

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Kaitaia Abundant Life School**

**August 2019**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Kaitaia Abundant Life 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
- *Kaitaia Abundant Life School NCEA Staff Handbook 2019*
- *Kaitaia Abundant Life School National Certificate of Education Achievement (NCEA) Student Handbook 2019*
- a sample of course booklets for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee/Acting Principal
- Head(s) of Department for:
  - English
  - Mathematics
  - Physical Education
  - Social Sciences
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal's Nominee/Acting Principal 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

## Kaitaia Abundant Life School

14 August 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

Kaitaia Abundant Life School is a school of special character whose guiding principle is 'to be a Christian School that partners with families to produce young people of academic and personal excellence in a safe environment'. Students are supported through differentiated courses and assessments. They have individualised programmes which are appropriate for their vocational pathways. External providers are used to provide courses that cannot be offered at the school.

Review processes are effective. The school has addressed all issues from the last Managing National Assessment review. Self-review has led to the strengthening of assessment practice, which is standardised and consistent. There are now processes in place that are clear to all staff and students.

The school ensures that only credible results are reported to NZQA through robust internal and external moderation processes. This includes effective monitoring and follow-up of issues identified by external moderation reports. They can now have confidence in robustness of their internal moderation process which has been strengthened through the use of subject-specific grade verifiers.

The management of assessment data is efficient, ensuring results reported to NZQA are complete, timely and accurate. Student academic progress is monitored by the Principal's Nominee, subject teachers and Heads of Department. Where a student is at risk of not achieving a qualification the Principal's Nominee, in discussion with other staff, will develop a support plan.

A range of methods of communication are used by the school to ensure staff, students and whānau have access to up to date assessment information. All students interviewed were well informed about NCEA and felt well supported by staff. Staff also reported being well informed through emails and staff meetings.

### Areas for improvement

Kaitaia Abundant Life School has reviewed how it manages, identifies and supports students with Special Assessment Condition entitlements but has yet to implement the process they have agreed upon. The newly appointed Special Education Needs Coordinator and Deputy Principal are working with the Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour to start identifying and putting in applications for students who might have specific learning disorders.

Although processes for following external moderation are in place these need to be formalised by being documented.

### **Agreed action**

The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems. These are to:

- implement the process for identifying and making applications for Special Assessment Conditions
- document the response to external moderation.

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21 October 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 15 June 2017 Managing National Assessment Report** The following significant issues were identified in the last Managing National Assessment Review. The issues were:

- inconsistencies in the completion of internal moderation
- insufficient follow-up of issues raised in external moderation
- a lack of systematic self-review that would identify issues and lead to improvement

The Principal, assisted by the previous Principal's Nominee has ensured these have been addressed, implementing the actions required from the last report. The new Principal's Nominee understands the importance of continuing to embed these actions. These actions are detailed later in this report.

Kaitaia Abundant Life School also had four agreed action items to improve the quality of their assessment systems. In response they have:

- reviewed how they manage the identification and support of students with Special Assessment Conditions entitlements, including ensuring that school-based evidence can be collected to support applications for students who might have specific learning disorders
- ensured that all teachers understand and follow NZQA's requirements for managing resubmission and further assessment and monitor that these are being followed
- ensured that teachers select sufficient pieces of work for internal moderation which should include a range of grades and work at grade boundaries; this may be more than eight samples
- encouraged all teachers to record the reason for an assessment decision to assist with further decisions.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** In response to poor external moderation outcomes the Principal has strengthened internal moderation. Where poor external moderation outcomes occur, teachers discuss action plans with the Principal and the newly appointed Principal's Nominee. These should be documented so that there is a transparent record. Adequate resources are provided to support improvement in practice.

Kaitaia Abundant Life School has changed a number of its grade verifiers to ensure that feedback on assessors' judgements is consistent with the standard. Strengthening of quality assurance processes provide the senior management team with confidence that internal moderation processes are robust, and results reported are credible. Agreement rates between NZQA moderators and teachers have improved significantly.

## **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)*

Kaitaia Abundant Life School's internal self-review allows them to identify areas of improvement to make change.

**Contextualised Learning and Assessment** The school is in the process of reviewing its curriculum and how this affects assessment. The review found that teachers were teaching primarily to assessments. The school wants teachers to show an increased understanding of contextualised learning and assessment, the requirements to gain a qualification and how this may look, while recognising a need to underpin this with the Christian philosophy of the school. The Principal's Nominee believes making these changes will make a significant difference to student engagement and therefore their achievement.

**Review of Assessment Practices** The school has continued to review their assessment practices. Having ensured that all teachers are consistent with resubmission and further assessment opportunities, they have reviewed a number of other assessment processes including the derived grade process, the management of extensions, deadlines, authenticity, appeals and breaches of the rules.

The school has introduced practice exams this year to enable the students to experience exams and to ensure they have credible evidence for derived grades, in case a student is unable to attend an external examination for reasons beyond their control.

## **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review. Senior management undertakes to:

- document the response to external moderation.

## 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)*

### **Kaitaia Abundant Life School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on missed and late work including extensions, resubmissions, and further assessment opportunities
- providing differentiated courses and assessments within multilevel courses
- providing a number of opportunities for students to follow their vocational pathways by using a wide range of external providers
- assessing when ready and where a student is not yet ready to be assessed, providing opportunity for further learning to avoid non achievement.

### **Kaitaia Abundant Life School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- encouraging the use of a digital platform to collect evidence to support their aim of becoming a digital school
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Students at risk of not achieving** Student achievement is monitored and tracked by the Principal's Nominee, subject teachers and Heads of Department. If a student is at risk of not achieving a qualification an intervention is put in place. This could include extra classroom support, further teaching and learning prior to assessment being given, and/or changes in their assessment programme to suit the needs of the student.

The school is proposing to expand on their current monitoring and tracking of student progress toward achieving their assessment and qualification goals and aspirations by implementing a mentoring programme. This will formalise and improve records of current interventions.

**Managing the identification and support of students with Special Assessment Conditions** The school has developed a plan for identifying and supporting students with Special Assessment Conditions. Their next focus is to implement this plan. They will use school and Ministry of Education data, along with recommendations from staff and parents or caregivers, to identify students requiring Special Assessment Conditions. Applications will be made by the newly appointed Special Education Needs Coordinator who will work with the Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour to gather school-based evidence in support of these applications. The school has indicated that they will start gathering evidence from Year 10. Implementation of the plan was delayed due to personnel changes.



**Agreed action**

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

- implement the process for identifying and making applications for Special Assessment Conditions.

## 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)*

### **Kaitaia Abundant Life School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- verifying grade judgements of purposefully selected samples of student work using subject specialists from outside the school
- documenting verification discussions and decisions on the internal moderation sheet
- the internal moderation cover sheet, assessment task, assessment schedule students work and annotated marking sheets being placed in a folder in the shared drive for the Principal's Nominee to view prior to results being reported.

### **Kaitaia Abundant Life School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples, of student work for external moderation using a valid selection process, when class size necessitates this
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

**Digital storage of all moderation material** In line with Kaitaia Abundant Life School's goal to be a digital school, the Principal's Nominee now requires all moderation material to be stored digitally in a newly set up Google shared drive. This is monitored by her and no results are reported until all materials and cover sheet are sighted.

**Consistent internal moderation process** The school has streamlined their internal moderation system to achieve consistent schoolwide practice. Emphasis was placed on ensuring appropriate grade verifiers were used and teachers sought support from colleagues in other schools. Not only has this now ensured the grade verifier is a subject specialist, but it has also had the added benefit of providing further networking opportunities for staff.

### **No action required**

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

## **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)*

### **Kaitaia Abundant Life School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- requiring Heads of Department to report an analysis of NCEA achievement data to the Principal and Board of Trustees, and to inform future teaching and assessment

### **Kaitaia Abundant Life School reports accurate achievement data by:**

- submitting results to NZQA in a timely and regular manner
- using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data errors
- ensuring all internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
- using analysis of achievement data to identify issues in student achievement each term then making changes to teaching, learning and assessments.

**Students monitoring of their results** Students are encouraged to register with the NZQA Learner Login so they can track their NCEA progress and identify data errors. All students interviewed use this to monitor their progress. The school has not yet set up the student portal of their Student management system but see this as a positive step to supplement the data held by NZQA and to assist students, parents and mentors to track student achievement in real time.

### **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))*

### **Kaitaia Abundant Life School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and whānau using a range of methods and media including assemblies, staff meetings, emails and newsletters.
- supporting teachers new to the school
- reviewing student and staff handbooks to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

### **Kaitaia Abundant Life School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- running an NCEA information evening for students and their whānau
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- discussing with students what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

**Inconsistent information in student course outlines** Assessment practice information is referred to in the student and staff handbook and this provides consistent information for all courses. However, the information in subject course information documents is inconsistent and in excess of subject-specific material. A common course outline for all subjects will ensure they are easily understood and that key information such as the number of credits and mode of assessment are readily identified by students. Each department can still provide additional subject-specific information for students but should leave schoolwide procedures to the handbook.

### **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:

- developing a common template for all course outlines to simplify and to provide consistent assessment information for students.