



*Office of Education Standards
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24th March 2022

Mrs. J Wright
Sir John A Cumber Primary School
44 Fountain Road
West Bay

Dear Mrs. Wright

OES thematic visit to Sir John A Cumber Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 23rd March 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 your 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, specialist staff, the senior school inspection officer and members of 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. I 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:

- School leaders and staff exhibited a clear desire to support the safety and wellbeing of all stakeholders across the school.
- Students and staff generally adhered to the school's Covid-19 protocols with regards to mask wearing and social distancing. Hand washing and sanitizing were clearly embedded across the school and students were able to explain the importance of hygiene and protocols during the pandemic.
- The school had increased the number of security staff and cleaners to reflect the additional requirements due to the pandemic. Cleaners moved throughout the school during the day and ensured tables were cleaned after snacks and lunches. The school also has a nurse on site three days a week.
- Senior leaders had ensured all classrooms were fully stocked with hand sanitizers and potable water. Students were encouraged to bring in their own water bottle and refill it from the class water cooler. The school had invested in appropriate Covid-related signage across the school.
- Students were in class-based 'bubbles' throughout the day and when they congregated in groups such as breakfast club or assemblies they were socially distanced appropriately.
- Social distancing was generally adhered to although on occasions such as in smaller classrooms or during larger school gatherings, limited space meant this was more a case of minimising the risk, rather than eradicating it altogether.
- The school had identified the need for additional space to enable full school gatherings to be held, and all stakeholders were aware of this.
- The principal, senior leaders and SSIO demonstrated a consistently high level of awareness and concern for the staff's wellbeing and recognised the extra stresses and workloads that Covid had caused. 'Mental health', as an issue, was openly respected and discussed by all stakeholders.
- The principal had created a management structure within the school based on 'thirds' – reception and key stage 1, lower key stage 2 and upper key stage 2. This had been done in response to Covid-related issues and was reported as being particularly effective with respect to management and support of students and staff.
- As such student arrival and departure was also based upon this system to ensure a staggered and more manageable arrival and departure.
- The same system was further used to enable the school to revert to assemblies in the hall, where students were socially distanced and wore masks throughout.
- In the morning, students were met by staff who sanitized their hands before they moved to either breakfast club or classes.
- The school was able to produce detailed attendance records for all students and had latterly adopted a system that enabled detailed analysis of absence due to Covid. Attendance on the day of the visit was 89%.
- Throughout the pandemic, heads of department had a very clear knowledge and understanding of the students' progress in the core subjects and were able to support this with detailed data analysis. Senior leadership had also undertaken rigorous work scrutiny that supported their findings.
- Heads of department reported learning loss was closely monitored during the pandemic and had been successfully addressed through the use of online engagement communication logs.

- Teachers in years 2 and 6 had offered additional learning sessions on Saturday mornings to ensure appropriate coverage of any learning loss due to Covid with respect to the upcoming SATs tests.
- Heads of department reported that through robust cross-curricular meetings, the school had managed to address all areas of coverage across core subject curricula.
- Heads of department reported they were able to cover all class-based sessions with appropriate staff during the pandemic and staff were not feeling burnt out or over-stretched. This was reinforced during a meeting with teaching staff and by the staff survey.
- Although senior leaders were able to ensure the coverage of all class lessons, the redeployment of some assistant teachers resulted in some SEN intervention sessions not being fulfilled.
- The school had moved towards a position whereby it was able to provide online support to most absent students. Lesson plans were uploaded on a weekly basis with necessary resources, and lessons were covered by appropriate staff. Some assistant teachers were qualified teachers who were able to step up to a full teaching role enabling a relatively seamless continuation of delivery. They were not financially recompensed for this unless undertaken for more than a month.
- During remote learning, senior leaders had identified issues whereby some homes did not have access to reliable internet connection. Senior leaders had facilitated 'MiFi' in some homes to accommodate remote learning.
- During the initial lockdown period of the pandemic, the school had been able to deliver remote learning. Senior leaders, staff and some parents highlighted the issue that there were a significant number of parents that had lacked the literacy, numeracy and IT skills to support their children's learning.
- Senior leaders had developed an initiative, 'Cumber University', that would deliver sessions to parents within the school's community to support adult literacy, numeracy and IT skills. These were to be delivered in the evening at school and the initiative had been met with considerable support from the community.
- There was a very clear protocol for supporting students requiring additional support, be it learning, emotional and social, or language and communication support. However, some intervention classes suffered due to the reallocation of staff to cover positions.
- Senior leaders, through the Educational Psychologist, had undertaken a series of tests with both staff and students to assess their levels of stress and anxiety during the pandemic.
- Student stress and anxiety was assessed through a series of tests including the PASS survey, a specifically designed Kid's Stress Test and a daily 'check-in circle'. The school had also undertaken stress test surveys across the staff body and this had informed wellbeing activities and events.
- Staff had also completed records of concern for students that exhibited stress related behaviours and these were discussed at the monthly School Based Support Team meetings.
- Professional development had focused on two issues, firstly, the upskilling all staff with respect to digital learning, and heads of department noted nearly all staff were now confident and competent in the use of all relevant technology. Secondly PD had focused on many aspects of wellbeing including how to recognise how stress and mental health issues may manifest themselves.
- The school had a social committee who organised regular wellbeing activities and events including monthly meetings such as aerobics sessions, lunches, and 'searches' across the school grounds. One PD day, allocated as a team building event at the Turtle Farm, had been particularly well received by all staff.
- Communication between the school and home comprised of email, websites, Teams, Zoom meetings, Seesaw, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and hard copies of letters.

- All stakeholders reported a much stronger level of communication between school and home with regards to quality and empathy. Staff highlighted successful communication with their parents in class groups via WhatsApp.

‘COVID Keepers’

- **Regular hygiene and hand sanitizing protocols** to support the general health of all stakeholders across the school.
- **Continued use of class-based WhatsApp groups** to maintain the strength and quality of communication with parents.
- **Streamlined drop-off and pick-up systems** to ensure swift and efficient access and egress.
- **The use of learning platforms and apps in the classroom** to support teaching and learning.
- **Parental meetings and conferences to be offered ‘online’**, for ease of access for all stakeholders.
- **The continued management structure of ‘thirds’** - reception and key stage 1, lower key stage 2 and upper key stage 3 to provide coverage and support across the school.
- **Staff wellbeing and incentivised events** to boost morale and contentment amongst 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,



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

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