



*Office of Education Standards
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March 21, 2022

Mrs. Susan Aaron-Abel
West End Primary School
10 East West End Road
Cayman Brac

Dear Mrs. Aaron-Abel,

OES thematic visit to West End Primary School

Following my visit to your school on March 16, 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 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'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 would be published on our website available to parents and carers.

From this visit the inspector noted that:

- Safety precautions such as hand washing and hand sanitisation were emphasised during the pandemic. There was free access to hand sanitiser in all rooms and additional hand washing sinks had been installed. There were sessions held to guide students on proper handwashing techniques.
- There was signage throughout the school reminding the school community of safe protocols such as mask wearing and physical distancing during COVID-19.
- Janitorial staff cleaned high touch surfaces regularly throughout the day. The janitorial company fogged specific areas of the school if there were reported positive cases.
- All students had masks and the school had additional masks if students did not bring one. However, masks were not always worn correctly, and not all staff were vigilant in prompting students to correct this.
- Older students ate outdoors or in classrooms, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 ate meals in the hall. While each class was on a separate table, there was no system in place to physically distance the students at each table. Students, therefore, were interacting with each other in very close proximity without wearing masks during meal times.
- The school used a bubble system. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 were in one bubble and Key Stage 2 in separate class bubbles. However, during outdoor play, Year 3 joined the Key Stage 1 bubble. Years 4, 5 and 6 joined together for outdoor play time. Senior Leaders shared that Public Health had been consulted regarding this arrangement.
- Senior Leaders and Pastoral Staff shared that ongoing sessions on healthy eating were taking place. Stakeholders were also engaged in menu choice for the free meal provision. However, at this time, there was a lot of food wastage and an obvious aversion to vegetables by students, especially in the younger year groups.
- When students were absent from school due to COVID-19 related issues, the school reported this absence to the Procurement Officer in the Department of Education Services. The Officer in turn liaised with relevant persons to have the student's lunch delivered to their home. This Officer was also commended regarding the process of procuring Lateral Flow Tests.
- Duty rosters had been adjusted quite frequently to balance the safety and supervision of the students and the needs of the staff. For example, Support Staff and Senior Leaders supervised students during breakfast and teachers were then able to have preparation time at the start of the school day.
- The school had an "Absent Student Protocol" which was followed to ensure that contact was made with parents of absent students to ascertain the reason for absence and check the student's well-being. Arrangements for access to online learning was also confirmed if the student was well enough to participate.
- Staff had been given information regarding child safeguarding while conducting remote teaching and students were referred to the School Counsellor if there were concerns. The School Counsellor worked with students and their families as required while they were in isolation.
- Sessions with specialist services providers were arranged remotely when in person sessions were not practical due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Pastoral Team reported that parents were often able to participate in the remote sessions when in isolation and this improved engagement and benefitted the students.

- There were guides for staff, parents and students relating to expectations for remote learning which were in line with the Ministry of Education's expectations. The school utilised Microsoft Teams as well as other online platforms such as Seesaw to facilitate online learning.
- The Pastoral Staff worked well together to support the well-being of all students. The Counsellor conducted group and individual sessions regarding social-emotional issues with all year groups as well as weekly sessions with Years 4, 5 and 6. Referrals were also made to community agencies such as the Counselling Centre and the Family Resource Centre if required.
- The Special Education Needs Coordinator and the Educational Psychologist also worked to identify and support students with learning and emotional needs. The Student Stress Reporting Survey was conducted two times per year and this, along with the PASS survey, assisted the school in identifying students who required additional support.
- Learning Support Plans (LSPs) were written and reviewed regularly. These included strategies and support for staff to use for students with additional needs during remote learning. There was a professional development session for teachers regarding the changes to the LSPs, and feedback was used to make adjustments as required.
- Programmes to support social-emotional development such as Zippy and Apple were used in the school, with the Counsellor monitoring the fidelity and effectiveness of the programmes.
- Although just 29% of respondents to the student survey felt that incidents of bullying were handled effectively, the Counsellor had recently started work with the students regarding bullying, and Senior Leaders had worked with groups of students and parents to resolve any issues which they are made aware of.
- It was reported that, based on data, most students have made progress during the pandemic. Staff expressed that more progress was evident during online learning with students who had parents who were also engaged in their learning.
- There were a variety of programmes, such as the Oxford Reading Criterion Standards, which were used in the core subjects to identify gaps in learning and staff worked with the students to cover these areas. They reported that progress has also been observed in the students' attitude to learning.
- While staff generally agreed that there was a vision for the school which could benefit the students and some staff described the Principal as a "good instructional leader", they reported feeling overwhelmed and disheartened by the pace of which change was introduced.
- Staff reported that they felt as though their well-being was the cost of the rapid introduction of initiatives and they therefore were not always able to be fully effective with their students.
- Some staff shared that Senior Leaders were open to their feedback, while others noted that this was not always the case.
- It was reported that the use of online platforms such as Hamilton Trust and Power Maths have helped to reduce teacher planning time and helped to improve teaching and learning.
- The Executive Officer has assumed additional responsibilities to help alleviate pressure on other staff. These responsibilities included managing meal orders, entering the morning attendance into SIMS and covering supervision duties as required.
- Senior Leaders, support staff and specialist staff cover staff absences as required. Senior Leaders reported that staff who were absent due to COVID-19 who were well enough to teach from home were asked to do so.
- However, some staff reported that they were sometimes expected to teach from home even when they were not well enough or when their responsibilities in their home

environment, such as caring for other family members while in isolation, were not conducive to doing so.

‘COVID Keepers’

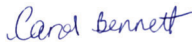
The school shared a wide range of practices that had been put in place either as a direct or indirect consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The practices that the school would look to continue in a post-COVID “normal” situation include:

- **Handwashing and hand sanitising** to help keep students safe and reduce the transmission of germs which cause illnesses such as the common cold.
- **Remote learning** for students who are out of school but well enough to participate in learning activities.
- **Professional develop using IT programmes** that could be integrated into class learning.
- **Online platform for some parent meetings**, such as the PTA business meetings.

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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