



*Office of Education Standards
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March 25, 2022

Ms. Janice Headley
Lighthouse School
233A Shamrock Road
George Town
Grand Cayman

Dear Ms. Headley,

OES thematic visit to Lighthouse School

Following my visit to your school on March 23, 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 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 and your 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' 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, staff and contracted personnel worked together to create a compassionate and professional ethos throughout the school where the welfare of each child was a priority.
- Sanitisation measures were adhered to throughout the school, with hourly sanitisation of high touch surfaces by the janitorial staff, hand sanitiser dispensers being installed throughout the school for use and increased hand washing.
- The Senior School Improvement Officer shared that many of the measures were in place at the school prior to COVID-19 so the demands of sanitisation and cleaning due to COVID-19 had much less of an impact compared to other schools.
- The school produced videos prior to the students' return to school in September 2021 which helped prepare them for new expectations due to COVID-19, such as bubble groups, proper handwashing procedures and wearing masks. These videos were shared with parents before school started so that they could begin to prepare their children.
- Water fountains were no longer used, with some being replaced with hand washing facilities.
- Students were separated in class bubble groups. This had reportedly lessened behavioural incidents and some staff reported this allowed for more flexibility with arranging their breaks during the day.
- Staff shared that students missed interacting with their peers from other classes while separated. However, Senior Leaders had proactively planned for a "bubble buddy" system to expand the groupings when it was safe to do so.
- The School Counsellor conducted group and individual sessions with students. The Counsellor partnered with specialist staff to support students who were non-verbal or who had other barriers to full access to mental health support. Referrals to other mental health providers were also made when necessary.
- The school provided nurture groups which were facilitated by the Educational Psychologist and School Counsellor. These groups were staggered to ensure class bubbles were kept separate while still providing the support for the students.
- The school utilised Zippy and Apple programmes for social-emotional support. It was reported that students were beginning to express their emotions and advocate more for themselves since the introduction of these programmes.
- A Healthy Lifestyle Policy was created for the school. Staff delivered lessons on healthy lifestyles and specialist staff worked with some students on food exploration as part of the new policy initiative.
- The school received part-time services of a School Nurse. As well as attending to medical needs, the Nurse also conducted sessions for groups of students on healthy lifestyles, for example.
- Integration into the community was restricted during the pandemic, therefore, staff were creative in finding ways for students to gain work experience. The result was school based business enterprises that included a café and car wash. The packaging and distribution of the Lateral Flow Test kits was also completely managed by students as a business enterprise.
- Contracted staff worked together with staff to provide a safe environment for students. Some contracted staff also participated in supporting in-school work experience. For

example, a student was learning gardening and landscaping from the contracted grounds person.

- Remote learning was available to students who were absent due to COVID-19 related issues. Teachers adapted online learning sessions according to the student's needs by, for example, dividing lesson times and preparing sensory and resource packets to support the online aspect of the lessons.
- While Senior Leaders had taken steps to reduce administrative tasks for teachers, staff reported that the paperwork had seemingly increased and had added to their stress level during the pandemic. Senior Leaders explained that planning for remote learning for students has increased the expectations on staff due to the required adaptations.
- Staff reported that learning was impacted by the pandemic for some students. However, they reported that the students still continued to make progress when measured against their Learning Support Plan goals. Some students also made progress as evidenced in the Performance Indicators for Valued Assessment and Targeted Learning (PIVATS).
- Remote learning helped students to remain engaged with their peers during extended absences. When they returned to school, emphasis sometimes had to be placed on independence skills, self-regulation and relationships. However, staff reported that students usually adapted very quickly upon return to the school environment.
- Senior Leaders shared that they had provided well-being initiatives for the staff. These included wellness activities during inset days. Staff, however, shared that they were "beyond exhausted" and, while the attempts of Senior Leaders were appreciated, they never did feel as if they were able to recover from the exhaustion.
- The School Counsellor was available for staff if needed. Information for community service providers was also shared with staff. While Senior Leaders reported that support was arranged for persons who had appointments, staff reported that they felt as if the demands at the school did not allow them time to access mental health services.
- Heads of Departments and Senior Leaders reported that there were competent Assistant Teachers at the school who could cover classes during teacher absences or when teachers had to complete duties outside the classroom.
- Shared telephones were provided for use by staff to contact parents/carers to arrange remote learning when required.
- Electronic devices were provided for each student at the school. However, sufficiently strong cases had not arrived with the devices to ensure they would be protected during use. The school therefore loaned school-owned devices to students as needed until the tablets could be distributed.
- While the staff survey revealed that not all staff had laptops which could effectively operate to facilitate online lessons, the Senior School Improvement Officer and Senior Leaders reported that the ICT Department provided trouble shooting and repair of devices. It was also reported that new laptops were on order for some staff.
- Laptops were provided to Teacher Assistants to help facilitate teaching and learning.
- Internet facilities at the school were constantly being upgraded due to the requirements of bandwidth as students and staff use technological devices throughout the day.
- Masks were worn by all staff. Some students did not wear masks due to sensory or medical issues.

'COVID Keepers'

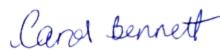
- **Maintain sanitisation stations and sinks** to promote good hygiene.
- The **use of digital devices** to support teaching and learning both in class and remotely. Therapy will also continue online as needed for absent students.

- Students remaining in **class bubbles** which will be extended to a “buddy class” when safely allowed. Staff will also supervise their own class during breaks which allows for continued reinforcement of targets.
- **Building capacity** so that Assistant Teachers can be effective substitutes during teacher absences.
- **Virtual parent and staff meetings.**
- **Visuals and videos to communicate** and maintain health and safety measures to the Special Educational Needs population.
- **Students being divided for morning supervision** based on the student’s needs which allows for staff to better cater to their needs.

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

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