

OFFICE OF EDUCATION STANDARDS CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

FEBRUARY 2023





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## INTRODUCTION

## INSPECTIONS OF EARLY YEARS CENTRES IN THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

As determined by Education Act (2016), all educational institutions are inspected regularly by the Office of Education Standards. The purpose of inspection is primarily to support ongoing improvement in each school and also to provide rigorous, impartial and comprehensive information to parents, government officers and Ministers regarding the quality of education both in government and private educational establishments.

Inspections are undertaken at least once every four years and will usually involve a team of inspectors visiting each school for between two and five days. Inspectors use an agreed framework to reach their judgements. In the Cayman Islands, the publication 'Successful Schools and Achieving Students 2' (Cayman Islands Government, October 2020) is the tool which is used by schools to review their own work and by inspectors when they form judgements.

Inspection frameworks are a central feature of different school evaluation systems worldwide. They provide a structure within which inspectors make judgements on the basis of evidence of observed practice. They serve a number of purposes:

- Indicators create a **consistent vocabulary and reference point** for a conversation with schools regarding the major determinants of educational success.
- The highest-level exemplar provides schools with a description of **educational excellence** to which schools can aspire.
- The lower-level exemplar provides schools with a clear understanding of levels of provision that are considered unsatisfactory and must be improved.
- The indicators can be used by schools for **self-evaluation purposes** and can be linked to school improvement through effective development planning.
- The use of a common set of indicators encourages **consistency in judgements** across different inspection teams. Inspectors must base their judgements on the evidence of the practice they actually observe, rather than with reference to set norms or by employing relative ratings or referring to personal or individual preferences.
- The publication of inspection quality indicators enables schools to see inspection as a **transparent** process.



## **INTRODUCTION**

# The inspection framework is organised around judgements using a four-point scale.

The four levels are defined as follows:

Excellent - exceptionally high quality of performance or practice	Excellent
Good - the expected level for every school in the Cayman Islands, both public and private.	Good
<b>Satisfactory -</b> the minimum level of quality required for the Cayman Islands. All key aspects of performance and practice in every school should meet or exceed this level.	Satisfactory
Weak - quality not yet at the level acceptable for schools in the Cayman Islands. Schools will be expected to take urgent measures to improve the quality of any aspect of their performance or practice that is judged at this level.	Weak

### Consistency in quantitative terminology

Inspectors use quantitative terms in reports, as follows:

All	The whole – as used when referring to quantity, extent, or duration	100%
Almost all	90% and more	90% to 99%
Most	Three quarters or more but less than 90%	75% to 89%
Majority	Half or more but less than three quarters	50% to 74%
Significant minority	A quarter or more but less than a half	25% to 49%
Minority	15% or more but less than half	15% to 24%
Few	Up to 15%	0% to 14%



## **SCHOOL INFORMATION**

## **General information**

<b>m</b>	Name of ECCE centre	ABC Kids
•	Address	1866 Shamrock Road, Grand Cayman
C	Telephone number	1 (345) 945-5626
	ECCE centre website	info@abckids.ky
<b>*</b>	Name of manager	Ms. Gail McIntosh
ř <b>A</b> h	Name of owner	Ms. Alecia Chin Yee
<b>:::</b>	Date of this inspection	February 1 - 2, 2023

## **Students**

ŤŤ	Number of students on roll	42
†† <b>†</b>	Age range of the students	6 weeks - 5 Years Old
***	Grades or year groups	N/A
صورا	Number of Caymanian students	30
Ġ	Number of students with special educational needs	7
<u>i</u>	Largest nationality group of students	Caymanians



## **SCHOOL INFORMATION**

Staff	Staff Curriculum				
	Number of teachers	1	1	Main curriculum	Emergent
63	Number of teaching assistants	9	4 	External tests and assessments	N/A
<del>( )</del>	Teacher-student ratio	1 to 4	Ŷ	Accreditation	N/A

## **School inspection overall performance history**

Cycle 1 Inspection	October 2020	Satisfactory
Cycle 2 Inspection	February 2023	Weak



Performance Standards 1 & 2. Helping our students to achieve in key areas of their learning; Promoting our students' personal and social development

Quality Indicator	Early Years Current Judgement	Change in judgement since last inspection
Exploration	Satisfactory	<b>&gt;</b>
Respect	Satisfactory	<b>&gt;</b>
Communication	Satisfactory	<b>&gt;</b>
Well-Being	Satisfactory	•



Performance Standard 3. Ensuring effective teaching to support our students' learning

Quality Indicator	Early Years Current Judgement	Change in judgement since last inspection
3.1 Teaching	Satisfactory	<b>&gt;</b>
3.2 Learning	Satisfactory	•
3.3 Assessment	Weak	•



Performance Standard 4. Offering a curriculum that meets the educational needs of all of our students

Quality Indicator	Early Years Current Judgement	Change in judgement since last inspection
4 Curriculum	Weak	•

## Performance Standard 5. Keeping our students safe and always supported

Quality Indicator	Early Years Current Judgement	Change in judgement since last inspection
5.1 Health and safety	Weak	▼
5.2 Support and guidance	Weak	•



Performance Standard 6. Leading and managing our school and developing our links with the community we serve

Quality Indicator	Early Years Current Judgement	Change in judgement since last inspection
6.1 Leadership	Weak	▼
6.2 Self-evaluation and planning ahead	Weak	•
6.3 Links with parents and the community	Satisfactory	<b>&gt;</b>
6.4 Staffing and the learning environment	Weak	<b>V</b>



## **KEY STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### What the school does well

- Relationships between adults and children are warm and nurturing.
- Healthy eating and the importance of rest are highlighted at the centre.
- Prayer and devotion are a regular part of the children's day.

#### Recommendations

#### Ensure the premises and practices are safe and hygienic

- Remove garbage and debris from the premises
- Create and complete a premises safety assessment and a maintenance log on a regular basis
- Ensure staff are consistently using safe and hygienic practices
- Leadership to create a culture of safety throughout the centre
- Leadership to ensure they are aware of and adhere to all regulatory requirements in the operation of an early childhood centre.

Review the assessment process and practice to ensure accurate assessment of children's achievements and the appropriate use of assessment information to support teaching and learning.

Review the curriculum and ensure teachers are using the curriculum when planning learning experiences and assessment.

Improve the quality of leadership to ensure standards are raised to at least a minimum quality.

Review support and guidance to ensure all children's needs are met.

## What has improved since the last

The provision for creative expression and mathematics exploration.



### **OVERALL PERFORMANCE**

#### ▶ Weak

The overall performance of ABC Kids was judged as weak.

Children's achievement in exploration, respect, communication and well-being was judged as satisfactory. Teaching and learning were also judged as satisfactory. However, assessment practice had declined since the previous inspection and was now judged as weak. The curriculum judgement had also declined, and was now judged as weak. The curriculum rationale was unclear with little evidence of curriculum review. Teachers used both the Emergent Curriculum and the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework. However, there was little evidence that the staff were familiar with the Emergent Curriculum.

Arrangements to ensure children's health and safety were weak, with a number of safety related concerns uncovered during the inspection. The staff had not developed a culture of safety, and there were too many instances of unsafe and unhygienic practices which created risks to children at the centre. Support and guidance were judged as weak. Although there were warm, nurturing relationships between staff and children throughout the centre, arrangements for monitoring progress as well as supporting children with special educational needs was found lacking. There was also no evidence of transition arrangements.

Leadership was judged as weak. Leaders lacked professional competence to ensure a safe environment where every child's needs were catered for. The process for teacher evaluations was poorly planned and executed and did not ensure improved standards. Self-evaluation and school improvement planning were judged as weak. The process was not collaborative and analysis of the performance of the early childhood centre was poorly informed and not an accurate representation of the work of the centre. The centre had a school improvement plan and an action plan, neither of which were aligned with the self-evaluation.

Links with parents and the community was judged as satisfactory, with parents sharing they received updates through the HiMama app. Community helpers visited the centre and children learned about their roles. Staffing and the learning environment were judged as weak. There was an adequate number of staff, but they were not always deployed effectively. Maintenance of the premises was weak and there was not a culture of safety among the staff nor an urgency to regularly complete maintenance checks or tasks to ensure the children were safe.



#### **ACHIEVEMENT**

Quality Indicator	Early Years
Exploration	Satisfactory
Respect	Satisfactory
Communication	Satisfactory
Well-being	Satisfactory

#### **Exploration**



Exploration was judged satisfactory overall. Children had access to an outdoor play area with swings, slides, climbing frames, pedaled toys, balance tubes and a see saw. All classes except the Hummingbirds regularly engaged in a variety of movements outdoors to develop their gross motor skills, while the Hummingbirds explored movement indoors. There were, however, too few opportunities for development of fine motor skills. All classes participated in a range of practical activities that promoted sensory exploration. For example, the Parakeets and Woodpeckers had several sensory bottles to facilitate curiosity and the Falcons washed fruit and vegetables during water play. Children participated in activities which required them to use their senses to smell, taste and touch to learn about fruit and vegetables. These included food tasting, smelling fruits and paint stamping with the fruit. Children would benefit from more opportunities to further promote their early scientific thinking. Children were observed in the older classes developing spatial awareness as they built towers with blocks and fitted puzzle pieces together. Children counted by rote and few were able to select the group with "more" counters. Technological exploration required further development for children to express themselves using a variety of media and tools and investigate the work through the use of resources.



### **ACHIEVEMENT**

#### Respect



Respect was judged as satisfactory. Most children were demonstrating an understanding of the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour and almost all were developing independence skills as they managed their own personal needs. Most children were developing the ability to take turns and share fairly. Through a previously planned theme, children had learned about community helpers and had interacted with staff from the Fire Service and a doctor had visited the centre. Although most children used resources which the staff created from reused material such as plastic water bottles, children were not yet developing practices to help protect the environment nor were they yet understanding the reciprocal relationship between themselves and their environment. There was a small garden at the centre, but children did not tend the garden during the inspection. Children did not demonstrate a familiarity with the Caymanian culture and no evidence was available to show that children actively engaged in cultural observances and celebrations. Children did, however, recognise the National Song and a minority could sing most words. Children participated in prayer and devotion where they sang Bible songs with enthusiasm.

#### Communication



Communication was judged as satisfactory. Most children were developing the skills of conversation. The infants made eye contact when being spoken to and smiled reciprocally with adults. Toddlers observed the speakers in a conversation and demonstrated their awareness of the varying nature of conversations. Older children were developing confidence, fluency and clarity as they engaged in communication. Most children confidently shared their needs and ideas with adults. However, children still required more opportunities to expand their vocabulary and develop mark making and writing skills. Most children demonstrated behaviours that indicated active listening and were able to respond appropriately to questions. They actively participated in listening opportunities such as songs, stories and music. In the Falcons class, children dressing in a chef's uniform and role-played cooking and serving a meal. The Parrots class engaged in pretending to shop for groceries, complete with a cashier and play-money. Children made prints using fruit and vegetables and created a collage using a variety of grains. Children played instruments in rhythm to devotion songs and joined in with songs. Most children demonstrated age appropriate book handling skills and actively participated in shared stories. Children required further development in phonological awareness to better prepare them for learning to read.



## **ACHIEVEMENT**

#### **Well-Being**



Well-Being was judged as satisfactory. Almost all children were learning to make healthy decisions as they learned about nutrition. The younger children were able to indicate their care needs, and most in the toddler class were able to feed themselves as they demonstrated growing independence. Children independently removed their shoes on arrival and departure. Most children benefitted from regular opportunities for daily exercise on various outdoor play equipment. Most were learning to work cooperatively as evidenced in the daily centre rotation activities. For example, children in the Parrots class were able to work together to buy and sell various items from the Farm Stand. Most children were developing a positive sense of self with adult support. The Woodpecker class was able to accurately differentiate between fruits and vegetables and could indicate the difference between healthy and unhealthy foods. Most children were developing the skills of emotional regulation. In the Falcons class, children were taught calming breathing techniques. Children would benefit from more regular opportunities to reflect on their experiences.



## TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Quality Indicator	Early Years
3.1 Teaching	Satisfactory
3.2 Learning	Satisfactory
3.3 Assessment	Weak

#### **Teaching**



Teaching was judged as satisfactory. Most observed lessons were judged as satisfactory. Teachers used resources appropriately to support learning, although more teachers required a deeper understanding of how children learn. Activities in most classes were planned well, but the needs of all children were not always met. Teachers had established appropriate classroom procedures and the learning environments were arranged so that children had choice. These helped to create a relatively calm learning environment in most classrooms. Teachers in the Parakeets class had arranged appealing centres for the children who then interacted with the toys and resources guided by their interests. The teacher in the Hummingbird class talked calmly with the babies, offered nurturing care and provided a selection of age appropriate toys and equipment to help them develop. In the Parrots class, the teacher capitalised on incidental teaching opportunities to promote interest and depth in learning. Most teachers used aides such as picture schedules and picture choice boards. While most teachers provided planned activities to stimulate critical thinking, their questioning was not always adequate to promote enquiry and critical thinking skills.



## TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

#### Learning



Learning was judged as satisfactory. Almost all children demonstrated a positive attitude towards learning and were keen to participate in activities which interested them. Most children listened to their peers and teachers and were able to share and take turns. Although there were a few children who required additional support with self-regulation, most children displayed age appropriate self-regulation skills and social skills with their peers. Children played together outdoors and the youngest children demonstrated parallel play as interacted with the resources in their environment. In the Woodpeckers' class, children worked together, sharing glue and markers to create a pictorial shopping list. In the Seagulls' class, children shared musical instruments during devotion time. Children, however, did not yet engage in many collaborative learning experiences of their own accord and teachers did not ask questions which would promote children's extended thinking.

#### Assessment



Assessment was judged as weak. The staff had recently transitioned to a new progress monitoring checklist which was not yet properly embedded and the leaders did not have a thorough understanding of how to use the checklist properly to monitor children's progress. Teachers made anecdotal records, but these were not yet evaluative in nature and were not always an accurate depiction of children's development. These records often contained "next steps" which were not relevant or were not used to plan learning experiences. Even though the centre used the HiMama app, this was used as a parent communication tool only and not an assessment tool. There were different checklists, baseline assessment, written assessments and report cards created which were not being properly implemented or were not appropriate for use with young children. Information that staff did have regarding children's achievement was then not used to aide in the teaching and learning process to cater to the needs of all children. Children received verbal praise, stickers or stamps as positive feedback when attempting tasks, however, accurate and thorough feedback to help children understand how they learn and their strengths and areas for improvement was not provided.



### **CURRICULUM**

Quality Indicator	Early Years
4 Curriculum	Weak

#### Curriculum



Curriculum was judged as weak. The curriculum was organised around Centre wide themes. The curriculum rationale was unclear with little evidence of curriculum review. Teachers used both the Emergent Curriculum and the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework. However, there was little evidence that the staff were familiar with the Emergent Curriculum and assessment and planning documents had little to no reference to it. There was insufficient continuity of skills and progression which led to unnecessary repetition. For example, all classes were on the same schedule for the letters of the week, regardless of age or ability. There was an emphasis upon the four key focus areas of the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework. However, activities were not always appropriately integrated and learning activities did not consider children's different stages of ability, particularly for the older children. Regular planned activities throughout the year ensured that children were able to learn from the wider community as well as from resource persons who visited. For example, persons such as a doctor, police and fire officers visited to promote children's awareness of community helpers. Children had attended a field trip to the Turtle Farm very recently. Children had recently planted vegetables in containers, but little emphasis on their care was evident. There was no evidence of transition arrangements into the centre, between groups or on to the next phase of education.



### **SAFETY AND SUPPORT**

Quality Indicator	Early Years
5.1 Health and safety	Weak
5.2 Support and guidance	Weak

#### **Health and safety**



Health and Safety was judged as weak. Overall, inspectors found that record-keeping was not sufficiently comprehensive or well organised to help ensure a systematic and reliable approach to health and safety matters. The frequency of emergency drills did not meet requirements and a log was not kept. There was a considerable amount of debris around the outdoors of the premises. Permission slips were in place for field trips, although there was no evidence of completed risk assessments. The centre had pass certificates from the regulatory agencies and were due for updated inspections in the near future. All staff had completed online child protection training. The centre continued to observe some Covid-19 protocols, such as removal of shoes before entering the building. There was a suitable focus upon healthy lifestyles. More attention should be made to the scheduled snack and meal times, as they were timetabled too close together. The daily schedule reflected an appropriate balance of active play and quiet and rest times. Although all classes were within required adult to child ratios, there were incidents were children were left unsupervised. Unsafe and unhygienic practices were detected throughout the setting during the inspection period and the staff had not developed a culture of safety.



## **SAFETY AND SUPPORT**

### Support and guidance



Support and Guidance were judged weak. Staff enjoyed positive relationships with the children and generally showed respect in the way in which they communicated with them. Attendance was recorded on the HiMama app each day, but assessment records to check the children's progress in the four key focus areas was lacking. Children with special educational needs attended ABC Kids and a few benefited from external support from the Department of Education Services' Early Intervention Programme. Inclusion Cayman also supported the centre. There were no individual development plans and no evidence of differentiation in the lesson plans. The Centre had not yet established an effective approach to managing complex behavioural needs and staff required further training and support to best meet the needs of all children, especially those with special needs or higher achievers. Staff had recently started using a new developmental checklist for reporting progress, although staff knowledge and use of this required further development. There was no evidence of transition arrangements, and this area therefore required strengthening. There was a named SENCO at the centre, although this staff member required upskilling and time away from the classroom to adequately perform these additional duties.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Quality Indicator	Early Years
6.1 Leadership	Weak
6.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Weak
6.3 Links with parents and the community	Satisfactory
6.4 Staffing and the learning environment	Weak

#### Leadership



Leadership was judged as weak. Leaders lacked professional competence to ensure a safe environment where every child's needs were catered for. While there was a senior leadership structure at the centre, the quality of senior leadership was weak and had minimal positive impact on the life of the centre. Performance management arrangements were weak. Although leaders did classroom observations, the records of these were largely narrative and did not evaluate the quality of teaching nor offer next steps. The staff also completed a self-evaluation and the leaders completed a checklist regarding the teachers' performance. However, items on the checklist were not relevant enough to reflect good quality teaching, and there was no evidence to support the outcomes. The performance management arrangements therefore did not have a positive impact on standards nor did they assist senior leaders to accurately put support and professional development in place for staff, although professional development plans were made for the upcoming year. Leaders did not have an overview of children's development to guide the work of the centre, and therefore they did not have an accurate understanding of whether the centre was meeting the needs of the children or whether their actions were raising standards at the centre.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

## Self-evaluation and improvement planning



Self-evaluation and improvement planning were judged as weak. Arrangements for self-evaluation were poorly developed and leaders did not have an accurate understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for development. The centre had both a school improvement plan and an action plan, neither of which aligned and did not provide the rigour needed to make improvements at the centre. The plans for the centre lacked appropriate details and were not formed based on accurate evaluation of the centre's performance. While opportunities for children to develop creative expression and aspects of mathematical exploration have improved, there has been no evident progress on the other recommendations from the previous report. The self-evaluation process was not collaborative in nature and was not based on accurate and thorough information. There was the need for greater rigour in the monitoring of teaching and learning as appropriate systems were not in place and leaders lacked professional competence to adequately monitor the work of the school. Centre leaders needed to establish a process of accurate self-review to inform improvement priorities.

#### Links with parents and the community



Links with parents and the community were judged satisfactory. There were established channels in place for communicating with parents in person upon arrival and pick up time and via the HiMama app. Parents reported being pleased with the pictures and information they receive on the app, although few noted it was not regularly updated. Termly reports on children's progress were issued to parents, however there was need for greater accuracy and depth in these reports. There is a Parent Teachers' Association and which recently elected an Executive Committee. The Association does not yet play a part in the forward planning for the centre, however. There was a recent Open Day which seemed well attended by parents. Visitors from the police, fire service and medical profession enriched the curriculum on offer. A few children receive support services from outside clinicians and Inclusion Cayman provided services for the staff. The children had recently participated in a field trip to the Turtle Centre.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

## Staffing and the learning environment



Staffing and the learning environment were judged as weak. While the centre was within the legally required adult to child ratios, staff were not properly deployed according to the needs of the children. There were staff with relevant qualifications, however, staff were not always assigned duties according to their strengths and therefore some staff members had insufficient qualifications or experience in order to undertake their current roles and remits. Resources across the centre were adequate and accessible to the children. However, additional resources and planned opportunities were required for technological exploration. There were health and safety concerns with the facility due to the lack of a culture of safety as well as poor monitoring and maintenance. The outdoor playground contained adequate equipment and resources for older children, but did not always meet the needs of the younger children. Some of the classrooms were thoroughfares for other groups as they entered the building or moved to the bathroom.



## **SURVEY RESULTS**

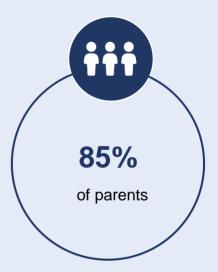
Before the inspection, the views of parents and staff were surveyed. The numbers of participants that completed the survey were as follows:

Parents 13 Staff 9

#### **Parents**

## Survey: "I am satisfied with the quality of education provided at this school."

Thirteen parents responded to the survey. Almost all felt that they child was making good progress in all aspects of early communication/literacy and all felt as through the centre was effective in developing their child's personal and social skills. A majority of parents felt that their child was making good progress in their mathematical and scientific understanding. All parents felt that the centre had developed their child's personal and social skills. A majority of parents felt that their child was developing a good understanding of the environment and how they can help protect it. All parents agreed that they quality of teaching at the centre was good and that their child enjoyed attending the early childhood centre. Most parents felt as though their child was inspired to learn and all felt as thought there was a wide range of age appropriate play opportunities each day. A significant minority agreed that there were regular visits and visitors to the centre which enhanced the learning of their child. All parents felt their child was safe and cared for at the centre and that their child was treated fairly there. A majority of parents reported that the centre provides good support for children with special educational needs. A majority also agreed that the centre was well led and that communication between the centre and parents was effective. A significant minority felt that they received good information about the improvement plans developed for the centre and that parent meetings were helpful and held regularly and a majority felt that the centre responded appropriately to parental concerns. Most parents reported that they received regular, comprehensive and accurate information about their child's achievement. A majority of respondents agreed that the centre had appropriately qualified and suitably skilled staff and that there were good resources to support their child's learning. Most parents felt as though they were satisfied with the quality of education provided at the centre.



**Strongly Agree and Agree** 

-15%

Decrease since the last inspection



## SURVEY RESULTS

### **Staff**

Survey: This school provides a good quality of education.

Nine staff members responded to the survey. A majority of staff felt that behaviour of most children at the centre was good and most felt that the children are taught conflict resolution skills. Most staff responded that there were good assessment systems at the centre, that the centre supports a positive learning environment and that the centre is a safe and caring environment for all members. All staff agreed that they were aware of the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse. All staff agreed that they were involved in the process of self-evaluation and improvement planning. Most felt as though parent teacher meetings were well attended and helpful while a majority felt that parents were effectively involved in the work of the centre. Most staff thought the centre was well led and that there was adequate, appropriately qualified staff at the centre.



**Strongly Agree and Agree** 

-13%

**Decrease** since the last inspection



## **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

The school has been asked to prepare an action plan within four weeks of the publication of this inspection report.

This should address;

- The recommendations identified within this report;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school.

## WHEN WILL THIS SCHOOL BE INSPECTED AGAIN?

As the Inspectors judged the overall performance of the centre to be weak, there will be a Follow-Through Inspection of ABC Kids within a specified time frame from the publication of this report. The school will continue to be inspected on a regular basis until all aspects of performance are judged to be at least satisfactory.



## WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE DO?

The Office of Education Standards is part of the Portfolio of Civil Service within the Cayman Islands Government. Our function is to inspect early childhood care and education centres, public and private schools and report upon standards in all educational institutions in the Cayman Islands.

#### How to contact us

You can contact us using the following e-mail address.

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### Where to read our reports

Our reports are published regularly and are currently available on the Cayman Islands Government website. Please use the following link to read our latest publications.

www.oes.gov.ky







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