

Managing National Assessment Report

2013

**Blind and Low Vision
Education Network NZ**

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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 for Schools with Consent to Assess 2012* (Assessment Rules) 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 their 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 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:

- 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 (SRM) met with the Principal's Nominee and the Data Manager and with the other teachers in charge of the *Immersion* programmes, the *Satellite* unit and the *Kickstart* and STAR courses. The school also provided course information, its assessment policy and procedures and a thoughtful pre-review information document.

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

Background

Blind and Low Vision Education Network New Zealand (BLENNZ) gained consent to assess in 2005 and has reported some results for internally-assessed standards in recent years. It runs several programmes for different groups, catering for nearly 1500 students around the country from early childhood to 21 years old.

Students aged 17 to 21 come to *Kickstart* courses at the school's Homai campus, where they live in a supported flatting situation as they transition to tertiary study, the workplace or independent living. This includes independent living skills, career options and pathways and social and personal skills.

A programme of themed *Immersion* courses is also run through the year at Homai, most of them 3 or 4 days long. Recent examples are *Challenge IT for Learners with Low Vision* and *Future Planning*.

Students doing *Kickstart* or *Immersion* courses may also be assessed against some unit standards by an outside provider.

The *Satellite* unit is hosted by nearby James Cook High School and staffed by two BLENNZ teachers and two teacher aides. The students divide their time between their mainstream classes, satellite unit group learning and one-on-one instruction. This programme is designed to help the students reach the goals in their Individual Education Plan, as well as general academic requirements, including NCEA.

The school also caters for students in their mainstream schools around the country. Regionally-based Resource Teachers Vision (RTVs) liaise with the school and the family and work with students to facilitate access and full participation in education. Any externally-assessed standards students are entered for are in the context of their mainstream courses and under the code of their home school.

This is the school's first MNA review.

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

How does the school's assessment practice allow for the effective management of assessment for national qualifications?

Meeting students' assessment needs The school develops an Individual Education Plan with each student. This plan links the New Zealand Curriculum to the school's Expanded Core Curriculum, which includes using assistive technology, the skills of daily living and specialist support in the regular curriculum areas. All learning and assessment are referenced to the IEP. For students in their home schools, the Resource Teacher Vision is a vital connection.

Gathering evidence of achievement Assessment is integrated into the learning. Students know that successful completion of the learning unit means they have achieved the standard. They are allowed all the time they need, are given general advice as they work and may use the technology they use for their learning. Each student in a group maybe assessed in a different way from the others. This helps ensure valid and credible results.

Authenticity The authenticity of student work is safeguarded by ensuring that all assessment is done in the classroom and that drafts remain there.

Special assessment conditions Where adequate time in class and the student's usual technology are unlikely to compensate for their difficulties, the school applies for entitlement to a special assessment condition. No students with BLENNZ as their home school are currently entered for externally-assessed standards.

Identified action

No action was identified as needed to improve the effective management of assessment for national qualifications.

Moderation (CAAS Guidelines 2.6, 3v)

How effectively does the school's internal and external moderation assure assessment quality?

Internal moderation processes The teachers collaborate in devising or selecting teaching materials and adapting them to suit their students. They work together to select the standards to be assessed and to critique and adapt the assessment materials. They also grade their students' work together. This is an effective way of ensuring that they share their understandings and that assessments are quality-assured.

Annotated copies of benchmark sample student work are filed for future reference with the teaching materials, the assessment and schedule and other student samples, kept for possible external moderation. The Principal's Nominee selects these samples at random if there are more than eight students. The starting name on the alphabetical list varies unpredictably for each standard. A completed internal moderation cover sheet was sighted for each assessment.

Monitoring internal moderation processes The Principal's Nominee joins her colleagues in their discussions about internal moderation as the cover sheets are completed. Her participation in the quality assurance process is a particularly effective way of combining monitoring with shared professional learning. She also leads the Curriculum Committee in undertaking regular audits of assessment and moderation practice and records.

External moderation procedures All moderation materials are filed, clearly labelled, in the office. This permits ready retrieval at submission time.

External moderation The school's first external moderation round was completed in November 2012, when one standard was moderated. The materials and all the grade judgments were approved.

Identified action

No action was identified to improve the school's internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality.

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 One teacher manages all the data and web entries and results. This ensures consistency and accuracy. Students register for NZQA Learner login so they can track and check their own entries and results. They are asked

to confirm the accuracy of their results as reported on Learner login.

The school checks its own NZQA login reports for complete, accurate entries and results.

Assessment is currently completed for only a very few internal standards, in small classes and for short courses. No entry is made for any student unlikely to achieve. Nonetheless, the teachers are aware of the rules relating to reporting Not Achieved and understand the additional complexities that using external standards would entail. NZQA enrolments, entries and results for students in the satellite unit and in home schools around the country are managed by the home school.

Teachers are aware of the requirement to keep student details and assessment data private and password security well managed. The Principal's Nominee and the Data Manager have high security ESAA registration and an application for general access registration was under way at the time of the visit for the remaining teaching staff.

Identified action

No action was 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:

- *BLENNZ Policy and Procedures for Assessment for National Qualifications*
- *Course Booklet - Career and Future Planning Year 11 and 12 Immersion Course*
- *Pre-review Information*
- An explanation on the school's website of the programmes outlined on page 3 of this report

Course outlines and assessment statements Separate booklets are published for each standard assessed. They have a common introduction that includes some of the procedures information students need. Generic and course information is also given out verbally in class. A comprehensive student guide is being developed and will be posted on the school's website.

Memoranda of understanding Current MOUs have been established with outside providers for STAR and *Kickstart* course standards. These were sighted during the visit.

Identified action

No action was identified as needed to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures and communicate them to staff, students and families

Summary

Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ is commended for its commitment to promoting the participation of its students in assessment for qualifications and ensuring the credibility of their results. Teachers assess students in appropriate ways so that their best achievements can be recognised. They have a good understanding of the school's assessment procedures and their practice is consistent across the school.

Internal and external moderation is effectively managed and the school reports only results that have been subject to the school's internal moderation procedure. Teachers moderate collaboratively and the Principal's Nominee attends moderation meetings and leads audits for each programme. She oversees assessment practice in the school and enjoys the confidence of her colleagues. She is fully supported by the Principal.

Student entries are closely managed to ensure they are accurate and complete. Assessment information and procedures are kept up to date and communicated effectively and the school is developing a comprehensive written guide for all stakeholders.

The 2013 Managing National Assessment review identified no significant issues that prevent the school from meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011* and its *Guidelines*.

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.