



Cayman Islands Government

*Office of Education Standards
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January 14, 2022

Mr. Delton Pedley
Joanna Clarke Primary School
1659 Shamrock Road
Savannah
Grand Cayman

Dear Mr. Pedley

OES thematic visit to Joanna Clarke Primary School

Following my visit to your school on January 12, 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 in regard to the 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 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:

- The very positive ethos of the school and the willingness of the staff to perform additional duties demonstrated their dedication to the children and community which they serve.
- The Principal and other Senior Leadership Team members demonstrated an exemplary attitude towards ongoing delivery of a quality provision for all students and creating a safe and supportive environment for students, staff and families.
- In line with early international reporting, attainment was lower than expected. However, student data and work scrutiny reveal that all groups of students continue to make progress during the pandemic.
- The school had a current plan of redeploying Teaching Partners to cover for absent teachers. While this plan was effective and proactive in covering teacher absences, it had a negative impact on in-class support and intervention as the Teaching Partners were removed from their subsequent supportive roles.
- Some teachers reported feeling exhausted and felt as though working longer term without additional staffing could prove to be unsustainable.
- There was a detailed risk analysis performed which helped the school to be proactive in developing comprehensive plans to mitigate risks and help ensure continuity of learning during the pandemic.
- The school consistently followed a robust procedure to address absenteeism as the attendance is lower than pre-community transmission averages (presently 83% as opposed to 87% prior to community transmission).
- Health and safety were a priority at the school, with regular and thorough cleaning by the janitorial staff, students being placed in year group "bubbles", sanitisation stations throughout the school which were regularly and appropriately used by staff and students, proper mask wearing by staff and students and appropriate physical distancing.
- Mental health needs of students and families was well supported by the Pastoral and Senior Leadership teams who also had strong links with service providers in the community.
- There was highly effective communication; with information being shared on a variety of platforms in a timely and organised manner with staff and parents. This was particularly borne out in affirmative responses to survey questions relating to communication as well as positive verbal feedback from staff (including contracted staff such as Security Guards).
- Teachers felt supported by the Senior Leadership Team and shared the variety of ways which Senior Leadership assists them. These included the Senior Leadership Team performing duties such as following up on absences and supporting parents with IT difficulties which then alleviated the staff so that they could use that time to work with the students.
- The ICT specialist had devised strategies to keep the students safe during ICT classes in the computer lab. One such strategy being used is casting instructions and support to individual or multiple devices being used in the lab in order to maintain physical distancing.
- The Senior Leadership Team reported that the school was strongly supported by the Senior School Improvement Officer and the Procurement Officer from the Department of Education Services which resulted in more ready access of supplies related to health, safety and facilities as well as assistance in forward planning to mitigate risks to learning and well-being.
- The school had identified a need for greater flexibility to deal with unforeseen issues and to allow for more time to better address teaching demands during the pandemic. As such, a

reduction in staff professional development and meeting times has created a useful additional resource.

- A significant minority of teachers had expressed concerns regarding the apparent lack of consultation with schools regarding the formulation and implementation of some Covid-19 national regulations and policies. One such policy was allowing unvaccinated students who are primary contacts of COVID-19 positive persons to continue attending school with negative LFT tests. A significant minority shared that they felt more vulnerable to COVID-19 transmission. They also felt that the possible increased risk of transmission to teachers was not always considered by policy makers.
- While the school agreed that the laptop initiative was effective in supporting remote learning, the school was not currently able to effectively transmit live classroom lessons to remote learners. Staff and the Senior Leadership Team were exploring ways to achieve this so that remote learners could then engage more effectively in real-time classroom learning experiences.
- The ICT specialist and a member of the Senior Leadership Team supported staff and parents with IT development to effectively support students during remote learning and to plan lessons which are more effective for remote learners.
- The school has maintained their IB certification through the pandemic.
- Pastoral staff and the Senior Leadership Team shared that the free snack and meal initiative had a number of positive effects on the students and their families.
- As students were now separated in year group bubbles, each year group had a specific outdoor area which had multiple uses during the day, including outdoor learning spaces and meal areas. Temporary tents had been erected while the school awaited a delivery of additional shade sails and tables to improve the areas.
- The school no longer had the services of a school nurse as the nurse had been reassigned to Public Health because of the increased demand in the department due to the pandemic (the nurse was an employee of Health Services Authority).
- The school utilised a variety of student performance data when conducting subject gap analysis and developing subsequent plans to fill learning gaps.

‘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:

- **Uploading learning resources on online platforms.** This strategy supports differentiation as staff, parents and students can readily access appropriate learning material during remote learning or when using technology in the classroom.
- **Remote learning** will provide continuity of learning in the event of absences attributed to unavoidable travel, for example.
- **The strategies and techniques for identifying and filling in learning gaps** is proving to be effective and will better support learning in the long term.
- **Lesson planning procedures** where teachers plan for six weeks at a time has been found to take less planning time. Staff, the Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Departments expressed that the new way of producing lesson plans has been more effective.
- **Strong links with a network of providers** in the community to support students and staff. The Pastoral and Senior Leadership Teams have shared that the school has recently

made strong links with a variety of support systems thus strengthening the welfare and education of the students and staff. These support systems include Mental Health providers and agencies and individuals who make donations to support the welfare and education of the school community.

- **Utilising a variety of communication platforms** to share information with the school community. The Senior Leadership Team has found that sharing the same information on a variety of platforms helps to ensure that all persons have access to the information.

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,

Carol Bennett

Carol Bennett

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

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AND ACHIEVING STUDENTS 2**

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