

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **The Catlins Area School**

**August 2019**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively The Catlins 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
- *The Catlins Area School, Procedures for NZQF Assessment, Staff Handbook, Updated January 2019*
- *The Catlins Area School, Assessment Information for Learners and their Whanau, Updated January 2019 (Student Handbook)*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal
- Principal's Nominee
- Curriculum Leaders and Teachers of:
  - Agriculture
  - Art
  - English
  - Home Economics
  - Mathematics
  - Science
- 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

## The Catlins Area School

6 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

The Catlins Area School aims to shape learners who are prepared for their future through offering them opportunities to achieve that match or surpass their expectations. This is reflected in the school's focus of reviewing their practice in consultation with all stakeholders to ensure it continues to provide assessment that is individualised and responsive to student needs.

Assessment opportunities are tailored to cohorts and refined further for individual students. Processes are effectively managed, understood by both students and staff, and consistently applied. Identified students are provided with approved special assessment conditions and appropriately supported. These all contribute towards assisting students to maximise their assessment opportunities.

Internal moderation processes, responses to external moderation and monitoring by the Principal's Nominee ensure that only credible assessment results are reported to NZQA. This is reflected in the high level of agreement between teacher and NZQA external moderator judgements.

Data management and use effectively supports student achievement outcomes and ensures the timely reporting of results to NZQA. Achievement data is analysed to review teacher practice, inform how to best support individuals' progression and evaluate the effectiveness of changes. Students monitor their own progress towards completing qualifications, and staff use data and their knowledge of individuals to identify and intervene with students at risk of not achieving the qualifications they need to support their future pathway.

The school has a range of communication systems that help staff and students to effectively gain a common understanding of NCEA and school assessment procedures.

### Areas for improvement

Processes are in place so that the Principal's Nominee, students and staff check the accuracy of results reported to NZQA, but the checks also need to cover entries with no results. The school must ensure that internal entries sent to NZQA have a result or are withdrawn if the student has not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed. This would mean that data reflects the assessment undertaken and ensure that students have an accurate assessment programme recorded to assist them with tracking their progress.

Some minor additions are needed to school handbooks to ensure the information to staff, students and parents aligns with the school's current practice.

### **Agreed action**

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

- introduce a consistent end of year checking process so that all internal entries made to NZQA have a corresponding result attached or are withdrawn if there has not been an adequate opportunity to be assessed
- update NCEA handbooks so they provide full and current information that reflects school practice.

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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 8 June 2016 Managing National Assessment Report** There was an agreed action to update the student and staff handbooks and this has been completed.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has effective processes to respond to external moderation. These ensure senior management are fully informed of issues and involved in the review of outcomes where required.

The Principal's Nominee reads each moderation report and provides the subject teacher with a copy. She discusses any issues with the teacher, and they complete a response sheet. The Principal's Nominee follows up on the completion of any required actions and produces a summary of the final outcomes of external moderation. The summary is shared with the Principal and the Board of Trustees.

Feedback from external moderation shows that there is a high level of consistency between assessor and moderator judgements.

### 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)*

Review of assessment practice is focused on meeting cohort and individual student need. Due to the small and varied cohorts this means there can be wholesale changes in the structure of courses from year to year. This results in different year groups, and even individuals within a year group, being taught and assessed in varying ways. These changes are based on the school's knowledge of students, including using assessment data and feedback from regular discussions with students and their parents about their aspirations. The school also carried out a formal curriculum survey with the community in 2018, focused on meeting student need.

Recent review has led to:

- the introduction of semester courses to offer the opportunity for students to study a wider range of subjects
- the current Year 10 and 11 students undertaking a two year NCEA programme
- an increase in the courses offered through virtual learning networks
- a focus on learning, and reducing the standards assessed to engage students and deepen their understanding, potentially increasing certificate endorsements
- a change in the use of Gateway funding from whole group assessment to more targeted individual career pathway related assessment

- the introduction of new courses including Education for Sustainability, Agriculture and Horticulture, and Financial Literacy.

The school reviews the effectiveness of any changes and considers future developments. With students increasingly learning in a digital environment, this year the school intends to offer some students the opportunity to complete some of their external assessments digitally. They are also considering if project or subject-based learning and assessment, or a mix of both will best support each future cohort.

**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)*

### **The Catlins Area School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- extending assessment opportunities by using a range of external providers to deliver standards the school is unable to offer
- providing learning and assessment in real life contexts through partnerships with industry and community groups
- offering additional support during supervised study and through a *slow workers club* for both targeted and self-selected students
- continuing internal assessment opportunities once examination leave starts at the end of year for students whose programmes are less focused on external assessment or at risk of not gaining a qualification
- ensuring that students potentially entitled to special assessment conditions are identified and support trialled
- clearly informing staff of students' special assessment conditions and readily providing appropriate assistance.

### **The Catlins Area School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- monitoring the authenticity of student work during the assessment and marking process
- managing missed and late assessment, appeals and breaches of the assessment rules
- providing valid resubmission and further assessment opportunities
- collecting credible evidence of student achievement for derived grade applications
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*
- supporting the Exam Centre Manager to run the external examinations.

**Focus on providing assessment to meet student needs** Students follow highly individualised assessment programmes which focus on assessing when ready and meeting their academic and vocational needs. Through students regularly meeting with the Principal and Principal's Nominee, and student/parent conferences with tutors, the school is very aware of students' intended future pathways. This enables them to explore ways to tailor assessment opportunities to each individual.

### **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)*

### **The Catlins Area School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring staff refer to clarifications and previous moderation reports as the first step in the process, and that all new or modified assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists within and outside the school to verify student work to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- the Principal's Nominee keeping a record of grade verifiers, so if staffing changes new teachers can access existing links
- clearly informing students of interim grades for internal assessments prior to moderation, so that students have a timely indication of their performance if using external grade verifiers slows down the availability of a final grade
- documenting the quality assurance process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* and submitting it, along with all the assessment material, to the Principal's Nominee so that it can be checked and stored centrally before results are sent to NZQA
- the Principal's Nominee reconciling submitted assessment material with results in the student management system, and following up on any inconsistencies
- teachers keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions.

### **The Catlins Area School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- negotiating suitable changes to the moderation plan
- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements, where necessary.

**Increasing staff engagement with external moderation** Giving staff access to appropriate functions in the moderation application could give them more ownership of the process and reduce the Principal's Nominee's workload. It would allow staff to access reports themselves and may encourage them to recommend standards to be included in the moderation plan. Teachers suggesting standards for external moderation gives them the opportunity to receive feedback on standards their self-review has targeted as important.

### **For consideration**

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

- giving staff access to functions within the external moderation application to increase their engagement.

## 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)*

### **The Catlins Area School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- analysing results by focusing on individual students' progression and next steps, to inform the structure of school courses and the modification of teaching practice.

### **The Catlins Area School reports accurate achievement data by:**

- reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- effectively working with students to use their NZQA Learner Login and the student portal to the school management system to check the results reported and monitor their own progress
- having student and teacher check the accuracy of entries and results at key times during the year
- closely managing markbooks to minimise late entries
- only reporting results for standards for which the school holds consent, or using the correct code of outside providers where the Principal's Nominee has checked there is a current memorandum of understanding
- resolving any issues highlighted in the *Key Indicator Checklist*.

**Student progress effectively tracked and interventions put in place to improve achievement outcomes** The school effectively uses data to track student progress, with a focus on improving student achievement outcomes.

Each term students set goals and review their progress with their tutor teacher. Their *Actioning my Goals* document, along with data in the student management system, informs the discussion at the well-attended twice-yearly student/parent conferences.

Staff also discuss each students' progress at a weekly rolling rota of year group meetings. This allows them to share concerns, student success and put in place any necessary interventions. The Principal and/or the Principal's Nominee meet with each senior student at least twice a year to discuss their aims and progress, and if their assessment programme needs altering to support their intended future pathway.

**Ensure all internal entries are withdrawn if a result is not recorded** The school needs to ensure that a result is reported for all entries for internally assessed standards made to NZQA, or that the entry is withdrawn if the student has not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed, so that data NZQA holds reflects the assessment undertaken. The number of standards without a result has varied over the last three years, but has averaged around nine percent.

Introducing a consistent final end-of-year check will ensure that students have an accurate assessment programme recorded to assist them with tracking their progress, and confirm no grades are unreported, which could have an impact on the qualifications gained.

**Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management and use of assessment-related data. Senior management undertakes to:

- introduce a consistent end-of-year checking process so all internal entries made to NZQA have a corresponding result attached or are withdrawn if there has not been an adequate opportunity to be assessed.

## 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))*

### **The Catlins Area School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive clear and consistent outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to staff, students and their whānau using a range of methods
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with assessment and moderation processes and the school's expectations.

### **The Catlins Area School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- using a variety of targeted year group meetings at key times in the year to brief students about assessment policy and procedures, with consistent reinforcement from class teachers
- the Principal's Nominee reminding staff of NZQA related process at the start of each year and in regular year level meetings
- storing all NCEA-related reference documents and updates in an online folder for staff to refer to
- presenting NZQA and school assessment-related processes to parents, through a NCEA evening, student/parent conferences and by sharing access to a digital NCEA handbook for learners and their whanau.

### **Students show good understanding NCEA and school assessment procedures**

Students could clearly articulate how NCEA works. They understood school processes such as extensions, moderation, dealing with authenticity, derived grades and appeals, and felt their teachers applied them consistently.

**Changes recommended to staff and student handbooks** School publications require some minor alterations and additions to ensure information is accurate and reflects current practice. This includes:

- separating the sections on resubmissions and the appeals process to improve clarity
- formalising the school's use of interim grades for internal assessments prior to moderation, so students have a timely indication of their performance
- adding information on student privacy, including gaining their permission to use their work as exemplars.

To make the student handbook more accessible the school should also consider writing it in language and a style more appropriate to the intended audience.

**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:

- update NCEA handbooks so they provide full information that reflects school practice.