

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Mount Albert Grammar School**

**May 2023**

## **FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW**

### **Mount Albert Grammar School**

**16 May 2023**

#### **Consent to assess confirmed**

This review found that the school is effectively meeting the requirements of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022.

No significant issues with the school's management of national assessment were found. The school's own review mechanisms allow them to identify and respond to most issues.

As a school with highly effective assessment systems and practices for national qualifications, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three to five years.

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2018.

#### **Actions and considerations**

##### **No actions required**

The school has no action items relating to the quality of their assessment systems



Kay Wilson  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

19 June 2023

**NZQA**

**0800 697 296**

**[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)**

## External and internal review

### External review

*Evidence of external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)*

**Action Items from 16 August 2018 Managing National Assessment Report** The agreed action item in the last report has been addressed by the school. The school now ensures that students' entries for internal standards either have a result reported or are withdrawn as appropriate. Heads of Faculty along with the Principal's Nominee do final checks of all markbooks prior to the last data file submission to NZQA.

**External moderation response to outcomes and processes** External moderation outcomes confirm that teachers' assessment decisions are consistent with the standard providing confidence in the school's internal moderation processes. The Principal's Nominee closely monitors all external moderation outcomes including developing trends and any issues raised through the individual reports. The external moderation report is discussed with the Head of Faculty and any other staff member deemed appropriate by the Deputy Principal responsible for the department with recommendations or actions determined, recorded and implemented. Action plans are established as appropriate, and issues raised must be addressed within a given timeframe. The actions are then checked for completion by the Deputy Principal and reported to the Principal's Nominee.

Due to the effects of Covid 19, in 2021 submission of external moderation was made optional for Auckland schools. If a school submitted a few standards for moderation the rest of the standards for which works was not submitted were recorded as Materials Not Received. This was the case for Mount Albert Grammar, which in 2022 once again submitted all standards selected for external moderation with positive outcomes.

In order to improve professional assessment expertise, support for teachers is provided as needed and includes working with subject associations, using and discussing exemplars, attending best practice workshops and collaborating with other schools.

### Internal review

*Evidence of the school using its self-review and evaluation processes to identify areas for on-going improvement in assessment practice and procedures, which are then actioned. (CAAS Guidelines 3iv)*

Self-review continues to be a part of the culture at Mount Albert Grammar School. Teachers and departments see review as an essential element of personal professional and departmental improvement. Classroom teachers, curriculum and senior leaders regularly review their assessment practices and the courses of study offered. This assures senior management that issues and improvements are effectively identified and acted on. Weekly meetings with the Deputy Principal of the department enables Heads of Faculty to discuss any issues straight away and to move on resolving them as quickly as possible.

**Credible assessment review leads to shared leadership and ownership of assessment processes and practice** An extensive review of the school's assessment processes and practice has led to changes to provide improved consistency and ease of access for a range of processes and procedures. For

example, applications for extensions to assessment submission are now approved by Heads of Faculty who manage their own extensions criteria and what evidence they require. In some cases, these can still be referred to the Principal's Nominee for a final decision. Students interviewed report this new system to be far easier to negotiate and that they feel more comfortable using it.

### **Improved management and monitoring of Special Assessment Conditions**

Teachers talked about refinements to the system for managing the provision of Special Assessment Conditions during assessment as being more efficient to monitor and that more students are getting the support they are entitled to, thereby ensuring equitable opportunities for all students.

Students entitled to Special Assessment Conditions now fill in a digital application form to receive the SAC entitlement they are eligible to receive during an assessment. This is processed by the Learning Support Department who provides the necessary support. Classroom teachers can easily check that this has been completed. Previously the student filled out a paper form that staff had no way of monitoring. The digital form has made it easier for teachers to check that students have met their obligations and where this has not occurred, teachers are able support the students to do so.

**Comprehensive department reviews** Teachers and departments review and report on every subject, topic, and standard throughout the year. They also conduct an end of year review. These reviews capture student voice, assessment data, moderation reports and feedback on participation from subject associations. They also discuss the main department goals associated with the school's strategic priorities, addressing issues such as at-risk students, the school's identified priority learners and Māori and Pacific student achievement. Heads of Faculty report to their Line Manager where the review and professional development priorities are discussed.

These comprehensive reviews have led to the modification of courses and assessments as well as the sharing of good practice and strategies for improvements, including staff appraisal and the professional growth cycle. Changes have been made to best meet learning and assessment needs with the aim of ensuring the best outcomes for their students. The school feels that this has been successful when analysing the achievement outcomes of their students. Results over the past two years have improved on those prior to COVID affected years.

**Review of all assessment documentation** All assessment material for staff and students has been reviewed to make it more streamlined, user friendly and fit for purpose. The Principal's Nominee felt that the previous assessment material provided to all staff and students was cumbersome and repetitive. Those staff and students spoken to agree the new material now provides clearer, more accurate and accessible information.

## **Credible assessment practice to meet student needs**

*Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023.)*

**Outcomes for Māori and Pacific Students** Mount Albert Grammar School has as part of their strategic plan, a key focus on improving academic outcomes, in particular Māori and Pacific students. Te Puna o Wairaka, a programme that has been implemented to support this is a whānau home base for Māori students where

they are able to practice tikanga Māori as well as strengthen their knowledge of te reo through various kaupapa such as karakia, whakawhanaungatanga, pōhiri and kapa haka. Siapo which was based on the same kaupapa as Te Puna has now been set up to support Pacific students in a similar way. The primary objective of these programmes is to support students so that they can experience success as Māori or Pacific within a mainstream context.

The school's achievement data analysis shows that Māori students in Te Puna are performing academically well above those Māori students who have not engaged in the programme. Siapo is still in its infancy, but it is hoped that the achievement outcomes for these students will also be elevated.

**Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Health Science Academy for Pacific Students.** School data highlighted the low participation of Pacific students in STEM subjects. Acknowledging this, the school in partnership with the Manakau DHB, implemented the Health Science Academy. This programme supports Pacific students in STEM subjects by providing extra tutoring as well as opportunities for senior students to take on leadership roles working with junior students. One of the students interviewed discussed the benefits of the programme and how it had provided her with many opportunities to succeed in these subjects and the positive benefits the tutorials provided.

STEM data still shows some Māori and Pacific students are not performing nearly as well as other students. The school recognises this and is continuing to work to improve outcomes in these subjects.

**Monitoring and tracking student progress** All senior students receive comprehensive guidance and mentoring with regards to career pathways, subject choices, and tracking of their achievement from their Year Level Dean and Academic Dean, with support from the careers department. Students are advised of their pathways for success and those identified to be at risk of not achieving their academic goals are well supported through extra tutorials, lunch time classes, as well as contact with the family. Year Level Academic Deans are constantly tracking all student achievement and are adept at identifying those that need extra support and providing effective interventions. For example, a special programme is put in place for students who in Year 13 have yet to gain University Entrance Literacy.

Students who require Special Assessment Conditions are identified, and all staff are aware of the learning needs of these students to ensure they receive the support to which they are entitled. This provides these students with equity of access to all assessments they are attempting.

## **Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results**

*Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023.)*

**Robust internal moderation processes assure credible results are recorded** Mount Albert Grammar School's internal moderation process is embedded as part of the normal quality assurance practice in all departments. The school implemented a robust 'NZQA- Ready Pack' as a digital process to improve efficiency and reduce workload. This has now progressed with the implementation of the Internal Moderation Tool, provided by their SMS provider.

This has provided the school with the confidence that checks are in place to ensure all results reported to NZQA are verified and correct. The SMS tool checks each step of the process and includes the critiquing of the task, strategic selection of student work for grade verification and monitoring the verification process. It also provides checks for results reported using an external provider. If the provider code is not entered, the teacher is asked to go through the internal moderation checks including grade verification. If the provider code is entered, they are not required to complete this part of the process.

Though there are some teething issues such as managing the process for a standard being offered in more than one course, Heads of Faculty and the Principal's Nominee are working around this. They print the PDF of the first reported results for the standard so the full process of internal moderation including grade verification is not lost. The school will continue to liaise with the sms provider to see what can be done to find more permanent solutions.

The Principal's Nominee also does random checks of each course offered to ensure that the internal moderation processes have been followed before results are reported to NZQA.

Grade verification is undertaken by a subject expert within the school, by obtaining contacts through subject associations, or colleagues at other schools. Within the school, staff use a variety of methods to verify grades awarded to samples of student work. This includes group marking or moderation meetings within a department. The school sees this as valuable professional learning as well as a support for teachers and to help grow their expertise in assessor judgements.

## **Appendix 1: Effective Practice**

### **Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of student**

**Mount Albert Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its students by:**

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are culturally appropriate focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations
- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers and extending the school's Consent to Assess if required
- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so student can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement
- assessing student when they are ready
- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet student needs
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual student with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support
- providing opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- engaging in Review of Achievement Standards pilots to prepare for future assessment
- identifying and providing support for student at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals
- implementing strategies to provide opportunities to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

**Mount Albert Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- managing missed or late assessment
- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules
- monitoring the authenticity of student work using a range of strategies
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have submitted no work
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived and unexpected event grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

## **Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality**

**Mount Albert Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment judgements
- using subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a strategic selection of a sufficient sample of student work
- using grade verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes
- monitoring and documenting completed internal moderation processes to ensure only quality assured results are reported to NZQA.

**Mount Albert Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- selecting sufficient samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes and providing support for assessors where appropriate
- monitoring and documenting actions taken to address external moderation feedback
- using external moderation outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation processes.

## **Effective management and use of assessment-related data**

**Mount Albert Grammar School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for student by:**

- monitoring and tracking student progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure these allow students to meet their assessment goals, and inform changes to courses and standards offered
- gathering student voice to evaluate courses and assessment workloads to inform changes to programmes, contexts, and standards
- reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

**Mount Albert Grammar School reports accurate achievement data by:**

- checking Key Indicators and NZQA reports to identify and resolve any errors

- conducting student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year
- ensuring low levels internal entries with no results
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding

## **Effective communication to inform staff, and student and their families about assessment**

### **Mount Albert Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- keeping assessment-related communications current and accurate, and reviewing communications to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- ensuring students receive outlines for courses they undertake
- supporting students to monitor their achievement
- discussing assessment policy and procedure with staff, and providing updates of NCEA information throughout the year
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing opportunities for parents to discuss their children's NCEA goals, progress, and achievement
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction programme to understand school and NZQA assessment processes
- celebrating students' success.

### **Mount Albert Grammar School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- communicating assessment information, such as holding NCEA information evenings for parents and NCEA assemblies for students
- informing students about suitable learning pathways
- supporting students to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

## Appendix 2: Overview

### What this report is about

**This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Mount Albert Grammar School:**

- has addressed issues identified through NZQA's Managing National Assessment review and through the school's own internal review
- manages assessment practice for national qualifications
- manages internal and external moderation
- makes use of and manages assessment-related data
- maintains the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicates them to staff, students and families.

### Why we review how schools are managing national assessment

**The purpose of a Managing National Assessment review is:**

- to confirm, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report, that schools are effectively meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022* (CAAS) and its *Guidelines* (CAAS Guidelines) in order to maintain their consent to assess; and
- to help schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment according to the requirements of the *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023*.

### What are possible outcomes

**Outcomes may include NZQA:**

- identifying the effectiveness of the school's review processes, assessment practice and quality assurance
- requiring action from the school where an issue is identified that significantly impacts on the school meeting the requirements of their *Consent to Assess*
- agreeing action with the school where an issue has been identified that could become significant if not addressed
- making suggestions for the school's consideration to enhance good assessment practice.

### What this review includes

**The review has three components:**

- The annual external moderation of the school's internal assessment.
- A check on specific aspects of assessment systems on an annual basis.
- A check on the school's assessment systems at least once every five years.

## How we conducted this review

The review includes examination of documentation from a range of sources and interviewing key stakeholders.

### Prior to the visit the school provided the following documents:

- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *Mount Albert Grammar School Assessment Manual 2023* (Staff Handbook)
- *Mount Albert Grammar School Assessment Guide for Students 2023* (Student Handbook).

### The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum/Assessment
- Heads of Faculty for:
  - Commerce
  - English
  - Mathematics and Assistant Principal's Nominee
  - Physical Education and Health
  - Science
  - Social Sciences
  - Technology
- Head of Department:
  - Dance and Year 13 Academic Dean
- three students

There was a report-back session with the Principal and Principal's Nominee at the end of the review visit to highlight good practice and areas for improvement, with suggested strategies, next steps, and to agree on any action required.