 24%
Few	Up to 15%	0% to 14%



SCHOOL INFORMATION

General information

	Centre name	Bloom Learning Centre
•	Address	11 Seven Mile Shops, West Bay Road, Grand Cayman
C	Telephone number	(345) 746-4444
	Website	www.bloom.ky
	Name of the principal	N/A
	Date of this inspection	September 13 - 14, 2023
(-	Date of the last inspection	No previous inspections

Children

ŤŤ	Number of children on roll	36
* *Ť	Age range of the children	6 weeks to 5 years old
223	Grades or year groups	Infants, Toddlers, Early Preschool, Preschool
صورا	Number of Caymanian children	8
Ġ	Number of children with special educational needs	2
 	Largest nationality group of children	South Africa, UK, US



SCHOOL INFORMATION

Staff

	Number of teachers	1 Licenced Teacher
63	Number of teaching assistants	8
âŶ÷	Teacher-child ratio	1 to 4

Curriculum

1	Main curriculum	Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework
9 - 9 - 9 -	External tests and assessments	N/A
P	Accreditation	N/A

School inspection overall performance

Inspection	September 2023	Satisfactory
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Performance Standards 1 & 2. Helping our children to achieve in key areas of their learning; Promoting our children's personal and social development

Quality Indicator	Early Years Current Judgement
Exploration	Satisfactory
Respect	Satisfactory
Communication	Satisfactory
Well-Being	Satisfactory



Performance Standard 3. Ensuring effective teaching to support our children's learning

Quality Indicator	Early Years Current Judgement
3.1 Teaching	Satisfactory
3.2 Learning	Satisfactory
3.3 Assessment	Weak



Performance Standard 4. Offering a curriculum that meets the educational needs of all of our children

Quality Indicator	Early Years Current Judgement
4 Curriculum	Satisfactory

Performance Standard 5. Keeping our children safe and always supported

Quality Indicator	Early Years Current Judgement
5.1 Health and safety	Satisfactory
5.2 Support and guidance	Satisfactory



Performance Standard 6. Leading and managing our school and developing our links with the community we serve

Quality Indicator	Early Years Current Judgement
6.1 Leadership	Satisfactory
6.2 Self-evaluation and planning ahead	Satisfactory
6.3 Links with parents and the community	Satisfactory
6.4 Staffing and the learning environment	Satisfactory



OVERALL PERFORMANCE

What the school does well

- The centre had a welcoming and caring ethos. Staff's relationships with children were caring, nurturing, and respectful.
- The centre had well-established methods of communicating with parents.
- Leadership of the centre was dedicated to its success and the care of the children. They created a welcoming environment for children and parents.

Recommendations

Improve the quality of teaching by:

- improving planning and provision to meet the needs of all children;
- reviewing curriculum planning to improve opportunities for children to access all areas of learning, including opportunities to reflect upon their learning and to further promote the development of their early mathematical and scientific understanding and mark making through practical activities;
- improving the performance management process and providing targeted professional development based on the needs of the staff;
- capitalising on areas of the centre and community to help secure learning opportunities across all areas of development.

Review the assessment process and practice to ensure accurate assessment of children's achievements and the appropriate use of assessment information to support teaching and learning.



OVERALL PERFORMANCE

▶ Satisfactory

Bloom Learning Centre was judged as satisfactory overall, with assessment being judged as weak.

Bloom Learning Centre is a recently established centre which provides early childhood care and education to children aged six weeks to five years. The centre employs one lead teacher and eight teaching assistants, in addition to one non-teaching staff member, the administrative coordinator. At the time of inspection, the leadership position of Programme Coordinator was vacant and the centre was in the process of hiring additional teaching assistants. The premises are located in Seven Mile Shops on West Bay Road and include communal learning areas, including the indoor and outdoor playrooms.

Children's achievement in Exploration was satisfactory, with almost all children's gross and fine motor, sensory and technological development at age-appropriate levels. However, further development in mathematical and scientific strands of development were necessary. Children's development in Respect was judged as satisfactory, with most children demonstrating a strong sense of self and respect for others. However, demonstration of their care for and awareness of the environment as well as cultural and religious awareness was very limited. Children's development in Communication was satisfactory, with listening skills and book handling skills being a strength. Further development was required in children's phonological awareness. Children's development in Well-Being was satisfactory, with almost all children enjoying healthy meals and snacks and taking time to rest and move their bodies. Almost all children demonstrated a growing ability to self-regulate and manage their own emotions and were developing pro-social behaviours. They required further development in reflecting on learning experiences and interactions with others.

Teaching and Learning were judged as satisfactory. Children generally learned through opportunities for play throughout the day, and their curiosity led their learning. Staff were warm and nurturing and knew the social-emotional needs of children well. However, Assessment was judged as weak and required development in the collection of information as well as analysis of data to plan for each learner.

Curriculum was judged as satisfactory, as it was planned in appropriate themes and reviewed regularly. Health and Safety and Support and Guidance were judged as satisfactory.

Leadership was judged as satisfactory, with the leadership roles being well defined and leaders who were committed to the work of the centre. Self-evaluation and improvement planning were satisfactory, with leaders regularly reviewing the key documents. Performance management required improvement and there was a need to better target professional development to meet the needs of staff. Links with parents and the community was judged as satisfactory. The centre had a well-established online communication system which kept parents updated on their child's care and activities. They now needed to use links with the parents and community to impact good outcomes for children and to develop links with other educational institutions. Staffing and the learning environment were judged as satisfactory.



ACHIEVEMENT

Quality Indicator	Early Years
Exploration	Satisfactory
Respect	Satisfactory
Communication	Satisfactory
Well-Being	Satisfactory

Exploration



Exploration was satisfactory. Almost all children were developing their fine and gross motor skills at age-appropriate levels. Younger infants were grasping toys and rolling from side to side while older infants were crawling and learning to walk. Across the other age groups, children could run, climb and jump while they demonstrated their fine motor skills by manipulating objects such as pipettes, puzzles and stacking rings. Children's self-regulation skills were developing and they demonstrated a tolerance for the effect of a variety of movements. There was a need to increase their descriptive vocabulary for sensory experiences. The scientific method was not well-developed as children were not encouraged to make predictions, investigate or develop their observation skills. While children demonstrated age appropriate spatial understanding by fitting together puzzles and other manipulatives, there were insufficient opportunities for children to explore concepts related to number, measurement, time and classification. Children's ability to use, understand and communicate about numbers through practical activities was underdeveloped. Across all age groups, children used a variety of tools and equipment such as blocks, construction toys and locks.



ACHIEVEMENT

Respect



Respect was judged satisfactory. Children's sense of self was good. Almost all demonstrated a positive sense of self and had an age-appropriate understanding of the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour. At age-appropriate levels, children could manage their own needs independently at meal times and toileting, for example. Children were developing the ability to share fairly and take turns. Children showed care and empathy towards others by assisting each other with tasks, for example. Older children were less secure in demonstrating skills that showed they had a respect for the environment; they did not demonstrate practices of protecting the environment and few children participated consistently in keeping their immediate environment tidy, with adults generally completing the tidying up tasks. There were insufficient opportunities provided for children to participate in environmental projects such as cultivating a grow box or recycling activities. Children did not demonstrate awareness or respect for culture or religion. There was very little evidence demonstrating that children had opportunities to participate in cultural and religious experiences.

Communication



Communication was judged as satisfactory. Across the centre, most children attained levels appropriate to their age and stage. While children in the infant and toddler classes demonstrated age-appropriate receptive language, further development of their expressive language was needed through increased interactions by staff and by staff narrating their play experiences. Older children were developing the skills of conversation and engaged in discussion with increasing fluency and clarity during exploration times. However, children still required more opportunities to expand their vocabulary and develop mark making and writing skills. Most children demonstrated appropriate active listening behaviours during circle time and listened to stories being read aloud actively and with great interest. Toddler, P1 and P2 children were able to respond appropriately to simple questions about the text, such as pointing to key characters. In P2 when reading a book about butterflies, a few children independently dramatised the caterpillar, cocoon and butterfly phases of the lifecycle without prompting. Most children expressed themselves creatively through role-play in the dramatic centres and through music and dance as they participated with enthusiasm in music jamboree and movement times. They explored beats and rhythms with musical instruments. Most children demonstrated age-appropriate book handling skills as they were exposed to books in all environments throughout the centre. There was no evidence that children's phonological awareness skills were developing at age-appropriate levels.



ACHIEVEMENT

Well-Being



Well-Being was judged as satisfactory. Children made healthy choices during meal time and rest time. Across the centre, children showed enjoyment when eating healthy food such as vegetables and fruits, whole grain snack bars and balanced lunches. Children were developing the ability to recognise and communicate their bodily needs. Too often, however, adults completed tasks for children instead of supporting their growing independence. Almost all children displayed a growing capacity to self-regulate and manage their emotions. They were able to deal with challenges and frustration appropriately within age appropriate expectations. For example, a child was observed making multiple attempts to fit covers on markers and persevered in his attempt even though the task was proving difficult. Infants settled easily once their needs were met and happily interacted with adults who cared for them. Children arrived at the centre happy and almost all transitioned into the care of the centre staff with ease. Almost all children demonstrated good social skills. Older children would benefit from regular opportunities to reflect on their experiences and interactions.



TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Quality Indicator	Early Years
3.1 Teaching	Satisfactory
3.2 Learning	Satisfactory
3.3 Assessment	Weak

Teaching



Teaching was judged satisfactory. While relationships were nurturing, adults required a deeper understanding of how children learn so that they could better plan and facilitate meaningful learning opportunities for all children. Adults were aware of and generally responsive to children's personal and social needs, but the lack of proper assessment information meant that they did not always adequately plan to meet the needs of all children. Adults supported opportunities for play throughout the centre. Adults in the infant room facilitated tummy time for younger infants while mobile infants explored the room. Supported by an adult, toddlers made "soup" in the play kitchen. Older children pretended to serve a variety of ice-cream flavours to their teacher and navigated the large play structure and push toys in the gross motor area. More opportunities to explore and investigate and for children to work collaboratively were required. Across the centre, appropriate resources and materials were easily accessed by children such as puzzles, blocks, a sand box, sensory bins filled with shredded paper and tools for fine motor development. There was need for adults to more consistently and effectively model and extend language and to capitalise on incidental learning opportunities.



TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Learning



Learning was judged as satisfactory. Children had positive attitudes towards learning and interacted consistently with their environment. Most children attended to tasks in which they were interested for sustained periods of time. For example, a toddler was observed repeatedly placing and removing rings on a stacking toy, trialing different objects to see if they would fit. Another young child was observed using cups to construct a volcano structure which required problem solving to complete. Guided by their natural curiosity, many children took responsibility for their own learning by freely exploring toys and equipment and creating their own learning activities. For example, a group of children spontaneously went on a "shape hunt" around their classroom. Children navigated their environment well, sharing the space and resources with their peers within age- appropriate expectations. However, collaboration to accomplish common goals was not a feature of learning at the centre. Further development was now needed for children to make connections to prior learning, relate learning to everyday life and develop deeper level critical thinking skills.

Assessment



Assessment was weak. An assessment tool had been created using the milestones from the Birth to Five Matters document matched to the learning strands of the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework. However, assessment practices were underdeveloped and staff were not yet tracking and monitoring children's progress consistently or effectively. Therefore, staff did not have information to adapt the curriculum to ensure a close match of learning activities to the needs of the children. Past assessment documentation demonstrated that when information was collected, statements were generally narrative and not evaluative in nature. Individual reports were produced regularly for each child, but information had not been analysed to guide plans. Leaders had recognised a need for development in this area and planned professional development opportunities for the staff as well as a transition to the HiMama app which would be used for assessment documentation. Accurate and thorough feedback to help children understand how they learn and their strengths and areas for improvement was an area for development.



CURRICULUM

Quality Indicator

4 Curriculum

Early Years

Curriculum



The curriculum was satisfactory. The centre used the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework which was organised into thematic units and respective lines of inquiry. The curriculum was rooted in a play-based philosophy but gaps existed in curricular planning documents. As a consequence, there was the need for more rigorous monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum. The curriculum was reviewed by staff and leaders annually. The centre had started to use a new guidance document, Birth to 5 Matters, to support the delivery of the curriculum and to ensure planned learning opportunities matched age-related developmental milestones; however, the impact of this was not yet evident. Transition arrangements within the centre were underdeveloped and occurred during summer camp when not all children were present. Occasional planned activities throughout the year ensured that children were able to learn from visitors to the centre and within the wider community. For example, persons from the Agriculture Department, police and fire officers visited the centre and the children participated in outings to the Marriott for nature walks in the courtyard, the Grandview for an Easter egg hunt, and older children recently attended a field trip to the Turtle Farm.



SAFETY AND SUPPORT

Quality Indicator	Early Years
5.1 Health and safety	Satisfactory
5.2 Support and guidance	Satisfactory

Health and safety



Health and safety were judged as satisfactory. The centre had effective policies and procedures in place to ensure the health, safety and security of all children. Children were checked into and out of the centre by parents using a QR code and the Bright Wheel app. The premises and resources were well maintained and suitable for children. The centre was recently issued with a re-registration certificate which confirmed compliance with regulatory requirements. Sufficiently regular emergency drills were conducted and records of these were appropriately detailed. While there were measures in place to ensure the safety of children engaged in off-site activities and trips, risk assessments were not yet formally documented. The centre promoted a healthy lifestyle by encouraging parents to pack healthy meals and almost all children brought well-balanced snacks and meals and happily ate these. Sufficient time for naps and rest was scheduled. Child protection arrangements were in place and met requirements. The majority of staff were aware of requirements and parents were educated on these arrangements via the Parent Handbook and centre's website. The centre was working on finding solutions to ensure the privacy of children and staff in the outdoor area and improving lighting in the infant classroom. Additionally, the centre now needed to ensure the consistency of established hygiene and safety practices.



SAFETY AND SUPPORT

Support and guidance



Support and guidance were judged as satisfactory. Staff's relationships with children were positive, warm, and nurturing. All staff were respectful in interactions with children. Staff knew the personal, emotional and social needs of the children well. The centre had an established Behaviour Matrix for various environments, but staff needed to use it to guide positive behaviours. The Bright Wheel app was used to track information regarding children's well-being, such as meals, rest times, changing, and provision of medication, as well as daily attendance. The centre did not yet utilise an effective system to track and monitor children's achievements. Parents received report cards quarterly and were also invited to attend consultative sessions. These reports now needed to be informed by accurate assessment procedures. Effective transition arrangements were established to welcome new children to the centre and consequently, children settled into their new environment quickly. There was scope to develop transition arrangements for children leaving the centre and entering their next phase of education. The centre admitted children with special educational needs and worked collaboratively with specialist service providers to support children's learning and development. The appointed SENCO and staff promptly identified children with developmental concerns and ensured their parents received timely and appropriate information. Learning support plans were completed; however, the centre needed to ensure these were reviewed and adapted systematically.



LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Quality Indicator	Early Years
6.1 Leadership	Satisfactory
6.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Satisfactory
6.3 Links with parents and the community	Satisfactory
6.4 Staffing and the learning environment	Satisfactory

Leadership



Leadership was judged as satisfactory. Leaders were committed to the improvement of the centre and to providing nurturing support of the children. The roles of leaders were defined and all members of the leadership team knew their responsibilities. Staff seemed committed to the work of the centre and ensured they provided appropriate care for children in the centre. Staff performance management procedures required development so that accurate information could be used for ongoing improvement in provision. Leaders provided professional development for staff, including professional development days during the year when the centre was closed. However, development needs required more accurate identification to tailor learning opportunities to the needs of staff. Leaders continued to identify areas for improvement across the early childhood centre and worked towards solutions. For example, to increase opportunities for outdoor play and exploration, leaders had ordered buggies to safely transport children on community walks to the nearby beach and community park. Leaders stated they were in the process of planning Parent Teaching Association meetings for the first time. There was no advisory body in place.



LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Self-evaluation and improvement planning



Self-evaluation and improvement planning were judged as satisfactory. Leaders had developed a self-evaluation document, school improvement plan and a teaching and learning action plan. These documents did not always seamlessly align, but leaders treated them as fluid documents and used them to guide the work of the centre. The views of stakeholders needed to be considered in future development of these documents. Further development was required on performance management procedures to more accurately inform self-evaluation and improvement planning. Leaders monitored the improvement plan, although more accurate success indicators were required. There were ongoing professional development opportunities throughout the year, however, these now needed to be more closely suited to the needs of the staff.

Links with parents and the community



Links with parents and the community were judged as satisfactory. The centre had well-established procedures for communicating with parents which included the Bright Wheel app, parent handbook, and daily interactions with staff at arrival and pick-up. In both surveys and individual interviews most parents agreed that communication was effective and timely. Parents also reported being pleased with the photographs and updates provided throughout the day on the app. Quarterly report cards and parent consultative sessions also kept parents well updated. These reports now needed to be informed by accurate assessment of children's achievements through improved assessment procedures. Leadership should build upon the existing positive relationships with parents to give parents opportunities to participate in the life of the school in planned and purposeful ways. The centre was beginning to create links with the wider community by inviting visitors to the centre, such as the Agriculture Department and police and fire services, and taking offsite trips into some areas of the local community. However, productive links with other early years centres and schools to strengthen teacher practice were limited.



LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Staffing and the learning environment



Staffing and the learning environment were judged as satisfactory. All staff were suitably qualified for their roles within the centre. However, there was scope to develop staff's knowledge, such as understanding how children learn and of the curriculum and staff's skills in assessment procedures. Sufficient staffing levels ensured required ratios were maintained and children were adequately supervised throughout the day. Leadership was addressing the need for better arrangements to ensure the Lead Teacher could be more effective in improving teaching across the centre. The premises were well-maintained and clean, with regular checks carried out to ensure a safe learning environment. Resources across the centre were adequate and accessible. As a result, children were developing age-appropriate skills. Although limited in space, the communal outdoor play area was well designed to promote child development in a play-based environment. It included resources and centres which catered to all key focus areas of the curriculum, including musical instruments made from reused material, painting, water play, a performance stage and play kitchen. Both the outdoor and indoor play areas were underutilised throughout the day and there was scope to maximise these spaces to further promote and extend children's development.



SURVEY RESULTS

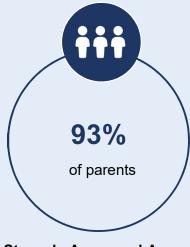
Before the inspection, the views of parents and staff were surveyed. The numbers of participants that completed the survey were as follows:

Parents 32 Staff 9

Parents

Survey: "I am satisfied with the quality of education provided at this school."

Almost all parents responded to the parent survey, with a majority stating their child had been at the centre for less than one year. Most parents felt that their child was making good progress in all aspects of early communication/literacy. However, a majority did state that they were unsure of their child's mathematical and scientific understanding. Almost all parents felt that the centre was effective in developing their child's personal and social skills. Half of the parents were unsure of their children's understanding of the environment. Most parents confirmed that the quality of teaching in the centre was good while almost all felt that their child enjoyed attending the centre. A majority of parents reported that their child was inspired to learn and most felt that their child was given a wide range of age-appropriate play opportunities. All parents agreed that their child was safe and cared for at the early childhood centre. Most parents felt that the centre was well led, communication between the centre and parents was effective and timely and that parent meetings were helpful and held regularly. A majority of parents reported that they received good information about the improvement plans developed for the early childhood centre and almost all parents felt that parental concerns were appropriately responded to. Most parents felt that they received regular, comprehensive and accurate information about their child's achievements and progress. A majority of parents reported that they were effectively involved in the work of the centre but a majority were also unsure as to whether the early childhood centre enjoyed good links with the wider community. Most parents agreed that the early childhood centre had appropriately qualified and suitably skilled staff and had good quality resources to support their child's learning.



Strongly Agree and Agree



SURVEY RESULTS

Staff

Survey: This school provides a good quality of education.

Almost all staff completed the OES online survey. All staff felt that the centre offered a good quality of education. All staff agreed that children's behaviour was good, that the centre had good assessment systems in place and that the centre supported a positive learning environment and provided good opportunities for children's exploration, choice and independent learning. Similarly, all staff indicated that children were taught conflict resolution skills using developmentally appropriate methods. Most staff felt that the centre was a safe and caring environment for all members of the community and that the centre helped children to choose a healthy lifestyle. All staff expressed that children were treated fairly and that the centre dealt effectively with incidents of poor behaviour. Most staff believed that children with special educational needs received good support. All agreed they were aware of the procedures for reporting suspected cases of child abuse under the Children Law (2012) and that the centre had adequate, appropriately qualified and suitably skilled teachers and staff. Most staff agreed that they were involved in the self-evaluation and improvement planning processes of the centre and that the centre had sufficient resources of good quality to support their work. Most staff believed parent teacher meetings were well-attended and helpful and that parents were effectively involved in the work of the centre. Only a majority of staff agreed that the centre enjoyed good links with the wider community and that the centre effectively supported their continuing professional development. All staff felt that the centre was well led.



Strongly Agree and Agree



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The early childhood centre has been asked to prepare an action plan within four weeks of the publication of this inspection report.

This should address;

- the recommendations identified within this report;
- areas identified by the centre as requiring improvement;
- other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the centre.

WHEN WILL THIS SCHOOL BE INSPECTED AGAIN?

As the centre is judged to be providing a satisfactory quality of education, there will be no further inspections until the next cycle.



WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE DO?

The Office of Education Standards is part of the Portfolio of Civil Service within the Cayman Islands Government. Our function is to inspect early childhood care and education centres, public and private schools and report upon standards in all educational institutions in the Cayman Islands.

How to contact us

You can contact us using the following e-mail address.

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Where to read our reports

Our reports are published regularly and are currently available on the Cayman Islands Government website. Please use the following link to read our latest publications.

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