

**Managing National Assessment
Report**

School Assessment Systems

2009

**Waitaki Girls' High
School**

Report on Managing National Assessment: School Assessment Systems 2009

Waitaki Girls' High School

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 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 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 7 April 2009. The SRM met with the Principal's Nominee to review progress since the last visit on 22 June 2005 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 Heads of Department (HODs) or Teachers in Charge of English, Food and Fabric, Information Management and Social Sciences to check that the school's policies and procedures are consistently and effectively applied. There was a report-back session with the Senior Management Team at the end of the visit to highlight strengths and weaknesses, with suggested strategies for 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

2005 Managing National Assessment Report (QA Standard 1.3v)

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

There was one action item and three suggestions made in the 2005 MNA report. All have been completed.

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 SRM reviewed the school's assessment policy and procedures. The school was complimented in 2005 for the quality of its documentation. Since then, it has been updated annually to maintain currency and reflect changing government policies. The guidelines provided to staff are logically structured, helpful and state clear expectations for quality assured processes. The information provided for students and parents is helpful and written in student-friendly language. The school is commended again on the continued quality of its documentation.

As a result of changing government requirements, the school should now include a statement about reporting Not Achieved results, linked to the current section headed 'Completion Deadlines'. Students need to know that a result will be recorded as Not

Achieved if they were given an adequate opportunity but refused to take up that opportunity.

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.*

The NCEA qualification system has been operating in schools since 2002 and it is now possible to gauge a longer term overall picture of a school's quality assurance systems by referring to the pattern of moderation results over three or four years prior to the visit.

The results of the 2008 external moderation round show that there are no areas of concern to senior management or NZQA. This indicates not only that good quality assurance processes are in place throughout the senior school but also reflects a solid history of good practice, effective systems and conscientious effort from staff since the school received its first Assessment Review report in 2000 and in all MNA reviews since that time.

Internal moderation Although the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* is not widely used in departments, each department is using its own methods of pre-assessment critiquing, maintaining consistency across classes and maintaining links with subject specialist advisers and/or teaching colleagues to help maintain a current understanding of national standards. Each department has kept detailed documentation as evidence that internal moderation has taken place and to assist with professional memory, continuity and monitoring by senior management. One HOD interviewed is still establishing appropriate systems in her department and senior management is monitoring progress.

The Principal's Nominee has been diligent in monitoring departmental compliance with the expectations of senior management and was able to show the SRM evidence of all aspects of the quality assurance systems throughout the school. He requires each department to complete annually a detailed form that covers every aspect of the quality assurance process. He investigates all issues arising from the each year's external moderation round and was able to provide detailed documentation about the follow-up actions taken. Following each external moderation round, he provides a summary of the outcomes and gives generic advice to staff in a way that is positive and constructive.

Course outlines provided to students are of very good quality and the Principal's Nominee checks these each year to ensure that they meet stated expectations.

Memoranda of understanding The school uses a number of external providers and a Memorandum of Understanding is in place for each. The SRM saw a sample of these. The school is assessing against ATTTO standards and results of the moderation outcomes should be available to the Principal's Nominee as well as the HOD who receives the Industry Training Organisation's (ITO) reports.

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

Evidence was sought of suitable systems and procedures for the management of data relating to student information and external assessment.

Procedures are in place to ensure, to the best of the school's ability, that results are recorded accurately on the electronic database. Printouts are checked and signed off by staff and students. Results are entered on the central database by teachers after completing an assessment and are forwarded to NZQA each month by the Principal's Nominee. The school knows that only results that have been subject to an internal moderation verification process should be submitted and teachers and students check and sign off data for accuracy before this is done.

Special assessment conditions Very good records have been kept for students who may require special assessment conditions. The SRM discussed the need for continuing up-to-date files on each student. These will contain records of on-going support provided in classrooms and assessments, evidence that individual education plans are reviewed annually and updated as required and current reports from independent qualified assessors for students with non-manifest conditions. The school is aware that it will not be applying for students to have reader/writer assistance where the student lacks the intellectual capacity to perform in assessments or for extra time where a reduced number of standards are being attempted in an exam session.

Results analysis Analyses of 2008 results for three subjects were provided to the SRM. One provided a statistical report that indicated that results were good and as expected for the cohort. It appears that changes have been made to the mix of standards offered in the past year, and this indicates that courses have been planned thoughtfully to achieve the best results for the girls. The second subject also compared results with national averages but was more analytical in its approach. It noted areas of difficulty and noted how results might be improved in a following year. The third subject, however, did not even start to address the matter of NCEA results, how well students achieved or how assessment matters might be improved. The school's attention is drawn to a set of questions found on the NZQA website, which recommends that HODs be expected to provide responses to questions such as:

- Are the results as expected for the cohort?
- What are the reasons for a deviation?
- Were the standards well matched to student abilities?
- Is this subject taken by relative "specialists" (e.g. French) or all-comers (e.g. English)?
- Were the skills dependent on other skills (e.g. essay skills)?
- Has this part of the curriculum usually been easier or more difficult than others?
- Do we have the right assessment approach? Could we assess this differently?
- Are there resourcing implications for the school?
- What trends are developing?
- Are students achieving their goals, such as completing STAR courses and national certificates?
- Are they achieving literacy and numeracy for their Level 1 qualification or for university entrance status?
- Is there any useful information to be gleaned from data based on gender and ethnicity?

Action Items

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

- include a statement about reporting Not Achieved results, linking it to information about missed assessments in its policies and procedures documentation
- ensure that moderation information relating to ITO standards is seen by the Principal's Nominee.

Commendations

Waitaki Girls' High School is commended for maintaining the excellent standard of its policies, procedures and systems. Its quality assurance practices remain robust and staff provided evidence that they were putting requirements into practice effectively. The Principal's Nominee has been most conscientious in his role, but staff must take equal credit for the high degree of professionalism they have maintained.