

CONFIRMED ASSURANCE AUDIT REPORT: SHILOH CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Scope

This assurance audit report prepared by the Education Review Office is based on an examination of the extent to which the managing body is meeting its legal obligations and undertakings to the Crown, which are contained in legislation, regulations and the conditions of registration.

This assurance audit report was prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

1.2 Institution Information

Location	Motueka	
Type	Composite Private School	
Roll number	29	
Ethnic composition	Pakeha 26	Māori 3
Gender composition	Boys 17	Girls 12
Date of previous report	Assurance Audit, April 1994	

2 SUMMARY

Shiloh Christian Academy, fully registered as a private school, is operated by the Motueka New Life Centre for primary and secondary students. Part of the eldership of the centre, chaired by its Pastor, is responsible for the governance of the school and forms the management team. Day to day management is delegated to the principal. The roll has remained stable since the last Education Review Office report in April 1994.

The philosophy of the school centres on providing a Bible based curriculum through which students are trained in the highest principles of Christian Living. The core curriculum, which largely comprises the morning session, is provided by the curriculum resource School for Tomorrow, also known as the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) programme. It is supplemented by a range of school developed programmes, as well as selected units of study, from other providers.

Noteworthy features of the curriculum include: the emphasis placed on the self-worth of each individual; support for students experiencing learning difficulties; opportunities to use technology as learning tools; educational experiences and motivation provided by fieldtrips and participation by senior students in the annual ACE Convention; and access to a wide range of elective courses.

A comprehensive “student handbook” provides the guidelines for management. Procedures include enrolment, attendance, standards of conduct and discipline. The management admit the school uses corporal punishment as a means of behaviour reform. This is against the law, and action must be taken to ensure the practice ceases immediately.

Recommendations made in this report relate to extending health and safety provisions, ensuring consistency, continuity and balanced programmes in each subject, further development of monitoring and recording procedures and extending the opportunities for professional development.

The standard of tuition and learning is comparable with those in a school of a similar type. Students and families of the Shiloh Christian Academy are well served by a conscientious staff. The Christian principles and teaching on which the education is based is strongly reflected in the attitudes and responses shown by the students. The goals related to the school’s philosophy are being met.

3 FINDINGS

3.1 Administration

While the school is governed by part of the eldership of the Motueka New Life Centre, day to day management is delegated to the principal. The principal reports weekly to the chairperson of the eldership and this is supplemented by regular

discussions. Key issues to be addressed are discussed at the eldership meeting. Current procedures are ensuring the management are informed on many aspects of the school's operation and in some cases the outcomes.

Systems of management are contained in a "students handbook." This comprehensive booklet addresses such aspects as procedures related to enrolment, attendance, standards of conduct and discipline. Most of the systems in place are appropriate for the school's philosophy, size and structure. However, the behaviour reform system, not outlined in the handbook which uses using corporal punishment, is illegal. The management must ensure this practice ceases immediately and more acceptable methods of dealing with misbehaviour adopted.

Central to communication with the school community is the school newsletter. These well presented documents contain a range of information related to school happenings. The newsletter could be used to provide a further audience for student achievements. Informal communication opportunities are facilitated by the close-knit family school situation and the relationship with the New Life Centre.

The admission register records details of students on enrolment and departure. Verification of the date of birth of students enrolling at the age of five years should be entered in this register. Records of daily attendance are kept. Systems are in place to monitor and follow up student absences.

The philosophy on which the school is based is clearly stated. On enrolment, parents are required to participate in an orientation programme and agree to support the academic and disciplinary regulations of the school. The partnership with the parents is emphasised and this is reflected in their involvement and support of school activities.

Staff have regular meetings to address organisational, administrative and professional matters. Self appraisal or review and professional support is a feature of the meetings.

3.2 Curriculum Management

The school's definition of a "suitable curriculum" is clearly expressed in its basic philosophy statement and other documents. Shiloh Christian Academy is seen as an extension of the Christian home where students are trained "in the highest principles of Christian leadership, self discipline, individual responsibility, personal integrity and good citizenship," using a Bible based curriculum.

The core programme, which largely comprises the morning session, is provided by the curriculum resource School of Tomorrow, also known as the ACE (Accelerated Christian Education) programme. This programme is seen to be self-instructional, individualised, Bible-based and provides a phonetics learning to read programme. Each of the four core subjects, mathematics, English, social studies and science - plus word building, has sequential units of work (PACES).

This ACE programme is implemented by teachers and monitors. Students are involved in setting goals and organising their personal learning on a daily basis. There is a high level of on-task work with all students demonstrating from an early age the ability to take responsibility for time management and to develop independent work habits. The programme demands competency in reading to gain knowledge and students use this skill confidently and effectively.

The ACE programme is supplemented in the junior school by interactive group work in mathematics, language, physical education, art, music and science, social studies and health topics. In the senior school, students are able to choose from a wide selection of elective courses including the subjects outlined above for the junior school. From early in their schooling, computer technology is employed as a learning tool. Students demonstrate independence and confidence in using technology.

Motivation for many of these activities is provided by a weekly fieldtrip which provides positive education outside the classroom experiences. Participation by senior students at the annual ACE Convention provides social and spiritual challenge, an audience to demonstrate skills and the opportunity to experience new activities. There is evidence of positive outcomes for students participating in these activities.

Importance is placed upon all students achieving to their potential. Students progress through the units of work at their own pace. A mastery approach is employed. Those experiencing learning difficulties receive counsel to set achievable goals. Courses are adapted to suit the needs of students. Correspondence courses are accessed as required. Senior students are encouraged to work for Year 10 or Year 12 Certificates.

It would seem to be timely to review the curriculum in terms of the balance provided for students. This would mean looking at the afternoon programme, in particular, in relation to the ACE curriculum to ensure there is a continuous and consistent programme in each curriculum area. The long term plans in the junior school could provide a useful starting point for this exercise. The minimum curriculum requirements for secondary students should be reviewed. A positive outcome would be the upgrading of the school programme/scheme statement. This statement would then provide the guidelines to ensure a balanced curriculum.

Student learning in subjects taught through the ACE system is closely monitored with a high pass rate required to proceed to the next Pace. A strength is the self evaluation carried out by each student, with scores entered on a cumulative record card. Consideration could be given to developing and implementing monitoring and recording systems which would demonstrate student achievement in the other aspects of the curriculum delivered. Such information could support a broader picture of individual student achievement and be useful for school-wide self review purposes.

The inculcation of patriotism and loyalty is integrated into the curriculum. Allegiance is pledged to the Bible and the New Zealand flag. The national anthem is sung on appropriate occasions. Respect for the government, leaders of the country and the laws of the land is taught.

There are a number of positive indicators demonstrating the achievement of students. International test results confirm school based achievement information that there is a high standard of literacy. Results for mathematics, although not as high, are still positive. New Zealand National Convention results indicate students are achieving to a high standard in music, sport, craft, reading and photography. Most students achieve a Year 10 or Year 12 Certificate on graduating. Work experience reports indicate high levels on personal skills and abilities. Since 1992 half of the students have gone onto further tertiary study or training. The others are all in employment. These indicators confirm that Shiloh Christian Academy is achieving a standard comparable with similar schools.

3.3 Personnel Management

The school has determined its own staffing level. There are two full time registered teachers, one of whom is the principal. The teachers are supported by two part time teachers, one of whom is registered for specific teaching responsibilities each week. Further support is provided by two monitors who assist with a range of teacher aide tasks. The outcome is a teaching support team which positively uses a range of skills to support student learning.

Staff are employed on the basis of their training, skills, and evidence of a clear Christian witness in their lifestyle. Staff must be in complete harmony with the philosophy of the school and work to ensure a godly atmosphere. All staff demonstrate commitment and dedication to these ideals and use their skills to the benefit of students.

The school and its staff are members of two Christian school associations. These are the New Zealand Association of Christian Schools and the Fellowship of Accelerated Christian Education (NZ). These associations provide a flow of information, fellowship, conferences and staff training. Professional development opportunities focus on ACE programmes. As the school also operates other programmes, benefit could be gained by participation in a wider range of selected professional development opportunities.

3.4 Asset Management

While the school management, chaired by the Pastor has responsibility for the management of its assets, day to day matters are actioned and monitored by the principal. A team of fellowship members attend to specific responsibilities of care and upkeep. The outcome is a property which is clean, attractive and well maintained.

The modern building consists of a large learning centre, an assembly/multi-purpose hall, a science laboratory, art room, staff work space, kitchen and other

required facilities. The facilities meet building, health and safety obligations and requirements. The outcome is an attractive and well organised environment for students to receive their education.

All furniture and equipment is suitable to the curriculum being implemented. Key features include office (cubicle) seating arrangements for students to do their PACE programme, furniture and equipment to meet supplementary and elective programme requirements and technology to meet a range of curriculum needs.

Trial evacuation schemes are known and drills are held each term. Management should ensure the scheme is charted and displayed at appropriate points throughout the buildings. Such assistance would ensure all users of the facilities know of the procedures. A record of the dates of evacuation drills would also help to provide assurance that legal obligations are addressed.

The school has a health and safety policy which positively promotes the health and safety of students, staff and other facility users. Key features include regular inspections to eliminate potential hazards, provision of first aid supplies and the keeping of accident records, checking of safety equipment, outline of emergency procedures and the promotion of sun safety.

There are areas of health and safety which, if developed further, could enhance current systems. While there are regular inspections of the buildings and facilities to identify potential hazards, these inspections could be based on a checklist, which can become a record not only of the inspection but suggested actions; management could ensure that at least one staff member has a current first aid certificate; and implement risk management procedures to ensure student safety, particularly for out of school field trips.

4 ACTIONS REQUIRED

- 4.1 Ensure no corporal punishment is employed at the school.
[S139A Education Act 1989]

5 SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENTS

- 5.1 Supplement health and safety provisions by:
- documenting outcomes of inspections to identify potential hazards;
 - charting and displaying evacuation procedures at appropriate sites in the school building;
 - providing training to ensure at least one person on-site has an appropriate first aid certificate;
 - implementing risk management procedures for out of school educational experiences.
- 5.2 Review the components of the curriculum to ensure they provide a continuous, systematic and balanced programme in each subject.
- 5.3 Develop monitoring and recording systems which identify what students are achieving in each subject area.
- 5.4 Extend opportunities for professional development to support the implementation of programmes other than the ACE programme.

6 CONCLUSION

Students attending Shiloh Christian Academy are receiving their education through the ACE programme and a range of other educational activities. A number of indicators confirm students achieve at a standard comparable with those in similar schools.

SIGNED

Lennane Kent
Senior Review Officer
for Chief Review Officer

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