

**Managing National
Assessment
Report**

2011

**Kaitaia Abundant Life
School**

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1 September 2011

Introduction

The purpose of the Managing National Assessment (MNA) external review is:

- to help schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment according to the requirements of *the Assessment and Examination Rules and Procedures for Secondary Schools* (Rules and Procedures); and
- in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report, to ensure that schools are meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011* and its *Guidelines* (CAAS Guidelines) in order to maintain consent to assess.

This process is a partnership between schools and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to ensure that assessment systems remain effective and internal assessment decisions are valid.

The MNA review has two components:

1. The annual external moderation of assessment materials and assessor decisions for an NZQA-selected sample of internally assessed standards and randomly selected samples of student work across curriculum areas selected according to the school's random-selection process.
2. An external review of each school's assessment systems at least once every four years.

This report summarises NZQA's evaluation of how effectively:

- senior management has addressed issues identified during the previous MNA review on 4 September 2008
- the school manages assessment for national qualifications
- the school manages internal and external moderation
- the school manages and makes use of assessment-related data
- the school maintains the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicates them to staff, students and families.

In preparing this report, the School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee and the Heads of Department (HODs) for Chemistry, Economics, English and Music. The school also provided the SRM with pre-review information and the staff and student assessment procedures guides.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, and the Principal's Nominee at the end of the visit to highlight strengths and weaknesses, with suggested strategies for good practice and to agree on recommended actions.

2008 Managing National Assessment Report (CAAS Guidelines 3v)

Evidence was sought that action items in the previous MNA report have been effectively addressed.

Both of the items in the 2008 report have been actioned.

Assessment Practices (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6, 3v)

How do the school's assessment practices allow for the effective management of assessment for national qualifications?

Gathering evidence of achievement Teachers are informed in their assessment guidelines of a range of methods which can be used to gather authentic and verifiable evidence of achievement within the teaching and learning process or in other settings. While in most subjects, assessment tends to revolve around use of formal assessment tasks completed by students in class time under formal or closed-book conditions, the school is taking steps toward adopting a wider approach to evidence gathering. An example sighted during the visit involved the use of the NZQA developed templates to manage portfolios in the English Department.

The school intends to assess the new Work and Study Skills literacy and numeracy unit standards in 2012 and this will enhance staff understanding of alternative forms of evidence of achievement. The school is recognising this initiative by supporting a number of staff to attend regional professional development workshops during 2011.

Missed and late assessments Staff interviewed during the visit understand that the outcome is Not Achieved for wilful absence or non-submission of work when a student has been offered an adequate assessment opportunity. The student guide incorrectly states that no grade will be awarded where there is no legitimate reason for absence or non-submission. The school is aware of the need to document this procedure correctly and ensure that staff are applying this procedure consistently across all subjects which conduct internal assessment for national qualifications.

The school uses appropriate settings for management to communicate and monitor that the school's procedures are being consistently applied. Staff meeting time is regularly allocated for the discussion of assessment practice and HODs are required to complete the school's *Annual Quality Assurance Systems Check* document and discuss this with the PN.

Authenticity Students are required to sign an authenticity statement for work submitted for assessment which has not been completed under the supervision of a teacher. Staff understand their obligation to manage the authenticity challenges for assessment and it is apparent that their close knowledge of the work and of the interests and abilities of their students assists them to effectively manage this.

Appeals The opportunity to appeal a grade is available to students and an appeal form is used to manage this process. It was agreed during the visit that this process needs to be expanded to include a student's right to appeal an assessment decision relating to a breach of the rules (e.g. misconduct, cheating, plagiarism), or their access to assessment (e.g. missed assessment, further assessment).

Identified action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following actions to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- communicate to staff and students the school's interpretation of what constitutes a reasonable opportunity for assessment, that the outcome of wilful avoidance of this opportunity is Not Achieved, and to monitor that this is consistently applied
- expand the appeal process to include a student's right to appeal an assessment decision relating to a breach of the rules or their access to assessment.

Moderation (CAAS Guidelines 2.6)

How effectively does the school manage internal and external moderation?

Internal moderation processes The school's quality assurance procedures for internal moderation are clearly documented for staff and teachers are expected to use the school's *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet 2011* to record their compliance with these. This cover sheet has been amended to require that the samples of student work randomly selected for external moderation, are the samples which are verified for internal moderation. It was raised by the SRM that samples to be verified for internal moderation purposes should be selected by the teacher. This maximises verifier time and expertise because feedback is provided for assessor judgements at grade boundaries.

It was apparent from discussions and evidence seen during the visit that teachers are engaging in effective internal moderation practice. Sole teachers of a subject reported appropriate grade verification strategies to overcome the difficulty of working in professional isolation, including face-to-face, postal or electronic contact with colleagues, and involvement with a cluster group or subject association. Other strategies reported to enhance professional knowledge included attendance at Moderation Best Practice workshops, the use of the Optional Teacher Selected Evidence provision for obtaining moderator feedback, and viewing national moderator reports and NZQA subject resource exemplars.

The use of colleagues outside the school often means delays in reporting verified results. An option discussed to assist in this is that teachers can delay the award of final grades by deeming them 'interim' until the verification and the reporting to NZQA can take place.

Audit of internal moderation processes The PN, in his first year in the role, is proactive in managing and reviewing the school's quality assurance procedures. TICs and HODs are required to complete the school's *Annual Quality Assurance Systems Check* document and this forms the basis of discussion in an annual meeting with the PN. This checklist includes the requirement for teachers to inform management about the internal moderation practice in their subject/department and, therefore, assists the school to meet its obligation to report only those assessment that results that have been subject to the school's internal moderation process. For some departments, this meeting can take place subsequent to internal results being reported to NZQA. The PN is aware that the process for monitoring compliance with the school's internal moderation procedures needs to be timely and efficient. The school's plans to achieve this were discussed during the visit, including the option of the PN viewing and retaining a completed copy of *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* prior to results being submitted to NZQA.

NZQA external moderation The most recent external moderation round was March 2011. Assessment material was submitted for all of the 37 standards selected and student work was submitted for all but one of these standards. For the majority of standards, moderators approved assessment material as being at the national

standard while assessment material for one standard was deemed as being invalid. Management have followed up appropriately to ensure that this and any other issues arising from moderation are addressed. The PN maintains a file containing internal moderation tracking sheets and moderation reports, so that the changes teachers are expected to make are readily identified for follow up.

Staff interviewed reported excellent practice to ensure that the changes required by moderators are acted on prior to the assessment being used again. However, the school's own review identified that, due to this process becoming protracted during 2011, management have undertaken to complete this follow-up process in a timelier manner. The school recognises that quality assurance monitoring would be further enhanced by the inclusion of an item in the *Annual Quality Assurance Systems Check* about the results of, and response to, external moderation.

Improvement in the school's external moderation process is exemplified by the significant increase in recent years in proportion of standards for which the assessment task and assessor judgments are at the national standard. Improved practice also means that no significant issues are apparent in relation to the validity of assessment material used and in relation to the way materials are stored.

Random selection Management reported that, where class sizes are sufficient, student work submitted for external moderation is randomly selected as required by NZQA. The school's procedure for this is to be documented for staff and management agree that the procedure will be revisited with staff to ensure that there is consistent understanding of this.

Identified action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following actions to improve the management of internal and external moderation. Senior management undertakes to:

- amend procedures to ensure that samples of student work to be verified for internal moderation purposes are selected by the teacher
- communicate with staff to ensure that there is consistent application of the school's procedure for random selection of student work.

Data (CAAS Guidelines 2.6, 2.7)

How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

Accuracy of assessment-related data The school has the procedures in place to ensure the accuracy of assessment-related data, including:

- encouraging students to record and track their entries of entries and results
- regularly providing students with the opportunity to check their progress and that results are accurate
- students signing off their result for each assessment
- teachers checking final entries and results for all courses
- teachers being restricted in the setting up of the mark-books so as to ensure that the PN is notified about any changes to courses during the year.

The Principal's Nominee sets up the mark-books for teachers to enter verified internally assessed results in the school's student management system. The PN conducts checks prior to the school reporting to parents and file submission to NZQA, and he reflected that he is increasingly confident in working with data-related issues, such as the procedure for transferring students.

Analysis of results TICs and HODs analyse their students' results from the previous year early in Term 1 and report to the Principal regarding implications for their courses in the current year. Results are compared to the national cohort and to similar schools and analysed by gender and by ethnicity. This analysis is used to make informed decisions about the structure of courses offered and the standards assessed in a course. The school reported that the standards alignment process is having a strong influence on these decisions.

Identified action

No actions were identified as needed to improve the management and use of assessment-related data.

Communication (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i, 2.6, 3v)

How effectively does the school maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, students and families?

Communication of policies and procedures to staff, students and their families

The following documents were provided for this visit:

- *Internal Assessment – a Guide for Students, Parents and Caregivers*
- *Senior Assessment Policies and Procedures*
- *Staff Manual – 2011.*

Policies and procedures are reviewed annually in accordance with the school's review calendar and staff meetings are the main forum for communication of any changes or update to teachers. The procedures which are documented for staff are detailed and informative, however, when next updated the staff document needs to contain information about reporting Not Achieved, the derived grade process, random selection and use of the school login on the NZQA website.

The *Guide for Students, Parents and Caregivers* is handed out early in Term 1 and contains clearly stated information about a range of procedures. The school has agreed to update this document to include information about further assessment, the derived grade process and the availability of other national certificates, and to accurately inform students of the circumstances that lead to Not Achieved.

Other means of communication include information evenings, parent-teacher interviews, school newsletters and the school website.

Assessment statements These are contained in course outlines, and it was identified during the visit that not all of the information required about the standards to be assessed is being published for students in subject assessment statements. Other than the requirement to include the title of standard, these requirements are listed in the staff guide. Management have agreed to monitor subject assessment statements for their required content.

Memoranda of understanding The school's Gateway/Star Coordinator and the Deputy Principal share the administration of arrangements. The PN checks that any results being reported using an outside provider code are covered by a current memorandum of understanding and has confidence in the processes that are in place.

Identified action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following actions to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff,

students and families. Senior management undertakes to:

- update assessment information for staff and for students as detailed in this report
- monitor subject assessment statements for their required content.

Summary

Kaitaia Abundant Life School is to be commended for the quality assurance systems that have been implemented in recent years. School management is demonstrating commitment to the effective monitoring and review of its systems for managing assessment for national qualifications. The school, and NZQA, have identified some areas that would benefit from further attention; however, no significant issues have been revealed which prevent the school from meeting NZQA requirements.

Based on the outcome of this assessment systems check, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.