EARLY YEARS INSPECTION **REPORT**

OFFICE OF EDUCATION STANDARDS CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

FEBRUARY 2023

MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF CAYMAN

Montesson School

えいたい

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
School Information	6
Key Strengths and Recommendations	8
Helping our students to achieve in key areas of their learning; Promoting our students' personal and social development Ensuring effective teaching to support our students' learning Offering a curriculum that meets the educational needs of all of our students Keeping our students safe and always supported Leading and managing our school and developing our links with the community we serve Overall Evaluation	8 8 9 10 10 11 11
Achievement	14
Teaching, Learning and Assessment	17
Curriculum	18
Safety and Support	19
Leadership and Management	22
Survey Results	24
Next Steps	27
About the Office of Education Standards	28



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
Satisfactory - 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%



General information

	Name of ECCE centre	Montessori School of Cayman
•	Address	519 South Church Street, George Town, Cayman Islands
C	Telephone number	1 (345) 949-0202
	ECCE centre website	www.caymanmontessori.com
¥ @ h 	Name of manager	Ms. Briana Bergstrom Currie
¥ 0 h 	Name of owner	Ms. Briana Bergstrom Currie
	Date of this inspection	February 27 - 28, 2023

Students

ŤŤ	Number of students on roll	47
****	Age range of the students	18 months to 5 years old
222	Grades or year groups	Toddler/Casa (EYFS)
1.000	Number of Caymanian students	24
بغ	Number of students with special educational needs	5
I	Largest nationality group of students	Caymanian (51%)



SCHOOL INFORMATION

- -

Staff		
	Number of teachers	3
63	Number of teaching assistants	5
ÂŶ Ŷ	Teacher-student ratio	Toddler 6:1, Casa 10:1
	Teacher turnover	66%

Curriculum

1	Main curriculum	Montessori (CIEYCF)
	External tests and assessments	N/A
Ŷ	Accreditation	N/A

School inspection overall performance history

Cycle 1 Inspection	November 2019	Good
Cycle 2 Inspection	February 2023	Good



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	Good	
Respect	Good	
Communication	Excellent	
Well-Being	Excellent	



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	Good	
3.2 Learning	Good	
3.3 Assessment	Satisfactory	▼



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	Satisfactory	▼

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	Good	
5.2 Support and guidance	Good	



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	Good	
6.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Satisfactory	▼
6.3 Links with parents and the community	Excellent	
6.4 Staffing and the learning environment	Good	



KEY STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What the school does well

- The centre had productive links with parents that supported the maintenance and raising of standards.
- The centre had quality provision that supported the areas of development in communication especially in phonological awareness.
- Highly effective relationships which positively impacted children's social and emotional well-being.
- Teacher classroom expectations were high that ensured children made good progress and a growing independence.

Recommendations

To improve teaching:

- Strengthen the quality of teaching by including greater challenge through opportunity and questioning within the programme particularly for the higher achieving children.
- Use assessment data to help children select tasks that match their ability so that next steps in learning can be identified and explored.

To improve curriculum:

• Complete the mapping of Montessori to the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework providing a gap analysis that ensures full coverage of all key focus areas.

To improve Assessment:

• Create a centre wide assessment policy that standardises the approach to monitoring, and analysis, of child outcomes to support progress and development for all children.

What has improved since the last inspection?

- Respect
- Communication
- Links with Parents and the community



► Good

Montessori School of Cayman was established in 1988. It was the first pre-school in the Cayman Islands to offer the Montessori curriculum. The school changed ownership in 2016.

Children's achievement in Exploration and Respect were judged good and although within this group, 'science' and 'religion' were less good there had been improvements with 'respect for others' and 'culture'. Achievement in Communication and Well-Being were judged as excellent and within this group literacy was a significant improvement.

Teaching and learning were also judged as good resulting in good outcomes for children. However, assessment lacked a systemic approach and practice had declined since the previous inspection and was now judged as satisfactory. The curriculum judgement had also declined due to incomplete mapping and alignment, and was now judged as satisfactory.

Arrangements to ensure children were safe and cared for were judged as good although it was noted that the Casa class was at the maximum child numbers for the space available. Record keeping was extensive and regular, and all staff were trained in child safeguarding. Healthy lifestyles were promoted throughout the centre. Children had choice regarding organic snacks, regular and varied physical activities and child well-being. Staff had a great rapport with children and there were warm and nurturing relationships.

Leadership was judged good and resulted in good outcomes for children. The Principal had recently moved fully out of the classroom but was regularly pulled back to cover staff. The administration of the centre was rigorous and orderly. The Principal gathered a range of internal information to support self-assessment, although school improvement plans and self-evaluation were less aligned. Links with parents and the community had improved since the previous inspection report and were now judged excellent. The centre felt very much part of the community and parents valued the work of the staff. Parents were actively involved in the raising of standards and although no formal PTA had been formed yet, parents were invited into the school for 'parent nights' to ensure that the Montessori system was fully understood and parents were aware of how that could support progress in learning. Centre resources were of a high quality however the outdoor space could be better utilised to ensure greater and more frequent progress that supported a wider variety of learning opportunities.



ACHIEVEMENT

Quality Indicator	Early Years
Exploration	Good
Respect	Good
Communication	Excellent
Well-being	Excellent

Exploration



Exploration was judged as good. Almost all children were able to comprehensively develop ever increasing control over their bodies for both fine and gross motor skills. The outdoor environment was well utilised to develop running, jumping, climbing pushing and pulling. Children had vehicles to ride on and carts to load and push, and a number of structures to climb on and jump from. Fine motor skill was developed through a range of manipulatives like plastic cutting tools, pencils and brushes. Children were beginning to regulate behaviour such as wearing hats in the sun and recognising when their friends were unhappy. They responded well to sounds and teacher instructions and were encouraged to use their words rather than actions when solving problems. They listened to music and followed with routine actions. Children used colour when creating pictures and could describe what they saw in the volcano experiment. Children reacted to the sounds of the aircraft over head and the cruise ship buses passing by the centre. Children could identify changes in temperature using terms like hot and cold, or wet and dry. They could count the days in the month/week, do basic addition and compare items using terms like more and less and big and small. Some children used playdough to make birthday cakes and count the number of candles. Children were able to explore a range of media from paints to plasticine and water. Children could use zips, buckles, Velcro, plastic cutting tools, and a variety of construction and cooking equipment. Although, magnifiers and binoculars were not a feature of activity during inspection.



ACHIEVEMENT



Respect was judged as good. Almost all children had developed a positive sense of self. They demonstrated an understanding of limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour and were able to manage their own personal needs while developing independence. The youngest toddlers fed themselves independently and changed their own shoes throughout the day. All children were able to interact with their peers in varying degrees. Toddlers played side by side and sought out special companions to complete tasks with. Children in the Casa class were able to share and take turns with resources and equipment and knew about community helpers as this was a theme in the curriculum. Children were responsible for their immediate environment, ensuring that it was clean and orderly. They cared for the plants in the grow boxes and participated in caring for the Cayman environment when completing activities such as beach cleanups. They also learned about a variety of environments and cultures as they studied the continents. Children were knowledgeable of the Caymanian culture, recognised the flag, sang the National Song with familiarity and reverence, participated in cultural experiences and visited important sites such as the Turtle Centre and the Parrot Sanctuary. Development is required to better incorporate respect for religion so that children could develop an awareness and respect for their own and other religions.

Communication

Respect



Communication was judged as excellent. Children were able to converse with adults and peers with confidence and clarity. Older children demonstrated the ability to form letters while younger children explored mark making opportunities, however more frequent mark making opportunities in a variety of contexts was required. All children demonstrated behaviours that indicated active listening and were able to respond appropriately in turn. They painted on easels and used water colours as part of their work cycles and participated in music and dance where they moved their bodies in self-expression. Toddlers painted a paper plate with primary colours to make representations of hot air balloons during their transportation theme. There was need, however, to further develop opportunities for creative expression. All children actively participated in shared stories throughout their day. Children developed phonological awareness skills, with the Casa class learning letter sounds, blending and a few children learning to read. Children in the Casa class used wooden letters to make words. Even the youngest toddlers demonstrated proper development of book handling skills.



ACHIEVEMENT

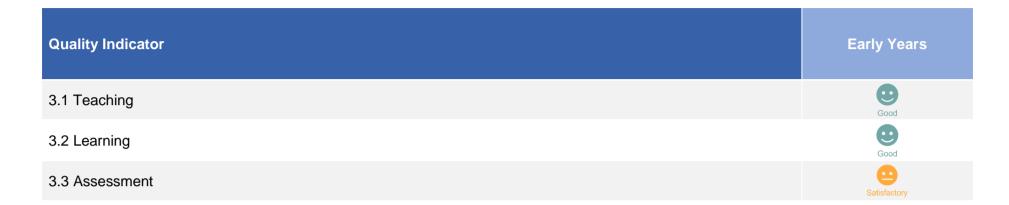
Well-Being



Well-Being was judged as excellent. Children made healthy choices, including meals, rest and engagement in physical activity. All children demonstrated a growing independence in their own personal care. Throughout the centre, children displayed a growing capacity to self-regulate as they accepted challenges and coped with frustrations. Almost all children managed their own behaviour extremely well and were able to accept guidance and affirmation from the adults who cared for them. There was a culture of compassion across the centre and children worked harmoniously together. Children in the Casa class formed a group to play a chasing game outside, organising the participants and setting guidelines for the game. In the Toddler class, a group of children worked at a table together with ink stamping and colouring and communicated with each other about their creations. Almost all children moved carefully around the classroom spaces with regard for the personal space of others, ensuring safety and consideration for their peers. While children reflected on their work and learning experiences during work cycles the children now needed to reflect on other experiences including their interactions with others and their play activities outdoors, for example.



TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT



Teaching



Teaching was judged as good. More than half the observed lessons were judged good or better. Teachers demonstrated good knowledge of the Montessori method and understood how children developed. They created positive learning environments where children were settled and actively engaged in learning because classroom management techniques and procedures were well established. Work cycles were carefully planned with good balance and choice for learners. However, more care and intent were required when planning activities in the outdoor environment to ensure that there were purposeful learning opportunities in all four key focus areas. There was a good range of opportunities planned throughout the day for children to learn independently, in small groups or in a whole class setting. Adults' questioning did not promote higher order and critical thinking skills in children, but their interactions with children did promote active learning. There is need for more comprehensive progress monitoring to ensure the needs of all learners, especially the higher achievers, are being met.



TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Learning



Learning was judged as good. Children were active learners; choosing activities to complete during the work cycles and seeking out peers to collaborate with. Almost all children demonstrated positive attitudes towards learning and seemed keen to interact with learning activities. Almost all children were able to engage for sustained periods of time without adult support. Children were able to relate learning experiences to real life situations. For example, during a water play activity where children identified sea creatures, one child shared his experience of snorkeling with his family and seeing turtles. Another talked about seeing a hammerhead shark from the shore. The group of children could identify the sea animals that lived in Cayman. There was need for development for learners to make more real-life links in numeracy, bringing the skills they gained in the work cycles into their play and problem solving. Higher order thinking is still an emergent feature of learning at the centre. Children now needed to further develop skills to become independent learners where they seek out information sources for themselves and think deeply to solve problems.

Assessment



Assessment was judged as satisfactory. The centre did not have a centralised assessment policy thus an inconsistent range of assessment was observed. Summative assessment was mainly about what children had learned and required further, more detailed analysis of progress. As a result, assessment information did not often impact the adaptation of learning to meet the needs of all children as they progressed through the year. Verbal feedback was regularly part of the learning process however, questioning that was deep and challenging was less evident during the inspection. Consequently, the more able children were not always challenged to reach their full potential. The vertical year grouping did support peer modelling and comparison that promoted progress during the work cycles and circle time. Teachers did know the strengths and areas for development in their children through observation and the recording of achievement using transparent classroom. Annual reports were more detailed with evaluative scaled judgements and teacher summative comments that were well received by parents. The centre should consider the use of the outdoor setting as a rich source of assessment opportunities for children to display their achievements and development.



CURRICULUM

Quality Indicator

4 Curriculum



Curriculum



Curriculum was judged as satisfactory. The Montessori curriculum had a sound rationale and was balanced and showed a planned progression as children moved through the Montessori activities. There was an appropriate balance between adult led and child-initiated activities. Because mapping of the Montessori curriculum to the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework (CIEYFC) was not yet completed and not all new staff were knowledgeable in the expectations of the CIEYCF, there were some learning strands and learning outcomes which required further development. While the curriculum was discussed and reviewed during staff meetings on a regular basis, a formal review process of the curriculum was required based on accurate information about children's achievement and as a part of the centre's self-evaluation process. Opportunities making up the curriculum did not meet the needs of all learners, especially the higher achievers. There was a need to improve curriculum planning to promote a more cohesive approach to delivering learning experiences in the outdoor environment. Transition between the Toddler Class and the Casa Class was well managed for each child. Additional curriculum offerings such as Yoga and dance enhanced children's learning. Field trips and visitors to the centre gave the children valuable opportunities to learn within their community.



Quality Indicator

5.1 Health and safety

5.2 Support and guidance



Good

Early Years

Health and safety



Health and safety were judged as good. The Principal had created extensive policies and procedures to ensure children and staff were safe and well cared for at the centre. Staff were well aware of their role in creating the safety culture of the centre through the staff handbook. In practice entry and exit was well managed with registration monitored via transparent classroom. Each class has a specific centre mobile phone allowing for direct contact should the need arise. Approvals and certificates from the required regulatory bodies were up to date. All staff were aware of the safeguarding arrangements and had completed the mandatory child protection training as well as holding a current CPR certificate. Frequent cleanliness and environmental checks ensured the premises were fit for purpose. Healthy lifestyles were systematically promoted through the organic snacks, centre resources and the range of healthy choices offered to children. Almost all children preferred water with their meals and throughout the day particularly when playing outside. Outdoor spaces had lots of shade and sun hats were a centre requirement for playing outside. Physical activity was a broad ranging and regular feature of the centre allowing for the comprehensive development of gross and fine motor skills in almost all children. The centre should update the arrangements for the offsite trips to a more formal risk assessed process.



Support and guidance



Support and guidance were judged as good. Good relationships between children and adults prevailed across the centre, with respect and compassion being tenets. Adults knew the children well and took time to learn about their families and special events such as the birth of new siblings. These features helped to create a positive learning environment for children. The quality of record keeping for children's achievement and the analysis of the information required further improvement in order to ensure the needs of all learners and groups within the centre were catered to. Parents received formal reports on achievement two times per year. Transition arrangements were well developed for individual children moving between Toddler and Casa classes. Transitions on to the next phase of education were supported by the Casa staff with information sharing with the receiving school. The centre had a qualified and experienced Special Education Needs Coordinator who ensured documentation was thorough and effective. Individual Education Plans and Support Plans were reviewed regularly and children's progress was monitored against the goals in these documents. The centre had a productive relationship with external specialist service providers. However, more care needed to be taken to ensure that centre IEPS were aligned with those of the specialist service providers.



LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

Leadership



Leadership was judged as good. Senior leaders had a clear sense of direction and communicated clearly the vision of the centre to be 'Authentic Montessori in every aspect of the centre.' The Principal had been successful in improving some aspects of the work of the centre although the pandemic and staff changes had impacted the pace of change. The Principal had recently fully moved out of the classroom to take on the sole leadership role of centre Principal. The Principal had a solid understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the centre and spends time in classes to remain aware of staff performance and child outcomes. Leadership was a distributed model and staff knew their role and responsibilities although they were less accountable for the outcomes of their children. Leaders did have the capacity to continue to improve the centre and staff were proactive in solving problems. The centre lacks external accountability with no Governing body. Although, the inception of a PTA had been explored the requisite parental support had not been garnered.



LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Self-evaluation and improvement planning



Self-evaluation and improvement planning were judged satisfactory. The centre gathered a wide range of information including internal surveys, feedback sessions, child outcomes, staff appraisal and teacher observations and therefore senior leaders knew their centre well. However, the self-evaluation required greater alignment to the quantitative terms in the framework to improve the accuracy of some judgements. In general, planning is detailed but does not link closely enough to the centre's self-assessment findings. Consequently, the centre improvement plan lacked the necessary targets and measures to support improvement. As such some of the items from the previous inspection were yet to be fully resolved such as assessment and governance although the Principal has started to engage with parents here. Satisfactory progress has been made with the teaching observation system that is now embedded into the leadership processes of the centre although, this requires further alignment to the inspection framework to be fully effective

Links with parents and the community



Links with parents and the wider community were judged excellent. In both the survey responses and in person, parents were highly supportive of the centre and specifically the leadership. Parents commented on the highly effective communication from teachers that informed and encouraged productive engagement. Many parents remarked upon the continued progress of their children and how the centre had involved them in the learning process thus helping to raise standards. Parents were actively engaged in a range of volunteer activities from supporting trips, community helpers and 'Parent nights' designed to support involvement in the learning. Parents commented on the quality of the bi-annual reports that identify individual child progress which includes academic and developmental milestones, although target setting and next steps were a developing feature of assessment in practice. The centre and parents both referred to being 'part of the neighbourhood' and valued the relationship with the wider community. A number of activities involving the uniformed services, CIS students reading to younger children, walking around the local area and parents volunteering for the Christmas Concert evidence the centres productive relationship with the wider community. The centre would benefit from a more formal parental body to collectively support the work of the centre and act as a critical friend to senior leadership.



LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Staffing and the learning environment



Staffing and the learning environment were judged good. Teaching staff were well qualified in the Montessori system and guided by the Principal who was a licenced teacher. Staff were effectively deployed across the setting although retention levels were lower than average. Classrooms were well appointed however the child/space ratio in the Casa class had reached the maximum allowed. The classrooms were of a high quality filled with a wide range of Montessori resources. The centre had a range of outdoor environments such as the deck which acted as a lunch space, animal hutches for rabbits and a guinea pig, raised beds, waterplay area and a range of outdoor play structures and equipment. A new paved area compliments the soft sand allowing children to ride their wheeled vehicles more easily. The outdoor spaces are of a good quality however, they are not always used effectively to enhance the learning outside of the motor skill development. The centre would benefit from extending the learning and assessment into the outdoor spaces affording greater opportunities for teachers and children to target progress.

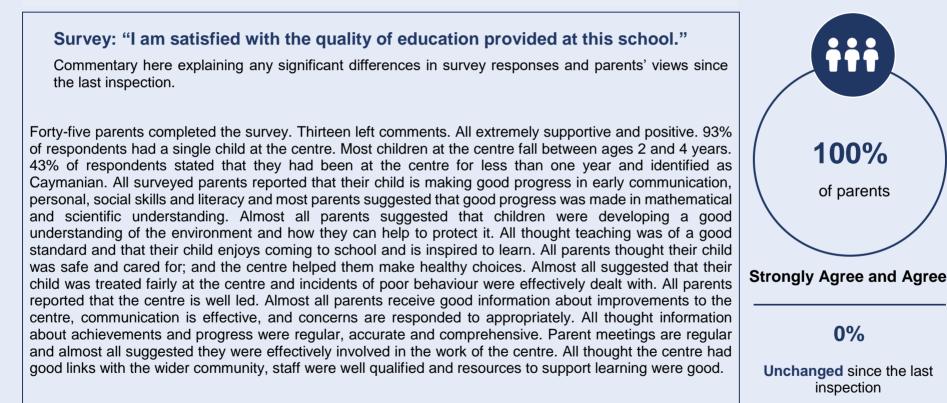


SURVEY RESULTS

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

Parents	45	Staff	7
---------	----	-------	---

Parents





SURVEY RESULTS

Staff

Survey: This school provides a good quality of education.

Commentary here explaining any significant differences in survey responses and parents' views since the last inspection.

Seven staff members responded to the survey. The majority of respondents had worked at the centre for one year or less. All respondents felt that the behaviour of most children at the centre was good and that the children were taught conflict resolution skills using developmentally appropriate methods. All staff respondents agreed that there were good assessment systems in the centre and that the centre supports a positive learning environment and provides good opportunities for children's exploration, choice and independent learning. They all felt that the centre was a safe and caring environment for all members. All respondents felt that the children were treated fairly at the centre and that incidents of poor behaviour were dealt with effectively. All staff respondents also felt that the centre provided good support to children with special educational needs. All agreed that the centre was well led and that their professional development was effectively supported. Parent teacher meetings were well attended and helpful and parents were involved in the self-evaluation and improvement planning process. All staff felt that the centre enjoyed good links with the wider community and that there was adequate, appropriately qualified and suitably skilled teachers and staff. All respondents shared that there were sufficient resources of good quality to support their work with the children and that the centre provides a good quality of education.



Unchanged 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 centre is judged to be providing a **good** quality of education, there will be no further inspections until the next cycle which commences in January 2024.



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.

adminOES@gov.ky

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







www.oes.gov.ky | adminOES@gov.ky

Office of Education Standards Government Administration Building 133, Elgin Ave, George Town Grand Cayman