

National Office

Mātauranga House
33 Bowen Street
PO Box 1666
Wellington 6140

Phone: 04 463 8000
www.education.govt.nz

DR: 1001936

31 October 2016

David Starshaw
Wā Ora Montessori School

Dear David

Thank you for your letter of 12 October 2016 about the MCAT assessment this year.

I note that you also sent this letter to NZQA who will be able to respond to the matters you raise directly related to the design of the assessment itself.

The Ministry has the responsibility of ensuring that the achievement standards are derived from the learning described in the National Curriculum. The MCAT assesses students against the standard 91027 *Apply algebraic procedures in solving problems*. The curriculum stresses the importance of mathematical thinking and problem solving and this is reflected in the standard.

The standard also makes it clear that students need to select the algebraic procedure and then use this in problem solving. This means they cannot be told which procedure to use. If this is a major focus in the teaching and learning programme then students will be well prepared.

I note you are requesting that the achievement standard be reviewed – currently the planned review date for all the standards is December 2018. We are happy to consider the need to review the standard earlier than this if required. Although we are aware that teachers had issues with the MCAT assessment itself, we have not yet seen evidence that indicates a need to change the standard.

I want to assure you that we work closely with NZQA on a regular basis and have contributed to responses on queries on MCAT, especially in relation to the national curriculum and the achievement standard.

We will continue to listen to maths teachers as we do representatives from all disciplines and we are happy to meet to discuss any concerns you may have.

Thank you for writing. I appreciate your interest and support for mathematics in schools.

Yours sincerely