



*Office of Education Standards
133 Elgin Avenue
Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands
Tel: (345) 244-2391
E-mail: adminOES@gov.ky*

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Veronica Juman-Khan
Little Cayman Education Services
Little Cayman,
KY3-2500
CAYMAN ISLANDS

Dear Mrs Veronica Juman-Khan

OES Thematic Visit to Little Cayman School

Following our visit to your school on the 16th March 2022, I write on behalf 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 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 centre 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 one 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, I spoke to you, your teaching assistant, the SSIO and the counsellor.

Context

As we learn to manage community transmission and continue to support the centre family, the OES will undertake thematic visits to 31 government and private 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. We did not find any significant concerns. As such a thematic visit report will be published on our website available to parents and other stakeholders. At the time of the visit only two students were of school age on the island of Little Cayman.

From this visit the inspector noted that:

- The school staff had created a safe and caring environment that allowed the students to continue with their education throughout COVID-19. The local community reported how caring and dedicated the school staff had been during the pandemic.
- The students were well disciplined in the wearing of masks and washing of hands. Students had elderly grandparents at home and were keen to follow the rules.
- The school had hand sanitizer and a regular cleaning regime. As both students were siblings they were in their own bubble.
- The lead teacher stated that the DES provided adequate LFTs and PPE, the staff commented on the strong support from the SSIO during the pandemic.
- The nurse was on hand from the HSA, sharing the same building with the school. Additionally, the nurse had provided support to students regarding the interpretation of the COVID-19 rules and expectations.
- Parents and visitors were prohibited from coming into the school site. Staff and students took regular LFTs with the latter bringing them in to school for checking.
- Students had started to make socially distanced visits to the wider community, for instance students had a police trip regarding the road signs around the island, attending the Parent Teacher Association meeting as the student representative and some participating in parental Spanish lessons.
- The school staff reported that they felt included in a wider context with Cayman Brac schools but the pandemic had negatively impacted upon this, particularly the cancelled annual inter-school sports day. However, they had been included in a joint trip to Central Caribbean Marine Institute with students from Grand Cayman.
- Students' performance was tracked both for those in quarantine/isolation and those attending face to face classes.
- The lead teacher noted that student attendance had dropped during term one specifically regarding quarantine and medical issues with one student being absent for 6 weeks, however this had returned to normal in term two.
- The school ensured that students still took part in the national assessments – PIRA, GAPS and PUMA. Although, staff did not always fully utilise results to inform the current curriculum emphasis.
- During student absence, additional work was taken to student homes and completed work marked and returned. Staff stated they provided lessons via Zoom to keep losses to a minimum.
- Staff did note that there was some learning loss in the lower year due to COVID-19 absence which was reflected in the national assessment trend data. Whilst staff were aware of particular loss there was only a verbal catch-up plan with limited additional targets presented on the day.
- Parents were helpful in reinforcing the mask wearing. The staff were in regular daily contact with parents supplemented by WhatsApp and email.
- The relationship with parents continued to be strong with the school over the pandemic but less so regarding the supporting services. The counsellor was aware of the need to engage parents more, particularly regarding the transition phase for the year 6 student. The SSIO reported the conversation with the parents regarding transition preparation arrangements to Layman Scott High School had continued through, but been hampered by, the pandemic.
- Students did have government laptops but were not used during the visit. The staff also stated that the internet and power was not always reliable on the island.

- Students brought in packed lunch and snacks, had access to a small outside space with outdoor play equipment, a small shaded tent was provided with a seating area and students took regular breaks during the day.
- Staff explained that a specialist counsellor provided social and emotional support every Friday via zoom based on Cayman Brac assigned to primary and high schools. The counsellor reported this was an imperfect system that was further hampered by unreliable connection issues between the two islands and a case load across four others sites.
- The counsellor reported that despite the pandemic challenges both students showed optimistic outlooks with strong positive personalities.
- The school, with the support of the SSIO and Layman E Scott High School, had started the process of transitioning the year 6 student however this had been impacted by the pandemic. As an alternative a number of remote sessions had been arranged with Creek and Spot Bay Primary School, particularly useful was the online music lesson with other off-island students. The school and SSIO were working with parents to allow the student to go off the island for transition visits.

‘COVID Keepers’

The staff shared examples of strategies and innovations that they had implemented either as a direct or indirect consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and which they planned to retain post COVID-19. These included:

- **Remote Learning** with various platforms - Offering students greater interaction opportunities and improve the student learning experience.
- **Health and Safety Protocols** - To continue with the hand washing facilities and expectations to impact any cold and flu future absences.

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,



Nicholas Sherriff
 Chief Inspector | Office of Education Standards
 Portfolio of the Civil Service

133 Elgin Avenue | Government Administration Building | Grand Cayman KY1-9000 | Cayman Islands
 Direct: (345) 244-2391 | Main: (345) 949-7900
 E-mail: AdminOES@gov.ky | Website: <http://www.oes.gov.ky>



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Cayman Islands Government