Managing National Assessment Report

Rotorua Lakes High School

October 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Rotorua Lakes High 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
- *Rotorua Lakes High School National Qualifications Framework Assessment Procedures 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *Rotorua Lakes High School Student Assessment Information 2019* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
    - o English
    - o Science
    - o Social Sciences
    - o Technology
- Assistant Head of Department for Science
- Teachers in Charge of:
    - o Economics
    - o Music
- Teacher of Geography
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the 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

Rotorua Lakes High School

31 October 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

Rotorua Lakes High School provides students with access to a wide range of academic and vocational assessment opportunities to help meet their assessment needs and achieve their qualification goals. Review, with a focus on using data to inform assessment practice, supports the school aim of improving academic success for students.

Assessment processes are effectively managed to ensure consistency of staff practice, the credibility of results, and that students' assessment needs are met. Improved processes support the identification, testing and making of applications for students who could potentially benefit from special assessment conditions.

Internal moderation is an embedded process within the school and is effectively monitored by Heads of Department and the Principal's Nominee. The school's external moderation results reflect the effectiveness of its quality assurance processes.

Accurate assessment data is regularly reported to NZQA. Students and whānau are encouraged to check the information being reported and monitor progress towards meeting qualification requirements. The school analyses achievement data to also monitor students' progress so that it can provide appropriate support, where necessary.

Information on qualifications and assessment processes is shared with the school community through a variety of physical and digital methods. It has helped students and staff to develop a shared understanding of school procedures and NCEA requirements. An induction process ensures staff new to NCEA and/or the school or are appropriately supported.

Areas for improvement

The staff handbook should be reviewed to ensure the information it contains is current, aligns with best practice and consistent with the NZQA Assessment Rules.

Some other steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

Agreed action

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

- review the staff handbook to ensure the information it contains is current, aligns with best practice and NZQA Assessment Rules.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

19 February 2020

NZQA

0800 697 296

www.nzqa.govt.nz

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 4 August 2015 Managing National Assessment Report   The school has addressed the one action item from the 2015 report. The process to select samples of student work for external moderation now meets NZQA requirements.

Response to external moderation outcomes   For the last three years the school's external moderation results show that based on the sample submitted overall its quality assurance processes are effective. Where external moderation reports identify issues, Heads of Department complete a response form detailing how they intend to address these and, if required, requesting support for planned actions. These actions are discussed with the Principal's Nominee, who checks on their progress towards completion. The same process is used for all external moderation, regardless of the standard setting body.

The current response form does not require the Principal's Nominee to record the completion of the actions taken, nor the staff to evaluate how effective these have been in addressing the identified issue. The school could consider how it could add these steps to its process so management can be assured that identified issues are adequately addressed or that standards are not suggested for further external moderation prematurely.

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)

The school has a focus on raising the academic success of all students. Regular meetings between the Principal and Heads of Department throughout the year focus on using data to inform assessment practice and encouraging review of student achievement outcomes. At monthly teacher enquiry meetings in departments, teachers use achievement data, along with collected student voice, to review and modify course assessment programmes tailored to student needs.

The addition of a data analysis tool has made it easier for staff to analyse student progress throughout the year. It ensures students at-risk of not meeting achievement goals are identified and supports annually reporting on achievement at the cohort, subject and standard level.

The school has reviewed how it provides for students with special needs, including the provision of special assessment conditions for NCEA assessments. This gives them confidence that students who need assessment support are getting it. This year approximately seven per cent of NCEA candidates have approved special assessment conditions with 80 percent of these students' applications supported by school evidence. To help achieve these outcomes the school has:

- improved the collection of information on the previous use of special assessment conditions when enrolling new senior students

- strengthened the data it gathers on new students from contributing Kahui Ako schools, so that it can better identify those who may need extra support or could potentially benefit from special assessment conditions.

The school has provided extra resourcing to increase the number of computers available for student use, ensuring students approved a computer use entitlement can access one when needed.

Review of school communication with whānau has focussed on ensuring it is timely. Parental use of the school's student management system online portal and regular contacts by email by staff are encouraged to keep whānau informed about student progress. A newly established student goal setting process uses software that will eventually allow staff and whānau to provide feedback to students on the goals they set.

These actions provide evidence the school has the capacity to use data to evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment practices that support its aim of improving the academic success of students.

For consideration

To extend good practice in external review of assessment, the school is encouraged to consider:

- adding a monitoring sign-off and evaluation section to its *External Moderation Response* form.

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)

Rotorua Lakes High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- introducing new or modifying existing courses to improve engagement and broaden the range assessment pathways offered

- engaging with outside providers to extend the school's capacity to provide vocational assessment opportunities

- tailoring contexts and assessment opportunities to individuals within courses

- assessing when ready, where appropriate and manageable

Rotorua Lakes High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing extensions, appeals and missed and late assessment processes consistently

- assisting students to present authentic work by using a range of suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process

- reporting Not Achieved where a student has presented evidence that is not at the standard, or has had an adequate assessment opportunity and submitted no work

- collecting credible, standard-specific evidence to support derived grade applications

- supporting the effective management of NZQA external examinations

- complying with the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993* when handling students' assessment information.

Māori and Pacific student engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects   New, or altered, courses have been introduced to encourage participation and provide for greater success in STEM subjects. The school has noted the lower participation and achievement in STEM subjects for Māori and Pacific students than for students of other ethnicities and has implemented strategies to address the gap, including:

- introducing a Year 12 Science course which, together with a Year 13 course the school intends to offer in 2020, will offer a further STEM pathway for students

- reframing Year 11 and 12 Mathematics courses to have a more statistical focus and offer more students the opportunity to take the subject through to Year 13

- increasing use of achievement standards in Technology courses, such as *Product Design* to allow students to meet University Entrance requirements.

No action required

No issues with the school's management of assessment for national qualifications were identified during this review.

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)

Rotorua Lakes High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- Teachers:
    - ensuring assessment materials are critiqued prior to use to confirm they are fit-for-purpose and provide students with the opportunity to present evidence at all grade levels
    - using standard clarifications and exemplars to inform their grade judgements during marking
    - engaging with subject specialists from within, and outside of, the school to verify selected samples of student grades
    - documenting moderation processes, including verification discussion and decisions, on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
    - using the same processes for moderating Industry Training Organisation administered standards
- Heads of Department and the Principal's Nominee monitoring the completion of internal moderation processes to ensure all reported results are credible.

Rotorua Lakes High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored
- encouraging staff ownership of the process by having them suggest appropriate standards for inclusion in the moderation plan
- providing staff with appropriate login access to NZQA's External Moderation Application to assist with the submission process and querying moderation reports.

Strategically select samples of student work for grade verification   Several of the staff interviewed reported selecting student work randomly for grade verification. Also, many of the staff interviewed have more samples of student work verified than just those at grade boundaries. The school should therefore provide staff with guidance on strategically selecting a sufficient sample of student work from around grade boundaries for grade verification.

Selecting strategically has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process and still provide assurance that assessor decisions are consistent with the standard before results are reported to NZQA. There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size should be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

Recording internal moderation process digitally   The school could consider using their student management system to record internal moderation processes. The recently added data analysis tool has a function that would allow staff to document their internal moderation processes for each standard digitally. Because the material is stored centrally and easily accessed, this would increase transparency and facilitate more efficient monitoring by Heads of Department and Senior Leaders.

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 a sufficient samples of student work for verification

- using the student management system to record the results of 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)

Rotorua Lakes High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- monitoring individual student achievement to ensure at-risk students are identified early, their programmes reviewed, and support provided as appropriate

- regularly reporting to whānau on their student's progress towards meeting achievement goals

- staff collecting feedback on assessment programmes to ensure they are meeting their students' interests and assessment needs.

Rotorua Lakes High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis

- checking for data submission errors using the Key Indicators

- encouraging students and whānau to use the online portal to the school's student management system to check their internally assessed results

- introducing a regular NCEA tracking report to help confirm student entries and reduce late entries in externally assessed standards

- reporting results for standards the school has consent for, and reconciling results from external providers with which they hold a current Memorandum of Understanding, to ensure results are reported with the correct provider codes.

Consider developing a proforma for staff data analysis   There is no set format that staff use when they analyse student achievement data at the start of each year. As a starting point, a proforma could be developed using the present guidelines on what needs to be reported. This would ensure greater consistency in reporting and potentially make it easier for Heads of Department and other middle managers to identify patterns and trends as part of their review.

Encourage students to register and use their NZQA Learner Login   Students should be encouraged to register and use their Learner Login to track their academic progress and ensure any data held by NZQA is accurate. It is only through their Login that they can:

- check the accuracy of their entries and the results NZQA uses to award qualifications

- order copies of their qualification certificates

- request reviews or reconsiderations of external examination papers

- print an official copy of their Record of Achievement.

The percentage of senior students registering to use their NZQA Learner Login dropped from 85 per cent in 2016 to 76 per cent in 2018. While some of the students interviewed had registered to use their Login, they preferred to view their academic progress through the student management system because the achievement information it holds is more current.

For consideration

To extend good practice in managing and making use of assessment-related data, the school is encouraged to consider:

- developing a proforma for staff to report their annual analysis of student achievement

- assisting students to register and use their NZQA Learner Login.

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))

Rotorua Lakes High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- helping students to set academic goals and providing them with information on what they need to achieve in order to gain their NCEA qualifications.

Rotorua Lakes High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- communicating information on qualifications and assessment processes to the school community using a range of physical and digital formats, including assemblies, the school *Facebook* page, *SchoolPoint*, emails, and face-to-face meetings
- ensuring relevant NZQA updates are circulated to appropriate staff and discussed as necessary
- providing an induction process to support teachers new to NCEA and/or to the school, to understand school expectations and NZQA's assessment processes
- keeping teachers informed about assessment best practice
- providing opportunities to discuss changes to school and/or NZQA requirements at Head of Department and staff meetings.

Review staff handbook The staff handbook requires review to ensure the information it contains is current and aligns with the NZQA Assessment Rules and best assessment practice, including:

- reminding staff that a *Not Achieved* grade must be reported if students breach the Assessment Rules
- providing guidance on:
    - resubmission and further assessment opportunities
    - sufficient grade verification and the strategic selection of student work for internal moderation
- adding information on the school's processes for monitoring the completion of internal and external moderation processes.

Using links to appropriate pages of the NZQA website could help maintain the accuracy of information provided and its currency.

Provide consistent course assessment information The assessment information in course outlines is presented in a variety of formats. The school should consider making similarly formatted information available to students and parents so that assessment programmes are easier to understand. The school's student management system can be used to produce standardised assessment statements for this purpose.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, students and families. Senior management undertakes to:

- review the staff handbook to ensure the information it contains is current, aligns with best practice and NZQA Assessment Rules.

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:

- standardising the assessment information in course outlines.