

INSPECTION REPORT

OFFICE OF EDUCATION STANDARDS
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

OCTOBER 2023



Montessori By The Sea

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
School Information	5
Key Strengths and Recommendations	7
Performance Standard 1. Helping our students to achieve in key areas of their learning	8
Performance Standard 2. Promoting our students' personal and social development	9
Performance Standard 3. Ensuring effective teaching to support our students' learning	9
Performance Standard 4. Offering a curriculum that meets the educational needs of all of our students	10
Performance Standard 5. Keeping our students safe and always supported	10
Performance Standard 6. Leading and managing our school and developing our links with the community we serve	11
Overall Evaluation	12
Achievement	14
Students' attainment in relation to international standards	14
Students' progress in key subjects	16
Students' Personal and Social Development	18
Teaching, Learning and Assessment	20
Curriculum	22
Safety and Support	23
Leadership and Management	25
Survey Results	28
Next Steps	31
About the Office of Education Standards	32



INTRODUCTION

INSPECTIONS OF SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND EARLY YEARS CENTRES IN THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

As determined by the 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%

INTRODUCTION

General information



School name Montessori By The Sea



Address 277 Prospect Point Road,
Grand Cayman



Telephone number (345) 947-0684



Website www.mbts.ky



Name of the principal Ms. Deborah Thompson and
Mrs. Kourtni Jackson



Date of this inspection 30 October - 01 November, 2023



Date of the last inspection 11 May - 13 May, 2021

Students



Number of students on roll 131



Age range of the students 21 months - 12 years



Grades or year groups Toddler - Grade 6



Number of Caymanian students 72



Number of students with special educational needs 16



Largest nationality group of students Caymanian



SCHOOL INFORMATION

Staff



Number of teachers 25



Number of teaching assistants 2



Teacher-student ratio 1:5 (Toddler); 1:10 (Casa); 1:15 (Elementary)



Teacher turnover 25 per cent

Curriculum



Main curriculum

Montessori, referenced with the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework and Cayman Islands Primary National Curriculum, English Early Years Curriculum and English National Curriculum



External tests and assessments

Renaissance UK Star Math and Star Reading (Grades 2-6); GL Assessments UK Key Stage PTE, PTM (Grades 5-6) and PTS (Grade 6)

School inspection overall performance history

Cycle 1 Inspection

March 2019



Good

Cycle 2 Inspection

May 2021



Excellent

Cycle 3 Inspection

October 2023



Excellent

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Montessori By The Sea is situated on Prospect Point Road, Prospect, Cayman Islands. The school is a private school established in 2000 by the two current Principals who are also owners of the school. The school is based in two buildings, with older students in classrooms adjacent to the sea. The Principals are proactive within their own community and seek and receive the views of parents. They also enjoy productive links with other local schools and the Montessori community.



















The vision for the school is 'students who are passionate about life and discovery'. The school follows a progressive Montessori child-centred curriculum based on the principles of learning central to the Montessori philosophy. Links are made to both the Cayman Islands and English Early Years Curriculums and National Curriculums. International reading and mathematics tests are used to record individual students' attainment. The curriculum reflects the values of the local and wider global community with skills and understanding relating to the world of work, global citizenship and conflict resolution.

The school is organised into mixed grade classes including Toddler, which starts at 21 months, Casa from 3 to 6 years, Lower Elementary from 6 to 9 years and Upper Elementary from 9 to 12 years of age. Students work with peers of their own age as well as those of other ages. The number of students in each class is small, especially in the older classes. Each class is taught by a team of two or three teachers plus subject teachers for art, physical education, information and communication technology (ICT), Spanish, learning support and music.

The school was evaluated as excellent at its last inspection and has continued to improve and grow.







PERFORMANCE STANDARD

Performance Standard 1. Helping our students to achieve in **key areas of their learning**



Promoting our students' personal and social development.	Toddler	Change in judgement since last inspection	Casa	Change in judgement since last inspection	Elementary	Change in judgement since last inspection
1.1 Students' attainment in English	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶
1.1 Students' progress in English	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶
1.1 Students' attainment in mathematics	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶
1.2 Students' progress in mathematics	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶
1.2 Students' attainment in science	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶
1.2 Students' progress in science	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶

PERFORMANCE STANDARD

Performance Standard 2. Promoting our students' **personal and social development**




Promoting our students' personal and social development.	Toddler	Change in judgement since last inspection	Casa	Change in judgement since last inspection	Elementary	Change in judgement since last inspection
2.1 Positive behaviour for good learning	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶
2.2 Students' civic and environmental understanding	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶

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







Quality Indicator	Toddler	Change in judgement since last inspection	Casa	Change in judgement since last inspection	Elementary	Change in judgement since last inspection
3.1 Teaching	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶
3.2 Learning	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶
3.3 Assessment	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶

PERFORMANCE STANDARD

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





Quality Indicator	Toddler	Change in judgement since last inspection	Casa	Change in judgement since last inspection	Elementary	Change in judgement since last inspection
4 Curriculum	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶

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

Quality Indicator	Toddler	Change in judgement since last inspection	Casa	Change in judgement since last inspection	Elementary	Change in judgement since last inspection
5.1 Health and safety	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶
5.2 Support and guidance	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶	 Excellent	▶

PERFORMANCE STANDARD

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

Leading and managing our school and developing our links with the community we serve	School Wide
6.1 Leadership	 Excellent
6.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning	 Good
6.3 Links with parents and the community	 Excellent
6.4 Staffing and the learning environment	 Excellent

KEY STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What the school does well

- Leaders had developed a shared vision and ethos which was underpinned by the school's progressive Montessori approach. Students and staff thrived within this respectful and purposeful community.
- Leaders had successfully sustained the highest outcomes for almost all of the inspection indicators since the previous inspection.
- Links with parents and external groups were extremely strong and enriched both those in the school and wider community.
- Progress in English, mathematics, science and other subjects was excellent. By the end of Grade 6 most students were working well above curriculum expectations.
- Most students with special educational needs made excellent progress due to a strong emphasis on practical learning, highly effective support and empowering relationships.
- Behaviour was excellent. Students developed very high levels of independence, resilience and perseverance. Children and students learned to take care of themselves, each other and their environment.
- Teamwork was very strong. Morale was high. Staff worked together extremely well, especially in their staff teams. Students collaborated closely in discussions and project work.

Recommendations

- Increase the rigour of the self-evaluation and improvement planning process by involving staff and external partners more strategically.
- Continue to embed the school's approach to teaching cursive writing consistently across all classes so that the presentation of students' work reflects their excellent levels of attainment and progress.

What has improved since the last inspection?

- The Principals have increased leadership capacity by appointing an experienced teacher to senior leadership with responsibility for curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment. This has had a positive impact on sustaining the quality of teaching.
- The school timetables have been amended to integrate specialist teaching more coherently within the curriculum.
- Leaders have increased provision to support positive mental health and well-being.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

► Excellent

Montessori By The Sea is an excellent school. This judgement has been sustained from the previous inspection.

Students' learning was rooted in a progressive Montessori pedagogy which promoted independence, critical thinking and perseverance. Teachers planned and prepared lessons extremely well, taking curriculum requirements and students' individual learning needs and interests into account. Students took responsibility for their own learning. Classrooms were quiet, purposeful hubs where students learnt new concepts, knowledge and information and devised plans to deepen their learning. They used a wealth of practical resources and worked on their own or in collaboration with others.










Independent learning was evident throughout the school. Toddlers learned to choose, use and then put away a wide range of resources. Most older students were so motivated to learn that they often chose to continue with projects rather than have a break. Students made excellent progress in English, mathematics and science because teachers had successfully facilitated highly conducive learning environments and strong independent learning. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were given additional support wherever necessary. The quality of teaching was excellent and the broad, engaging and experiential curriculum was enriched by strong links with the community. Parents were extremely positive about the school. They were well informed and involved, which supported them to extend students' learning outside school hours.

Systems to support students' safety were robust and embedded. Buildings and resources were highly suitable and conducive to learning. Leadership was excellent. The two Principals were highly committed and promoted the school's fundamental ethos and vision successfully through their purposeful leadership. They knew the school well and were successfully driving and sustaining improvements. They had increased the capacity of senior leadership by appointing an experienced and longstanding teacher at the school to a new role leading the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment. The process of self-evaluation and improvement planning was not fully streamlined or shared with key stakeholders such as staff. This meant that despite considerable strengths, leaders did not always see or address all the very fine details for further development.

Students attained excellent standards in their learning and behaviour. They were proud of the school and of their country and were becoming able, respectful, responsible citizens of both. Leaders had addressed the recommendation from the previous inspection. An agreed approach for cursive writing had started to improve students' presentation of work.

ACHIEVEMENT

Students' attainment in relation to international standards

Students' attainment in relation to international standards	Toddler	Casa	Elementary
1.1 Attainment in English	 Excellent	 Excellent	 Excellent
1.1 Attainment in mathematics	 Excellent	 Excellent	 Excellent
1.1 Attainment in science	 Excellent	 Excellent	 Excellent

English



Attainment in English was excellent across all three phases. Most Grade 6 students attained above international standards in external assessments. Students, including those who were most able, demonstrated particular strengths in retrieval, non-narrative comprehension and non-narrative reading. Although standardised test results varied for other year groups, classwork and lesson observations indicated that most students were working above expectations for their age. Students with special educational needs reached levels higher than expected, considering their starting points. In Upper Elementary, students accurately used a variety of sentence structures and techniques. In Lower Elementary, most students demonstrated an excellent grasp of key elements in story writing, including settings, conflict and creating suspense. Children in Casa confidently used their secure knowledge of phonics to build words and sentences with letter tiles and cursive moveable alphabet, before going on to read these aloud and write them in their books. Most children in Toddlers spoke in words and sentences using a wide range of vocabulary. The majority had very good book handling skills and carefully explored a range of books. They listened attentively to stories and showed the precise finger control needed for writing. Not all students followed the school's policy for cursive writing as advocated within the National Curriculum.

ACHIEVEMENT

Students' attainment in relation to international standards



Mathematics

Attainment in mathematics was excellent in all three phases. This was evident in international tests, workbooks, lessons and discussions. The majority of students, especially those who were most able, demonstrated strengths in geometry, number fluency and reasoning. Younger children secured a deep understanding of mathematics through the systematic use of bespoke practical Montessori tasks. In the Toddler class, children followed patterns, counted and showed the correct number of fingers in mathematical rhymes. In Casa, most children skilfully used numbers in a variety of ways with more-able children applying these to written notations of up to four figures. In Lower Elementary, the majority of students identified, manipulated and described polygons and their properties. Most students used mathematical vocabulary correctly to explain their reasoning. Older students confidently used and applied mathematical understanding and abstract skills. In Upper Elementary, most students understood the properties of triangles and how to measure their areas. Most were competent in mathematical tables due to daily practice. Students with special educational needs achieved higher levels of attainment than expected.












Science

Attainment in science was excellent in all three phases. By the end of Grade 6 almost all students were above average in international assessments. Students were also at a higher standard than peers internationally in working scientifically and applying their scientific knowledge and understanding. Comparisons between younger elementary year groups and international standards on these tests varied but observations and discussions indicated that these students were working beyond curriculum expectations. Children in the Toddler class explored the world as they peered intently through prisms of different coloured lenses intrigued at how the colours of things around them changed. In Casa, children competently used magnets to sort objects. Students in Lower Elementary passionately described and discussed beach erosion, confidently considering the 'domino effect' of different natural and social factors on the composition of their island. In the Upper Elementary class, most students showed high levels of careful and accurate scientific work as they predicted and recorded their observations of materials, including ground coffee, using microscopes. Almost all students, including those with special educational needs and those who were more able, excelled in science at the school.

ACHIEVEMENT

Students' progress in key subjects

Students' progress in key subjects	Toddler	Casa	Elementary
1.2 Progress in English	 Excellent	 Excellent	 Excellent
1.2 Progress in mathematics	 Excellent	 Excellent	 Excellent
1.2 Progress in science	 Excellent	 Excellent	 Excellent



English

Progress in English was excellent in all three phases. From Toddlers through Upper Elementary, students became confident and expressive learners. Almost all students, including those with special educational needs, used oral language well. As students advanced through the phases, work in books and in lessons showed excellent progress in a diverse range of writing genres. More able students developed oral, research and writing skills particularly well through project work. In Toddlers, children quickly developed their vocabulary and confidence to use words to express ideas and needs. In Casa, most children swiftly increased their knowledge and use of phonics. By Lower Elementary, the majority of students had developed enthusiasm for reading and skilfully embarked on an extended range of literature. Students extended their vocabulary and writing skills in a range of contexts such as in a lesson on homophones. These students also made great strides in their understanding and use of persuasive writing, confidently expressing their opinions on matters such as the construction of a cruise ship port. In Upper Elementary, almost all students made rapid gains in reading age-appropriate texts with fluency, expression and deep understanding. They made rapid progress in the quality of writing, including content and style across the genres taught.

ACHIEVEMENT

Students' progress in key subjects



Mathematics

Progress in mathematics was excellent in all three phases. Students of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, made excellent progress. Students' frequent use of a wide range of tangible manipulatives helped them understand and apply concepts and provided secure foundations for current and later mathematics. Children started Toddlers with mathematical knowledge and skills in line for their age. Almost all children, including those who were more able, made rapid progress in their understanding and use of numbers through daily routines such as counting the number of children present and working out how many were absent. Children in Casa made better than expected progress because they engaged in practical hands-on activities which extended their understanding of reasoning, number and shape. Rapid progress in understanding place value was evident in students' work across the school. For example, the majority of children in Casa could already transfer practical skills into abstract calculations. In Upper Elementary progress in number fluency and the speed and accuracy in number calculations was particularly strong because students were highly motivated to practise and succeed in the online programme which the school had employed. Students with special educational needs reached standards higher than expected from their starting points because tasks were practical with effective support.



Science







Progress in science was excellent in all three phases. This was evident in discussions, lessons and books. Students throughout the school, especially those who were more able, made strong connections between learning and life experiences, showing deep understanding and application. Progress in scientific exploration and investigation was particularly strong in Toddlers. For example, children looked at, felt and tasted a range of different fruits at snack time and developed understanding of different tastes through well planned sensory and exploratory experiences. In the Casa class, children rapidly increased their observational skills and use of scientific vocabulary as they took turns to be 'meteorologist of the day' and reported in detail on the weather outside. In Lower Elementary classes, students made rapid progress as they looked at photographs on the interactive white board, shared their observations and embedded their extensive knowledge of Cayman's biomes and the different creatures that lived in each. In Upper Elementary, students quickly developed their understanding of elements and the periodic table as they recreated models of these with cocktail sticks and differently coloured gummy bears. Students with special educational needs made exceptional progress

ACHIEVEMENT

Students' progress in key subjects

as they learned accurate scientific vocabulary and explored practical resources including sound cylinders, planetary systems and absorption trays.

STUDENTS' PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Students' personal and social development	Toddler	Casa	Elementary
2.1 Positive behaviour for good learning	 Excellent	 Excellent	 Excellent
2.2 Students' civic and environmental understanding	 Excellent	 Excellent	 Excellent

Behaviour

Behaviour was excellent across the school. Students of all ages consistently displayed high levels of confidence, motivation and productivity. Playtimes and transitions between lessons were peaceful and fun. In the inspection surveys, all parent and staff respondents and most student respondents thought that behaviour was good. In Casa, children were engaged and focused, motivated by their teachers' high expectations, consistent routines and highly suitable learning opportunities. Interactions between students and teachers and students themselves were intrinsically respectful and considerate. Students understood and respected the clearly defined rules and values of the school. Students spoke positively about initiatives such as the "Peace Table," which promoted restorative justice among peers. Upper Elementary students acknowledged and celebrated the positive attributes of their peers at the Friday Student Council Meetings. Upper Elementary students adhered to the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and students at Casa and Elementary were well-informed about safeguarding and well-being issues. Additionally, they were confident to seek support from trusted adults if they ever needed this. Students observed the school uniform policy well. Most students were punctual to school and lessons during the inspection period. Levels of attendance were satisfactory for the current term but lower than in the previous inspection.



STUDENTS' PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT












Civic and environmental understanding

Civic and environmental understanding were excellent in all three phases. Almost all students confidently engaged in discussions about various traditions, cultures and faiths, especially those of Cayman. Students sang a gratitude song before meals and all including the very youngest, showed great respect as they sang the National Song. They actively engaged in environmental activities such as mangrove replanting, turtle releases and beach clean-ups. These greatly enhanced their understanding of environmental sustainability and the reciprocal relationship between humans and the environment. The youngest children were appropriately introduced to conservation and sustainability through composting and caring for fish and hamsters. Casa children learnt about the Cayman Cottage and about nurse and reef shark's resident in the Cayman waters. In Lower Elementary, students confidently discussed the potential impacts of a new cruise ship pier on the island's beaches, demonstrating their awareness of local challenges. Older students showed a commendable understanding of economic activities, including the crucial role of tourism in the local economy. School initiatives, including 'dress down' days and participation in marathons to raise funds for charitable causes, played a vital role in promoting students' sense of civic responsibility and fostering good citizenship.



TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Teaching, learning and assessment	Toddler	Casa	Elementary
3.1 Teaching	 Excellent	 Excellent	 Excellent
3.2 Learning	 Excellent	 Excellent	 Excellent
3.3 Assessment	 Excellent	 Excellent	 Excellent



Teaching

Teaching across all three phases was excellent. Teachers' subject knowledge was very strong, particularly in relation to the concrete, enquiry based Montessori foundations which underpinned all aspects of the school. Teams of teachers planned and prepared lessons extremely well and worked seamlessly to facilitate each student's bespoke learning. They knew their students well and skilfully adapted their teaching, questioning and interactions to meet individual needs. Teaching was highly effective in establishing cross-curricular links and applying these to real life situations. Teachers made excellent use of the school's diverse resources which were high quality and suitable for all students, including those with special educational needs. Effective specialist teaching provided further support for those who needed help, which resulted in the excellent progress of students with special educational needs. Interactive white boards were used well to provide inspiring images; for example, in a Lower Elementary lesson on animals in Cayman. Older students used computers for a range of lessons including projects and mathematics. A wide range of texts were used in English to expand students' repertoire of reading genres and passion for reading. Routines were consistent and expectations high and as a result, behaviour was exemplary. Time was used well for innovative learning. Almost all teachers were highly skilled in facilitating interactions and dialogue which promoted independent decision making, critical thinking, open-ended questioning and deep discussions.

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT



Learning




Learning was excellent in all three phases. Across the school, students demonstrated very high levels of independence through their self-directed learning. All students were expected to take responsibility for what and how they needed to learn. They did this extremely well. In Toddlers, children independently collected and unrolled a work mat, chose materials and carefully carried out an activity. They followed the correct processes for the task, tidied up and put everything carefully away. Children expressed delight and joy at their successes in learning. One two-year-old excitedly said, 'I did it, I did it, I did it!' as they succeeded in threading beads onto a string before taking them off and spontaneously repeating the task to embed knowledge. Children in Casa chose to repeat a task which their teacher had demonstrated. Students in Lower Elementary passionately used break times to continue creating persuasive posters about beach erosion to send to the Minister of Tourism. Older students used technology effectively and were able to transfer what they had learned from specialist teachers into their classroom. Most students collaborated well using critical questioning and higher-order thinking. However, there were fewer planned opportunities for this in the Upper Elementary class than elsewhere.



Assessment

Assessment was excellent across all three phases. High-quality, consistent and effective assessment practices were securely in place. Daily reviews of students' individual planners and lesson outcomes enabled teachers, and students, to keep a close eye on progress. This process was supplemented by 'Transparent Classroom', an online assessment platform, and Montessori records. Tracking was thorough and teachers used assessment information very effectively to pinpoint how well each student was doing and what they needed to do to improve. They based their lesson plans on this assessment information, consistently matching teaching to the learning needs of each student. Teachers' effective questioning ascertained students' current knowledge and understanding. Positive feedback such as 'I like the way you have done this because...' from teachers and students showed when and why a student had been successful. Highly effective individual targets and bespoke planners underpinned students' personalised work schedules. In the best practices, students evaluated their learning as an integral part of the lesson. Marking and verbal feedback were consistent and helped students improve their work. In most lessons, students checked their own and each other's work using focused success criteria which showed what students had done well and how they could improve.

CURRICULUM







Offering a curriculum that meets the educational needs of all students	Toddler	Casa	Elementary
4 Curriculum	 Excellent	 Excellent	 Excellent



Curriculum

The curriculum across all three phases was excellent. It was based on the enriched Montessori curriculum, the English National Curriculum and Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework. Leaders had created an integrated cross-curricular approach which secured breadth and balance across students' learning and incorporated experiential activities that students applied to real life contexts. The curriculum was regularly reviewed and developed to ensure it was internationally benchmarked, met the Montessori principles and matched students' individual needs and interests. Leaders had divided the curriculum into cultural themes. Curriculum plans for each subject area ensured continuity and progression in knowledge and skills. These were creatively adapted for individual student and teacher preferences and strengths. Elementary classes had three-year topic cycles which provided consistency and opportunities for teachers to share ideas and resources and for students to collaborate. Specialist teachers secured greater curriculum breadth and subject specific skills and understanding such as those in Spanish or drama. The comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities including music, sport and technology as well as visits to local and international places of interest such as the island's caves and New York contributed to the rich student learning experience. Community events such as the recent Peace Day celebrations and charity fundraising greatly enhanced learning. Social development and life skills were embedded in the curriculum through monthly themes which included topics such as friendship and conflict resolution.

SAFETY AND SUPPORT

Keeping our students safe and always supported	Toddler	Casa	Elementary
5.1 Health and safety	 Excellent	 Excellent	 Excellent
5.2 Support and guidance	 Excellent	 Excellent	 Excellent



Health and safety





Health and safety were excellent in all three phases. Arrangements to ensure the health, safety and well-being of students were well-managed and comprehensive. Policies and procedures to keep students safe and secure were very effective. There were comprehensive records of fire drills and evacuation procedures, and all regulatory requirements were up to date. The school premises were meticulously maintained, clean and the school actively promoted a safe learning environment for students. Healthy lifestyles were a key feature of the school culture, with opportunities for exercise embedded throughout the day. All students who responded to the inspection survey thought that the school helped them choose a healthy lifestyle. Most lunches and snacks that children brought from home were nutritious. Students had frequent water breaks and generally wore hats outdoors. Most students reported feeling safe at school. Almost all parents agreed that their child was safe and cared for at school. Steps to address various forms of bullying were clear and as a result students were confident that if they ever experienced this, an adult within the school would help. All staff members had up to date training in child protection and first aid, contributing to a culture of shared responsibility for all students.



Support and guidance

Support and guidance were excellent in all three phases. The school had an open, inclusive and welcoming ethos. Staff members knew the students well and consistently provided high-quality support, nurturing their all-round development in a climate of care and collaboration. Students who completed the student survey said they felt heard and supported. Systems for tracking students' behaviour, attendance and academic progress were well established. However, attendance monitoring required greater rigour as attendance rates were lower than the previous inspection. The new special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) expertly coordinated care and support for students with special educational needs and provision fully complied with the Cayman Islands' Code of Practice. Individualised support plans for these students were based on a comprehensive assessment profile for each learner. Teachers shared their knowledge and expertise and developed appropriate support plans at regular school-based meetings. As a result of focused and targeted support, most students with special educational needs made excellent progress in their learning. Support plans also ensured smooth transitions between classes and schools. Termly reports to parents were thorough and comprehensive and gave a clear picture of students' attainment and progress. Students in all classes learnt about a range of jobs and potential careers. During the inspection, it was evident that the positive and supportive interactions between staff and students significantly contributed to their well-being and reinforced their confidence as learners. Student transitions to other schools were managed well with familiarisation visits and liaison with other schools to help students prepare for the changes ahead.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leading and managing our school and developing our links with the community we serve	School Wide
6.1 Leadership	 Excellent
6.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning	 Good
6.3 Links with parents and the community	 Excellent
6.4 Staffing and the learning environment	 Excellent



Leadership

Leadership was excellent. The two Principals very clear sense of direction and vision were underpinned by their commitment to progressive Montessori education. This explicit framework empowered staff and strengthened their common vision. Leaders' high expectations for all staff and students had resulted in the excellent school judgement and a culture of continuous improvement ensured that the school continued to develop and move forward. High levels of respect were evident across the school. Staff training and well-being contributed to very high staff morale and very positive outcomes for all students. Leaders were proactive in responding to new initiatives and addressing any areas brought to their attention. For example, they had employed new staff for pastoral support, leased platforms for promoting fluency in mathematics and purchased the data management system, 'Transparent Classroom', for recording and sharing assessments. The Principals had recently increased senior leadership capacity by appointing an experienced teacher at the school to her new role of leader of curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment. This had already had a positive impact on staff professional development. At the end of the summer term all staff reviewed the past year and agreed priorities for the future. This strengthened collaboration and collegiate work. Senior leaders received support and challenge from the Parents' Guild, staff evaluations, the Montessori community and colleagues in other schools.



Self-evaluation and improvement planning

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. The Principals knew their school well. They had effectively used clear criteria for self-evaluation, drawing on a range of information from the school. This included achievement data, administrative records, lesson monitoring and their extensive experience. Views of students, staff and parents were sought and fed into the process. Evaluation was accurate and used to further develop the school. For example, teaching staff hugely appreciated focused feedback from leaders' 'glow and grow' lesson observations. Praise and feedback were very effective and resulted in high levels of motivation, and clear focused areas for development. This was especially helpful for new staff. Staff retention was good. The school improvement plan prioritised teaching and learning to ensure that excellent provision was sustained but did not include all the priorities for development. Leaders had addressed the single main recommendation and additional development points from the previous inspection report, including the introduction of cursive writing and increasing technology for older students.



Links with parents and the community

Links with parents and the community were excellent. They were highly effective in supporting students' learning and well-being. Parents were extremely well informed about, and involved in, their children's learning through newsletters, open days, presentations, projects and termly written reports. Online records through 'Transparent Classroom' provided opportunities for daily two-way communication. Written reports about each student from Toddlers to Upper Elementary were comprehensive. Parents were very appreciative of the school and 99 per cent of those who responded to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that the school provided a good quality education. A very strong familial community was fostered through regular social events, such as community picnics and beach clean ups organised by the Parents' Guild. These benefitted the community and the school. Partnerships with the wider community extended students' learning; for example, children in Lower Elementary took shopping lists to local shops and chose items to purchase from within their budget. Older students participated in a major residential visit to Montessori Model United Nations in New York each year.



Staffing and the learning environment

Staffing and the learning environment were excellent. The majority of staff were trained in the Montessori approach. This provided a very well-considered and deeply held pedagogy and approach to all students. Teams of two or three teaching staff worked closely and cohesively together in each class. As they retained students for three years in mixed-age classes, they got to know them all extremely well, successfully supporting and helping their learning and well-being. Class teachers were supported by well-qualified specialists, administrative and site staff. Staff loved the school and most had worked there for a considerable time. Accommodation was spacious, clean and attractive. Space inside and outside was used well. Each class had a range of high-quality resources including specialist Montessori equipment which provided a very effective practical foundation for students' learning. All the classrooms offered a wide range of good quality fiction and non-fiction books. The older classrooms had their own library areas, computers and space for individual and group private study. Accommodation and resources were in excellent condition because students took an extremely active role in caring for them. Resources were chosen carefully to fit the ethos of 'less is more' which promoted students' learning and personal development extremely well.

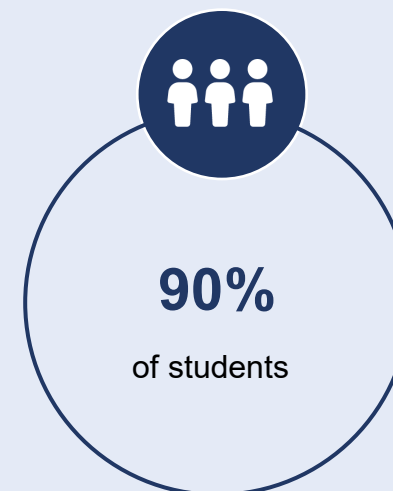
SURVEY RESULTS

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

Students	21	Parents	78	Staff	23
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Survey: “I am satisfied with the quality of education provided at this school.”

Twenty-one students completed the inspection survey. This was slightly fewer than at the previous inspection. Almost all expressed satisfaction with the school’s overall quality of education. All felt they were making good progress in mathematics and other subjects, that the school was well led and dealt effectively with bullying. Almost all felt that they were making good progress in English and science. Most agreed that students’ behaviour was good and that students understood their responsibilities as members of a wider community. Almost all agreed that lessons were good, that they enjoyed these and that they were developing good environmental understanding. Similarly, almost all expressed satisfaction with the amount of homework they received, felt that the school provided subjects they wanted to study and agreed there was a good range of extra-curricular activities. Almost all students reported that teachers explained how they could improve their work and that they received regular updates on their progress. Almost all stated that the school sought their views on how it could improve, and that staff responded to their concerns appropriately. Almost all agreed that the school had appropriately qualified and suitably skilled teachers and staff and had adequate resources to support their learning. Most felt safe and cared for at school and felt that the school helped them to make good choices about their future education and career. A majority felt that they were treated fairly at school. Students who made written comments commented positively on the work of the school.



Strongly Agree and Agree

4%

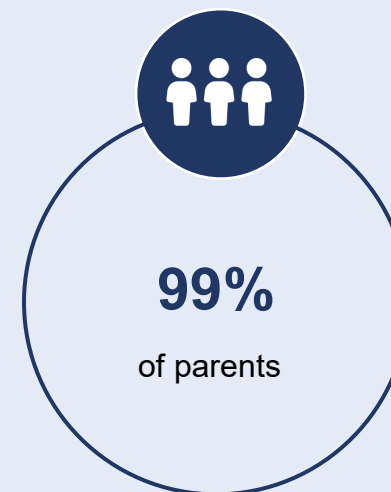
Decrease since the last
Inspection.

SURVEY RESULTS

Parents

Survey: “I am satisfied with the quality of education provided at this school.”

Seventy-eight parents responded to the survey which was higher than at the previous inspection. Almost all felt that the school provided a good quality of education. This matched the result of the previous inspection. All those who responded felt positive about students’ progress in English, behaviour, enjoyment of lessons, sense of responsibility and community as well as their understanding of the environment. Almost all felt that students made good progress in mathematics and other subjects, had a good choice of what to study, were inspired to learn, were treated fairly, felt safe and were encouraged to have healthy lifestyles. Almost all felt that communication with parents was good, that parents were well involved, received regular reports, that parent teacher meetings were well-attended, and that staff responded to any concerns which parents might have. Almost all felt that the school was well-led, had good quality resources, well-qualified staff and that there were good links between the school and wider community. Most felt that they were involved in school improvement planning, that students were making good progress in science, had the right amount of homework and that opportunities for extra-curricular activities were good. All who responded to the question about safety on the school bus agreed that this was safe. Most who responded agreed that the school dealt well with any bullying, provided suitable information about career choices and supported special educational needs effectively.



Strongly Agree and Agree

+0%

Unchanged since the last inspection.

SURVEY RESULTS

Staff

Survey: “This school provides a good quality of education.”

Twenty-three members of staff completed the survey. This response rate was higher than at the previous inspection. All respondents felt that the school provided a good quality of education. This equated with previous levels of satisfaction. Almost all agreed with all the questions and there were no negative responses to any. All the respondents felt that behaviour was good, that students were safe and well-cared for, were treated fairly and that the school dealt with any incidents of bullying. They all felt that students understood their responsibilities in the wider community, had good environmental understanding and a good range of extra-curricular activities was provided. All felt that students were encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle, that there was good support for students with special educational needs and there were effective links with parents and the wider community. Staff felt that they were suitably skilled and appropriately qualified with good opportunities for professional development. All felt that the school was well-led, that they were involved in school evaluation and development and that the school was resourced well. Almost all respondents agreed that parent teacher meetings were well attended and helpful, that the school had good assessment procedures and that students were told about their next steps in learning. Most felt that students were able to make good choices about future education and careers. These latter response rates were slightly lower because a few staff were unsure or chose not to answer these questions.



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 school is judged to be providing an excellent quality of education, there will be no further inspections until the next cycle which commences in September 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





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