

Managing National Assessment Report

School Assessment Systems 2010

Springbank School

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The purpose of Managing National Assessment (MNA) is to help schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment. It is a partnership between schools and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and has two components:

- a visit to check and report on the school's assessment systems at least once every three years
- the annual external moderation of assessment materials and assessor decisions for a sample of internally assessed standards across all curriculum areas.

This report summarises the findings of the assessment check carried out by an NZQA School Relationship Manager (SRM) on 27 April. The SRM met with the Principal to review progress since the last visit on 28 May 2008 and to appraise the school's assessment policies and procedures against the *Assessment and Examination Rules and Procedures for Secondary Schools*, the *Quality Assurance Standard for Accreditation of Secondary Schools* (QA Standard) and national practice.

The SRM also met with the Head of Department or Teacher in Charge of Biology, Economics, English, Mathematics, Science and Visual Art to check that the school's policies and procedures are consistently and effectively applied. There was a report-back session with the senior managers at the end of the visit to highlight strengths and suggest further good practice.

This and previous MNA reports will be used in combination with the Education Review Office Report in the reconfirmation of the school's accreditation.

School Policies and Procedures

2008 Managing National Assessment Report (QA Standard 1.3v)

Evidence was sought that action items in the previous MNA report have been addressed. (See Appendix for summary of action items.)

All but one of the required actions in the 2008 report have been fully or partly actioned.

Review of Policy and Procedures (QA Standard 1.2.6, 1.3v)

Evidence was sought that school-wide assessment policies and procedures have been reviewed and are in line with national practice.

The school's assessment policy is reviewed regularly in the cycle set out in the Quality Management Systems documentation. Assessment procedures information is reviewed annually by the Principal and is published for students and their families in the *Senior Qualifications Assessment Booklet*. The option choice booklet, *Senior Curriculum 2009*, also gives some information about the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEAs). Topical information is communicated in newsletters and at assemblies and course-specific information is published in course assessment statements and explained verbally in class.

Additional information and procedures are provided for teachers in the guide: *Internal Procedures on Assessment, Moderation and Reporting for NCEA*.

Some additions and refinements were discussed for the next version of these guides. In the interest of consistency and simplicity, the school may consider producing one guide

for students and their families and teachers, with a supplement containing the additional information teachers need and students do not.

Course outlines and/or assessment statements Teachers refer students to the page for their course in *Senior Curriculum 2009*. These pages set out any prerequisites for entry to the course and contain a table of the standards to be assessed in a standardised format. They do not, however, contain all the information that the staff handbook says must be provided in course assessment information. These documents should be aligned or separate assessment statements prepared.

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement The teacher guide states some clear assessment principles for teachers and some methods they may use in helping students gain the best results they can. The NZQA rules on further assessment opportunities, set out in *Assessment and Examination Rules and Procedures 4.4* and published in a circular in July 2009, should be summarised in the next version of the guide. The school should also consider summarising these sections for students and parents.

Missed and late assessments The student guide instructs students to contact the school office if they are ill on the day an assessment is due. The teacher guide states that a Missed Assessment form must always be handed in, but this is not mentioned in the student guide. The school's practice is that, when a student misses an assessment or a deadline for a valid reason, a grade may be awarded if enough standard-specific evidence has been recorded from other authentic work. This is explicit in the teacher guide and implicit in the student guide. This section of the two documents should also be aligned.

Authenticity The staff handbook lists some sound methods of assuring the authenticity of students' work. The school should consider summarising these in the next student guide.

Appeal process Any appeal relating to a grade judgement or a ruling on a breach of assessment rules must be lodged within one school week, using the form available from the Principal. The school intends to add that it may call on an independent expert to verify a grade under appeal. This is already part of its practice.

Special assessment conditions The requirements and process are set out accurately in the staff handbook and summarised in the student guide.

Privacy Act Teachers are reminded in the assessment policy to observe the requirements of the Privacy Act. The school should consider adding this information in the next version of the student guide, as students are also subject to the Act.

Quality Assurance Processes (QA Standard 1.2.6, 1.3v)

Evidence was sought that systems are in place to ensure that:

- *internal moderation is taking place*
- *departments are linking externally to maintain a current understanding of the national standard*
- *concerns raised by external moderation are dealt with.*

Internal moderation Most departments have developed good internal moderation practices and use the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to record their completion of the five internal moderation steps as listed on the cover sheet. The teacher guide explains the process and instructs teachers to store completed internal assessment materials securely and accessibly. To this should be added the direction to store the completed cover sheet also. This provides evidence of the process and demonstrates that teachers have taken responsibility for the quality of the internally assessed results reported to

NZQA with the school's provider code, as set out in *Assessment and Examination Rules and Procedures for Secondary Schools* 4.6.b.

Most teachers have developed or are developing robust quality assurance procedures, but an informal approach to internal moderation will not detect any non-compliance. Neither will it guide teachers new to the school or to New Zealand. The school has not yet set up a system of routine monitoring to ensure that internal moderation is formalised and documented in order to satisfy the requirement to quality assure results before they are sent to NZQA. This was an action item in the 2008 MNA report and is repeated here.

External moderation The Principal files a copy of all moderation reports, including any from Industry Training Organisations, and works with departments where changes are needed.

The school's random selection method will be added to the next version of the guide, although many senior classes are small and generally all student work is sent.

The most recent external moderation round for Springbank School was in March 2010. Nineteen standards were selected for moderation. Seventeen of the submitted assessments were approved as fit for purpose and the other two as requiring some modification. There were concerns about half or more of the teacher grade judgments for three of the standards. The departments are addressing these concerns and have further developed their networking with colleagues in nearby schools to verify their grade judgments.

Moderation results in most subjects have shown continuing improvement in recent years and regular monitoring of internal moderation may be expected to bring further improvements.

Administration (QA Standard 1.2.5v-vii, 1.2.6, 1.2.7)

Evidence was sought of suitable systems and procedures for the management of assessment-related data.

Accreditation The Principal checks the school's accreditation for any standard to be assessed for the first time and she holds copies of memoranda of understanding with outside providers.

Entries and results Teachers report results on the school's recording sheet, which is appended to the teacher guide, and pass this to the Principal to enter on the school's database. The accuracy of these results is verified and signed off by the teacher and the students before they are sent to NZQA. This process is set out in the teacher guide.

Analysis of results The school analyses its results each year and tracks trends. Departments use this analysis to inform their teaching and learning programmes, including the forms of assessment used, the amount of assessment and class placement of students.

Action Items

In order to comply with the *Assessment and Examination Rules and Procedures for Secondary Schools* and the *Quality Assurance Standard for Accreditation of Secondary Schools*, the school must:

- summarise the 2009 rules for further assessment opportunities
- align the sections of the teacher and student assessment guides relevant to:
 - the information in course assessment statements
 - further assessment opportunities
 - missed and late assessments
- develop and document a system for routine monitoring that internal moderation is complete and that evidence is filed with the other materials for each assessment.

In line with good practice as seen nationally, the school should consider:

- producing one guide for students and their families and teachers, with a supplement for teachers
- summarising for students some of the strategies teachers use to ensure the authenticity of student work
- adding the relevant provision of the Privacy Act to the student guide.

Commendations

Springbank School is commended for the systems and practices it has established and for the creditable qualifications results gained by its students.

Procedures documentation is more comprehensive and is well understood. Quality assurance practices are increasingly robust and teachers work collaboratively to ensure that they improve and maintain their understanding of the national standard.

The Principal has developed sound procedures and documentation and she and her colleagues are commended for their commitment to providing quality assessment for students.