

Managing National Assessment Report

Raglan Area School

15 March 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Raglan 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.

The summary section evaluates the school's overall effectiveness and provides a broad overview of the review's key findings for all readers. The remaining sections provide detail of these findings for school managers.

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 meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011* (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 *Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019* (Assessment Rules).

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- 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 to consider 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 four 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
- *2019 Staff Assessment Handbook*
- *Raglan Area School Student NCEA Guide*
- a sample of course *Assessment Statements* for Years 11, 12 and 13.

Two School Relationship Managers met with the:

- Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum/Assessment
- Four students
- Subject Leaders of:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Education
 - Social Sciences
 - Science
 - Technology.

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

SUMMARY

Raglan Area School

15 March 2019

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*. 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. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

What the school is doing well

Raglan Area School has a culture of self-review that ensures credible assessment practice continues to develop. Initiatives are implemented and revised as needed, using the NCEA assessment model to meet the needs of all students.

The school is developing effective ways to use technology for assessing students and gathering achievement evidence. To focus on quality assessment, there has been a conscious effort to reduce the number of standards assessed at all certificate levels. Strategies have also been implemented to raise Level 2 certificate achievement rates, which have improved in recent years.

Robust internal moderation processes assure senior management that only quality assured results are reported to NZQA. Responses to external moderation outcomes are documented and action plans are developed when issues are identified. These responses are monitored by senior management to ensure they are completed, and that improvement occurs, where necessary.

Achievement data from a range of sources is used to reflect on and develop assessment programmes. Data entry is timely and data accuracy is enhanced through regular checking of results by staff, students and senior managers. Close monitoring of achievement data, often through *Academic Mentoring*, enables students to track their progress and meet their academic goals.

A range of communication systems are in place to assist staff, students and parents with their understanding of the NCEA qualification and the school's assessment policies and procedures. Senior managers work closely to ensure consistency of assessment and moderation practice across the senior school and that results they report to NZQA are robust, reliable and credible.

Areas for improvement

This review identified that the student NCEA guide needs to be reviewed so it is fit-for-purpose and there is some inconsistency around the use of resubmissions and selection of student material for internal moderation verification. Senior managers are considering strategies to remedy these concerns which are highlighted in this report.

Agreed action

The school agreed that the following action will improve the quality of their assessment systems. This is:

- ensure staff understand the school's procedures for managing resubmissions.

Kay Wilson
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28 August 2019

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FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

How effectively has the school responded to external and internal review?

External review

Evidence for external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Items from 17 March 2016 Managing National Assessment Report All agreed action items from the 2016 review have been completed.

Response to external moderation outcomes Raglan Area School has a system for responding to external moderation outcomes that is well-understood by staff and effectively monitored by the Principal's Nominee. Where poor outcomes do occur, action plans are developed and carried out. Responses may include finding qualified verifiers, using clarification documents and moderation reports to support assessor judgements and participating in suitable professional development opportunities. This approach enables teachers to develop their understanding of the standard and supports continued improvement in external moderation outcomes.

Internal review

Evidence for 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)

Raglan Area School has strong internal review processes that continue to impact positively on assessment within the school. Recently, senior managers have developed a number of initiatives with the goal of enhancing assessment practice and procedures for national qualifications. These include:

- effective tracking and monitoring of student achievement through the establishment of Academic Mentoring sessions
- the provision of parent-teacher-student conferences that involve goal-setting and course selection
- greater support for gathering digital evidence of achievement and upskilling staff to process digital submissions for external moderation
- providing support so teachers can meet with and travel to subject specialists for internal moderation purposes.

A project-based approach in some junior classes is allowing integrated assessment to be trialled with a view to introducing more integrated assessment in NCEA. These initiatives have the potential to ensure that assessment is more coherent, that assessment practice more closely aligns with the learning process and that student needs are better met through personalised assessment.

Ongoing improvement in assessment practice is reflected through the school's self-review processes Senior managers continue to monitor the effectiveness of their responses, identifying positive outcomes for students, with most school leavers following meaningful pathways, such as tertiary study and employment.

No action required

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice were identified during this review.

How effectively does the school's assessment practice meet the needs of its students?

Evidence for assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019 5.5)

Raglan Area School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- using student voice to develop topics for assessment that are relevant to them
- using authentic contexts and gathering naturally occurring evidence, where manageable
- implementing strategies to address inequality for Māori and Pasifika students in STEM subjects, including *Academic Mentoring*
- reducing the number of standards assessed to focus on quality assessment not quantity of assessment
- applying for special assessment conditions to meet the assessment needs of identified students
- unpacking the standard, clarifying task requirements, scaffolding assessment, setting milestones and providing feedback and feedforward as appropriate
- developing opportunities for digital assessment which parallel developing digital pedagogies within the school.

Raglan Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment
- preparing students for NCEA by having similar assessment conditions for some junior school assessments
- investigating appeals following the principles of natural justice
- encouraging and maintaining authentic assessment practice through a range of documented strategies
- ensuring credible, authentic evidence for derived grades is available if needed
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Assessment contexts reflect student interests Contexts for assessment within the school reflect Raglan Area School's unique coastal environment and student interests with the development of its Surf Academy. This is a multi-level programme that allows students to develop their surfing talents, while accessing a range of integrated assessments. A Manaaki Ao science strand gives students access to biology and bio-science standards, while skateboarding is one context used to assess in physics. These contexts increase student engagement and lead to enhanced academic success.

Clarify processes for resubmission The review identified variation in the use and understanding around the resubmission process. A resubmission can only be offered at the discretion of the teacher where the student has made a minor error or omission that they can identify and correct without further guidance. The student's grade should be at a grade boundary. A resubmission should not be student driven or offered to all students being assessed for this standard. Senior managers agreed to

clarify the school's expectations for resubmission with all teaching staff. Material from the 2018 Principal's Nominee seminar and NZQA's resubmission *Mythbuster* publication are useful references that could assist with this understanding.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure staff understand the school's procedures for managing resubmissions.

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

Evidence for internal and external moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019 6.4b)

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use and using subject specialists to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work
- larger departments using team marking and verification to ensure judgements are consistent across classes
- using subject specialists outside of the school to verify student work where manageable, including verifying online and documenting evidence through saving email conversations
- all teachers documenting internal processes through using the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* and through the Principal's Nominee monitoring completion.

Raglan Area School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work for external moderation randomly to NZQA requirements and ensuring they are available for external moderation by being adequately stored
- storing boundary exemplars for future reference
- ensuring external moderation feedback is actioned as appropriate, before assessment materials are used again through an embedded response to external moderation process
- constantly reviewing external moderation processes and outcomes.

Increased digital submission of external moderation The school has set targets for digital submission, managing to submit half of its external moderation material digitally for the 2019 submission. Curriculum leaders interviewed for this review are supportive of this goal and have put in place systems to ensure that digitally-stored, student assessment work is available for external moderation in 2020. To support this process, internal moderation processes are also being completed online.

Strategic selection could reduce workload Senior managers should consider providing staff with further guidance on the strategic selection of student work for internal moderation. Teachers interviewed for the review were verifying more samples of student work than is necessary. The number of samples should be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and the range of grades. Strategic selection has the potential to accelerate the overall internal moderation process, reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process, and support the timely return of confirmed results to students.

No action required

No issues with the school's internal and external moderation were identified during this review.

For consideration

To extend school practice in assurance of assessment quality, the school is encouraged to consider:

- providing staff with further guidance on the strategic selection of student work for internal moderation.

How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

Evidence for data management and use supporting student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)

Raglan Area School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- monitoring the appropriateness of assessment programmes and modifying them as needed
- maintaining current Memoranda of Understanding with outside providers
- sharing documents between teachers for analysing results and reflecting on progress
- targeting students at risk of not achieving and supporting them through a range of strategies

Raglan Area School reports accurate achievement data by:

- using Key Indicators to ensure only standards for which the school holds consent are assessed, and to identify and remediate errors
- ensuring that internal results are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
- actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the student management system and NZQA Learner Login.

Robust data management processes embedded The Principal's Nominee has embedded robust processes to ensure that all teachers responsible for assessment data know and carry out their responsibilities to check entries and ensure results are accurate. Teachers in charge are also required to enter their results in the student management system as soon as internal moderation has been completed. The Deputy Principal Curriculum/Assessment and Principal's Nominee report results to NZQA after the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* has been checked for completion. This system ensures that results are reported to NZQA in a timely manner and that the school's quality assurance processes have been followed.

No action required

No issues with the school's management and use of assessment-related data were identified during this review.

How effectively does the school's communication inform staff, and students and their families about assessment?

Evidence for school communication promoting understanding of assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7ii(b))

Raglan Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive clear, consistent assessment statements for all courses they undertake
- communicating consistent, up-to-date and easily accessed assessment information to staff, students and their families through the student management system portal
- maintaining consistent understanding for students through the *Academic Mentoring* sessions
- supporting teachers new to the school by including regular input from the Principal's Nominee in their induction programmes
- Senior Managers reviewing communications to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and current.

Raglan Area School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- using a range of strategies to share and reinforce assessment information within the school community including:
 - regular newsletters
 - regular emails home
 - parent-student-teacher conferences
 - distributing NZQA's information handout
 - online assessment-related information such as assessment calendars
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes at full staff and department meetings
- reinforcing students' understanding of what they need to achieve to gain a qualification.

User-friendly student handbook recommended Senior managers are aware that the current version of the student NCEA guide is not fit-for-purpose and should be modified to better meet the needs of its intended audience. This was reinforced when students interviewed, indicated that while they are aware it exists, they have not yet read the student NCEA guide. The student NCEA guide contains important information for students and their families and is one mechanism the school uses to encourage consistent assessment understanding and practice across the whole school community. Reducing the volume of information in the student NCEA guide, simplifying the language and providing hyperlinks to further information on the NZQA website will make it more user-friendly. This will ensure that the students understand NCEA processes and practices, allowing them to more effectively manage their own assessment journeys.

No action required

No issues with the way in which the school maintained the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicated them to staff, students and families were identified during this review.

For consideration

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- simplifying the student NCEA guide so that it is more user-friendly.