



Cayman Islands Government

*Office of Education Standards
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February 4, 2022

Mr. Ryan Dale
Red Bay Primary School
271 Shamrock Road
Grand Cayman

Dear Mr. Dale,

OES thematic visit to Red Bay Primary School

Following my visit to your school on February 2, 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 willingness of the staff to perform additional duties demonstrated their dedication to the children and community which they serve.
- Student data and work scrutiny revealed that all groups of students continue to make progress during the pandemic. The Senior Leadership Team reported that the staff focused on closing learning gaps during the previous school year and this has helped the student's progress in this school year.
- The school had a current Leadership and Staffing Coverage Plan with the aim to ensure ongoing operation of the school in the event of staff absences.
- Staff reported feeling exhausted. Few staff expressed that working through to the end of the school year in the manner that is demanded of them at this time could prove to be unsustainable. Only 33% of staff who completed the survey felt that the school had sufficient staff to deliver the curriculum effectively during the pandemic.
- Most teachers have the capacity to facilitate synchronous lessons successfully. The school has secured the correct technology and connectivity to help ensure students could successfully join in core subject lessons while they are in isolation. Unfortunately, teacher's assistants who covered classes required professional development to ensure continuity of this option.
- There was a 90% attendance rate. Students in isolation who attended synchronous lessons were marked as "present" and therefore counted towards their attendance.
- 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.
- Most water fountains were replaced with handwashing sinks. The remaining water fountains have been disabled as students bring water bottles and can refill from the water dispensers in their classes.
- Mental health needs of students were well supported by the School Counsellor and other members of the Pastoral Team as necessary. Senior Leaders and Pastoral staff reported that students have showed strengthened resilience and improved behaviour and conflict resolution which may be contributed to the social-emotional programme provisions which are implemented.
- Social-emotional evaluations were used to more efficiently identify students who required additional social-emotional support so that it could be provided in a timely manner.
- The School Counsellor was utilised by staff who required mental health support. However, the staff did express they were unaware of other mental health providers which they could access.
- Survey results demonstrated that parents were satisfied with communication from the school. Staff reported high parent engagement, and Senior Leaders reported that parents were comfortable speaking with school staff about their needs and concerns. Staff felt that effective communication with parents has helped students' progress.

- In general the staff felt supported by the Principal but some felt anxiety and did not feel as if their suggestions were always listened to.
- The SLT reported getting support from Department of Education Services with a particularly strong relationship with the Procurement Officer ensuring the needs regarding personal protective equipment of the school were met.
- The Acting Principal had made some provisions to help reduce the workload for the staff. For example, an active WhatsApp group is used to share information instead of frequent staff meetings.
- Students eat breakfast under the school's cabana while separated in year group bubbles. The students have their snack and lunch in their classrooms to avoid the large gathering in the canteen. 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 for playtime. These areas lacked shade and varied resources. Students received only 15 minutes outdoors during the visit. Senior Leadership later explained the usual daily outdoor time is 30 minutes.

'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 assignments on online platforms** will continue for homework assignments.
- **Remote learning, including live lessons**, will provide continuity of learning in the event of absences attributed to unavoidable travel, for example.
- **Increased handwashing sinks and hand sanitisation stations** improve the health of the students and staff.

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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