

Predicting likely rolls at each year level for 1 March in the 1 July Return.

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To ensure you have sufficient staffing at the beginning of the 2011 school year, it is important that predictions at each year level are not inadvertently understated as it is very unlikely that the 2011 March return will remedy any staffing deficiency which results. There are a number of reasons for this, not the least of which is that the March return does not include a new entrant adjustment when comparing your 2011 March headcount with your provisional staffing. As was clearly pointed out by the Ministry last year, the March Return is only a “Confirmation” process.

The ministry generally bases its initial prediction at each year level for your school on the headcount figures you supply with the returns (Year 1 March Headcount for likely year ones and the July headcount at each year level, rolled over one year level for likely year two and above predictions) as explained on pages 3 and 4 of Chapter 2 of the Funding Staffing and Allowances handbook. These ministry predictions are derived from **ministry** year levels, not from any “in house” year levels you may use to place children in appropriate year groups for learning. Other methods, particularly for small schools who are staffed for curriculum on 1 teacher for every 25 pupils (MACS schools), can lead to the loss of a whole teacher for a year, with the board then deciding to pick up the tab for additional staffing out of local funds to ensure appropriate teacher pupil ratios and management time. **You need to understand that if your prediction at any year level is less than the Ministry prediction for that year level, then you are unfortunately likely to be staffed on your prediction for that year level.**

We therefore recommend that you follow the procedure below to complete your 1 March prediction at each year level on this year’s July return.

Use, as a minimum, your year 1 headcount from this year’s **March** return as your year 1 prediction

Use, as a minimum, your year 1 headcount from this year’s **July** return as your year 2 prediction

Use, as a minimum, your year 2 headcount from this year’s July return as your year 3 prediction

Continue this process of rolling over figures from the July Headcount to complete your predictions at each year level.

When rolling over the year 5 total to predict your likely year 6 total, contributing schools **must not** include year 7 pupils in their year 6 prediction. These year 7 pupils will generally not be counted, as the ministry will only use the year 5 pupil numbers in its initial prediction of next year’s year 6 numbers. Instead, **contributing schools should include a year 7 prediction.** (Again, see page 4 of Chapter 2 of the Funding Staffing and Allowances handbook which specifically alerts contributing schools to this part of the process.)

When rolling over year 5 totals we would recommend that you ignore “local rumour” regarding pupils who may be thinking of leaving your contributing school to attend a full primary so that they spend 3 years there rather than 2 years at an intermediate school. Simply roll over the year 5 total to produce a likely year 6 total for next year.

Full primaries need to be aware that this same “local rumour” regarding children who may leave after year 6 to attend intermediate school applies with regard to the number of year 7 pupils you will have next year. Again we would recommend that you simply roll over all year six pupils when predicting your year 7 numbers for 2011.

Some questions to focus your thinking....

Are you already engaging in roll growth applications this year that could have been avoided?

Have you already been in touch with resourcing seeking a roll review?

Will your new entrant numbers at 10 October this year outstrip what you were staffed for on the Provisional Staffing Notice (Year ones plus Year one Adjustment)?

If a school with a new entrant roll reaches the provisional grading roll before 10 October this year, perhaps at least some of the reason relates to an overly cautious prediction.

A good test, for those wanting to “trial” this predicting system and comparing it with their current practice before completing this year’s July Return, would be to dig out your March and July Headcounts to produce a set of predictions at each year level as set out above, and then line up those predictions with the provisional entitlement notice you received in September for each year level. Where the provisional figure is lower at a particular year level, go to your own July return, 1 March prediction for that year level, and see whether you were the author of your own misfortune! Be warned - this activity can be depressing when you realise how much staffing you could have been legitimately entitled to from the beginning of the school year, but instead means you are now waiting for roll reviews and roll growth to get your staffing ratios up to where they should be.

If, in spite of the information in the Funding Staffing and Allowances Handbook, you are not sure about implementing what is recommended above, go to the Ministry “Guidelines for Roll Returns” and read the Ministry suggestions about how to predict rolls. For example the 2009 Guidelines said “All schools are asked to predict their regular student rolls for the next March and to estimate their March rolls for the following two years. **You can base this prediction on previous year’s rolls, estimated new entrants and/or transfers, natural roll growth.**”

Another illuminating article comes from John Clarke, Group Manager, Resourcing, entitled “2009 Primary School March Confirmed Staffing Entitlements”. It was circulated in the NZPF Federation Flyer No 6, dated 28 April 2009. It is included below for those interested in this topic.

Is there a danger that if overstaffing results, you will somehow lose staffing or funding?

Provisional Staffing becomes Assured Staffing and you retain the higher of either that assured staffing or an improved staffing entitlement if the 1 March headcount supports it. So, no staffing loss to deal with, but you will want to avoid redeployment issues at year end if the roll does not reach expectations.

With regard to funding, the Ministry uses predicted rolls to help calculate the first instalment of the funding entitlement for the year but you need to anticipate reduced funding if expectations are not reached, as the funding is recalculated on the actual roll plus 11/12ths for a new entrant adjustment. A prudent school will take account of this possibility when setting the budget.

Are you a mentor principal or a principal giving voluntary support to you local first time principals?

Your “flock” might benefit if you can find the time to guide them through the completion of the 1 July return..... You might be able to help them secure an extra teacher for next year, gain some additional release time and save precious board funds in the process.

What about children who are absent on Roll Count Day?

Children are required to be enrolled, present and eligible on roll count day! There are exceptions. A quick read of pages 2 to 7 of chapter 5 in the Funding Staffing and Allowances handbook will provide you with the documentation requirements you need to ensure that these children can be counted This includes absence due to illness, domestic reasons, suspended pupils, children temporarily overseas, at activity centres, at health camps or regional health schools, overseas exchange students, attending more than one school or attending off site locations.

And a final gentle push What does the word “prediction” mean? – and are you an optimist?

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June 2010

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