

Managing National Assessment Report

Mercury Bay Area School

April 2023

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Mercury Bay Area School

26 April 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 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 2021.

Actions and considerations

Agreed actions

The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. These are:

Action	Timeframe
Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results	
Clarify internal moderation processes	Immediate and ongoing
Ensure internal moderation materials are adequately stored	Immediate and ongoing
Strengthen systems for monitoring internal moderation	Immediate and ongoing
Evaluate the effectiveness of follow-up to external moderation	Immediate and ongoing

For consideration

To extend good practice in meeting student needs and supporting assessment practice, the school is encouraged to consider within the next year:

- simplifying and clarifying the process for student appeals
- ensuring that the student handbook is updated annually and made available to all students



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31 May 2023

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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 8 August 2017 Managing National Assessment Report

There were no action items for follow-up from the 2017 Managing National Assessment review. The school was asked to consider standardising its course outlines. This has been implemented.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes In 2022, the school's external moderation results were inconsistent. Several subject areas had patterns of not consistent or not yet consistent assessment materials and/or inaccurate grade boundary decisions. In addition, there were three standards where materials were not received for moderation. The school has responded by taking measures to improve the consistency of its internal moderation processes, including teacher understanding of the steps in this process and the importance of following them. This will continue to make a difference to external moderation outcomes.

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)

In 2022, there was a change of Principal and the appointment of a new Principal's Nominee following a period of difficulty with COVID and weather events that had impacted the school's review systems. The two Deputy Principals and Principal's Nominee are working together to improve communications to staff and students regarding NCEA practice and procedures and to improve the follow up to external moderation reviews.

New online storage protocols improve monitoring of internal and external moderation The Principal's Nominee is reviewing storage protocols to better manage the moderation of student work and ensure there are no further situations where materials are not available for external moderation. This is providing greater transparency for the senior leadership team to check that external and internal moderation practices are consistent with NZQA requirements.

Reviewed role of Principal's Nominee As a consequence of the review of the role, ownership of monitoring external moderation is shared with the Leader of Curriculum. A system developing assessment action plans with departments is being developed. This system better supports the functions of the role of Principal's Nominee and has begun to make a difference to moderation processes and outcomes in the most recent 2023 moderation round. Improved teacher understanding and application of the new internal moderation systems mean the school is now better using its external moderation results to act as a lens on its internal moderation systems.

Staff and student handbooks updated to improve accuracy and currency The Principal's Nominee and Deputy Principal are leading a communications review to support common understanding of assessment and internal moderation practice within the new workflow, and to ensure this is more clearly reflected in policy. The staff handbook has been reviewed for accuracy, currency and completeness. A

student handbook has been written and a summary leaflet will support existing communication in Kauri groups and assemblies.

Improved assessor support available With a significant number of changes to Heads of Faculty and many new teachers over the past two years the Principal's Nominee identified the need for professional development to help ensure all teachers have a common understanding of NZQA's assessment and moderation requirements. Staff have been given ESL Logins and understand how to use NZQA's Learning Management System, Pūtake. This assessment support offers improved channels of communication and up-to-date advice on assessment and moderation to departments and those new to NCEA.

School improves student readiness for mandatory digital assessment of Literacy/Numeracy The leadership team has identified that staff and students need to be better prepared to meet the challenges associated with digital online assessment. The school has already engaged with a range of digital practice examinations and smaller end of year examinations such as Business Studies and History. It plans to enter a larger number of Year 10 and 11 students in the Literacy/Numeracy co-requisite standards in 2023 to gauge students' readiness for this form of assessment in 2024.

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, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023

Courses tailored to meet student needs The school is meeting student needs through a range of academic and vocational pathways. Courses such as Apiculture and Maritime Studies provide local contexts for students to use their prior knowledge in a familiar rural and coastal setting. Students commented during the review that these courses engage their interests and that they would value further careers advice.

Growing use of Student Login Three quarters of students already access their Student Login through Kauri mentoring groups. This good practice should continue to enable students to access digital assessments, apply for reviews and reconsiderations and order further certificates as appropriate.

New courses support Māori student achievement The school continues to work on initiatives to reduce disparities in Māori student achievement, including the addition of a Te Ao Māori course offering assessment standards in Te Ao Haka and Tikanga. If necessary, students can study Te Reo Māori remotely. Where there is no capacity to offer a particular subject, the school has adapted course design and is encouraging professional development with the intention to redevelop this subject on site.

The school's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) data shows success for a number of Māori students. Continued interventions such as removing any banding and continuing to expand culturally appropriate contexts will support ongoing development of equitable assessment outcomes for students. These equity initiatives can continue to be embedded to build opportunities of student success.

Update the student appeals system The process for to appeal a grade is not well understood by students. It could be rationalised through the reintroduction of the appeals form the school used some years ago. As part of its communications review, the school needs to build a better and common understanding of this process so that students can access this aspect of natural justice with confidence.

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, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023

Changes to internal moderation practices in departments The school is implementing establishing clearer expectations around internal moderation through a monitored workflow system. Effective practices include encouraging teachers to take part in professional subject associations and engaging with suitably qualified subject specialists outside of the area. To further improve the credibility of internal moderation examples of effective storage practices, both physical and digital, and examples of good practice have been shared within the school. To develop beyond a compliance focus, and ensure that materials are available for external moderation, the school should continue to strengthen moderation monitoring and verification practices.

Monitor sufficiency of internal moderation Heads of Department should continue to monitor the number of samples of student work that an assessor provides to their grade verifier. For less experienced teachers or those with a history of not consistent or not yet consistent external moderation, more samples should be selected for external verification. This will help ensure that teachers including those new to NCEA continue to develop their understanding of the standard and their ability to provide accurate grade boundary judgements.

Greater use of external grade verifiers In a small number of departments there is evidence of a need to confirm that grade verifiers have recent successful experience with the standard that is reflected through external moderation and a clear track-record of understanding the requirements of the standard. This might include an expectation that process documents, comparative studies and greater depth of evidence is supplied to the grade verifier to help ensure that assessment materials submitted are at the appropriate level of the curriculum. In those departments where there is insularity this will help to resolve longitudinal patterns of lack of consistency with the standards assessed.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Mercury Bay Area School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their 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 students can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement
- assessing students when they are ready
- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet student needs
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support
- providing opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- identifying and providing support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals
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Mercury Bay Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed or late assessment
- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- 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
- safeguarding student / privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Mercury Bay Area School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes

Mercury Bay Area School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students 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.

Mercury Bay Area School reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date data
- 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 of late external entries, and 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 students and their families about assessment

Mercury Bay Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- 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.

Mercury Bay Area 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

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Mercury Bay Area 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
- *Mercury Bay Area School NCEA Handbook 2023* (Staff Handbook)
- *Mercury Bay Area School NCEA Handbook – Students 2023* (Student Handbook).

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum/Assessment
- Heads of Faculty/Department for:
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Education/Health
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
 - Technology
 - The Arts
- two students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, two Deputy Principals and the 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.