Managing National Assessment Report

Putaruru College

March 2020

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Putaruru College:

- 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
- links to Google Sites for:
    - *NCEA for Teachers* (*Senior School Assessment Policy – A Handbook for Students and Caregivers*)
    - *NCEA – Keeping You Informed (Senior Assessment Policy – Student Information).*

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Senior Academic Mentor/Assistant Principal's Nominee
- Curriculum Leaders for:
    - English and Media Studies
    - Mathematics
    - Sciences
    - Social Science
    - Technology
    - Te Reo
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Principal's Nominee and Senior Academic Mentor 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

Putaruru College

12 March 2020

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.

The next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years. NZQA will return within 12 months to confirm that the issues related to the school's management of special assessment conditions are being addressed and improved.

The issues are:
- the processes for the identification of students who would potentially benefit from special assessment conditions and the making of applications is not timely

- effective processes need to be developed to ensure candidates with entitlement have their special assessment condition provided for internal assessment.

What the school is doing well

Putaruru College uses the flexibility of the NCEA model to offer academic and vocational programmes to support students' identified learning pathways, abilities and career aspirations. Developing school practice includes assessing students when ready using flexible timeframes and offering a menu of standards for students to negotiate their course.

The school has recently focussed on improving achievement for all students by using culturally responsive pedagogy and relevant and authentic contexts. This and other strategies, discussed in this report, have resulted in an improvement in NCEA achievement at Levels 1 and 2 in 2019 after a significant decline in 2018. However, the school is encouraged to expand this focus to better identify and meet the needs of students who may be entitled to special assessment conditions.

There is now close monitoring of student progress, including completion of literacy and numeracy requirements, effectively identifying those at risk of not achieving a qualification and enabling the early provision of assistance. This has led to an increase in students meeting the Level 1 NCEA requirement. The introduction of the Senior Academic Mentor position further strengthens the school's ability to track student achievement, promptly identify, and respond to, those at risk.

Teachers understand and consistently follow school internal moderation processes and expectations. Senior management has confidence that results reported to NZQA have been subject to a quality assurance process. This confidence was confirmed by the Principal's Nominee and Senior Academic Mentor's when they visited curriculum areas in early 2020 to check moderation processes are completed and the documented evidence reflects actual practice.

Teachers annually review the effectiveness of programmes offered, using student voice and an analysis of NCEA outcomes. Reflective analysis using a set template identifies next steps to meet individual needs and further promote achievement. The school is encouraged to consider asking Curriculum Leaders to identify specific next step actions for Māori students to further support the school's goal of improving Māori student achievement.

Areas for improvement

The processes used to identify students for special assessment conditions, make an application for entitlement and the provision of the entitlement for assessments, require review and strengthening. The identification of potential students and collection of school-based evidence should occur in Year 10 or earlier to enable confirmation of entitlement prior to a student beginning Level 1 NCEA. Using school-based evidence to support applications removes the financial barrier of a Level C Assessor Report. Strengthening special assessment condition processes will further support the school's focus on improving achievement for all students.

A process to ensure teachers are aware of students with an entitlement to special assessment conditions is required. These conditions must be available for internal assessment and practice examinations.

NZQA can provide advice and guidance to the school to support them to identify and better meet the needs of these students.

Teachers' follow-up to external moderation requires strengthening by ensuring planned actions address issues identified by moderators. This will assist in the further development of teacher understanding of grade boundaries and support accurate assessor judgements. The school is also encouraged to suggest standards for moderation to confirm the effectiveness of actions taken to address identified issues.

It is recommended that teachers use NZQA terminology for resubmission and further assessment opportunities. This will provide clarity and reduce confusion for staff, students and parents as to what type of assessment opportunity is being offered, and under what circumstances it is appropriate.

For completeness and currency, the school's newly developed Google Site of NCEA information for staff and students requires additional information. When next updated, information on when Not Achieved must be reported and the requirements for assessments that may be used to generate a derived grade should be added.

Agreed action

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

- ensure students who potentially would benefit from special assessment conditions are identified and appropriate applications made for them *(CAAS Guidelines 2.6i)*

- monitor students with Special Assessment Conditions entitlement *(Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2020, 5.5).*

- strengthen responses to external moderation by ensuring actions will and have address an issue

- use NZQA terminology for resubmission and further assessment opportunities

- update staff and student NCEA information.

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11 May 2020

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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 12 April 2017 Managing National Assessment Report The agreed action items from the 2017 review have been addressed as follows:

- In 2020 the Principal's Nominee and Senior Academic Mentor have begun visiting departments to confirm the documented internal moderation process reflects actual and good practice. This change is further discussed in the moderation section.

- Teachers' responses to address identified external moderation issues are now monitored by the Principal's Nominee on a shared document visible to all staff. The school's follow-up can be further strengthened. This is discussed below.

- Course outlines sighted at the review address the 2017 agreed action. The school moved to an online tool to share course outlines with students in 2020.

- Staff NCEA information has been updated.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school's follow-up to external moderation requires strengthening. Evidence of thoughtful reflection and actions was sighted from some teachers. However, other responses did not identify actions that would enable the assessors' understanding of the standard to be further developed to make valid assessment decisions.

In some subject areas there is a trend of a low agreement rate between the assessor and moderator. Actions that support the further development of assessor understanding of the standard will assist with improving this. The effectiveness of the staff actions in response to external moderation feedback can be assessed by suggesting these standards for external moderation in future years using the NZQA External Moderation Application. The school is encouraged to do this in subject areas of concern.

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)

Putaruru College has used ongoing self-review to make changes to address student learning and assessment needs, strengthen the monitoring of student NCEA achievement progress and confirm quality assurance processes ensure the reporting of credible grades.

A school wide focus on developing culturally inclusive teaching and assessment pedagogy along with professional learning is used to support teachers to provide relevant and authentic learning and assessment contexts. Teachers interviewed provided examples of their ongoing review and the ways they have used the flexibility

of the NCEA qualification to amend programmes and modify tasks to be relevant, inclusive and better engage students. These changes reflect teachers' shared vision of supporting students to meet their NCEA achievement goals.

Student voice identified that those involved in attending off-site courses and work experience struggled to keep up with work missed. In response, these students now take one fewer subject. They are supported to catch-up with material provided on Google Classroom in a supervised study and their work completion monitored. Assessment timelines are modified as appropriate. Professional learning support for teachers on the use of Google Classroom has been provided as a result of teacher feedback.

A Senior Academic Mentor/Assistant Principal's Nominee position has been established aiming to provide the Principal's Nominee with assistance in carrying out academic interviews with students and quality assurance monitoring. This new position enables the sharing of NCEA knowledge and school processes to ensure the continuity of valid assessment for qualifications and effective quality assurance processes should the Principal's Nominee be unavailable.

One Curriculum Leader's analysis of student achievement resulted in the reduction in the number of credits offered in 2019 to better manage student assessment workload, increase student achievement and provide the opportunity for students to focus on the quality of credits achieved. The curriculum leader considers this resulted in the increase in NCEA achievement and Merit and Excellence grades in this subject area. This change has also been a contributing factor to the rise in the school's Excellence endorsements in 2019 at Levels 1 and 2.

The school's focus is to ensure that students leaving school are able to continue on their chosen pathway when they transition to tertiary study or employment. To achieve this, they have strengthened mentoring strategies by identifying students' next step beyond school and their NCEA qualification goal. The Senior Academic Mentor closely monitors student progress.

Shared ownership of student achievement by teachers, the broadening of assessment programmes, and the effective monitoring of academic progress ensures student needs and qualification goals are effectively supported.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice. Senior management undertakes to:

- strengthen responses to external moderation by ensuring actions will address an issue.

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)

Putaruru College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- offering a Trades Academy on site and seeking extensions to the school's consent to assess to assist those wanting to transition to employment or further vocational training

- engaging with outside providers to offer vocational courses and work experience opportunities

- annually using student voice to negotiate and modify the list of standards offered in a course to reflect the abilities and interests of the class

- supporting students to present their best evidence of achievement by scaffolding assessment tasks, providing feedback / feedforward information and gathering oral evidence

- enabling students to negotiate their assessment programme by offering a menu of standards to select from.

Putaruru College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on missed and late work, extensions, resubmissions and further assessment opportunities

- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted for assessment by using suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process

- reporting a Not Achieved grade for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work

- ensuring derived and unexpected event grades are based on authentic standard-specific evidence from practice examinations

- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Review of special assessment conditions processes is required   The school must develop processes to:

- ensure timely special assessment conditions applications are made for students who the school identifies as potentially meeting the eligibility criteria

- collect school-based evidence to support applications to remove the possible financial barrier of a Level C Assessor Report

- ensure teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlement and develop a process that enables the provision of these resources for internal assessment, where appropriate.

At the time of the review there were no new submitted applications for students for the current year and existing applications had yet to be rolled over. Evidence collected at the review found that students were identified when they were in Year 11. Good practice is to identify potential students earlier, collect evidence to support

applications and making the application toward the end of Year 10 so that students can start their NCEA year with a confirmed entitlement. This will also enable students to become familiar with their entitlement and assist them to achieve to their potential when assessment begins.

Prior to 2019, Level C Assessor Reports were used to support applications. While school evidence is now being collected and used for applications, these represent a smaller percentage than similar decile schools. The cost and availability of suitable professional resources may be prohibitive to some students who would be eligible to benefit from a special assessment conditions entitlement.

Evidence gathered at the review identified that teachers were not always aware of students with an entitlement, and so it was not consistently available for internal assessment.

NZQA provides special assessment conditions seminars to support SENCO's and teacher aides to develop confidence in collecting school-based evidence and to share good assessment practice for managing special assessment conditions. The school is encouraged to use these seminars to further develop school processes to support their students. Support is also available directly from NZQA's Special Assessment Team (sac@nzqa.govt.nz). They can provide advice and guidance on identifying potential students for entitlement and collecting school-based evidence.

Engaging students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics subjects (STEM)   The school acknowledged the engagement and achievement of Māori students in STEM subjects is lower than those of other ethnicities. The school has had a focus on improving Māori achievement over the past few years with professional learning on using culturally responsive learning and assessment pedagogy. Following a review of the 2019 data the school has taken the following steps to further support Māori student engagement, achievement and success in STEM subjects including:

- improving tracking and monitoring of student progress in STEM subjects
- Curriculum Leaders reviewing pre-requisites and the need to be flexible to allow students to continue studying at the next level with support to assist them to succeed
- developing the College's school-wide "Focus on Māori" programme to expose junior students to Science Fairs and guest speakers to spark their interest in STEM subjects.

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 students who potentially would benefit from special assessment conditions are identified and appropriate applications made for them *(CAAS Guidelines 2.6i)*
- develop processes to ensure students are provided with their entitlements (Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2020, 5.4).

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)

Putaruru College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring new and amended assessments are critiqued before use

- engaging with subject specialists within and outside the school to verify samples of student work

- strategically selecting samples of student work at grade boundaries for verification of assessor judgements

- documenting the internal moderation process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*

- monitoring the completion of internal moderation by:

    o Curriculum Leaders being responsible for ensuring internal moderation has occurred for every standard where results have been reported to NZQA

    o the Principal's Nominee and Senior Academic Mentor conducting audits of departments' internal moderation processes, confirming good practice, providing advice where appropriate, and confirming moderation documentation reflects actual practice. This is a new initiative for 2020.

Putaruru College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements

- monitoring agreement rates to identify subjects where inconsistent assessment judgements occur

- the Principal's Nominee working with Curriculum Leaders in subject areas with inconsistent assessor judgements, to improve quality assurance processes

- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

Strengthened internal moderation monitoring   In response to the agreed action in the 2017 review, the Principal's Nominee required Curriculum Leaders, who are responsible for monitoring the completion of internal moderation, to submit completed cover sheets to him. In 2020 he has introduced department visits, twice a year. The first visit focused on the effectiveness of departmental internal moderation processes, providing advice, and reinforcing expectations including:

- the strategic and purposeful selection of student work for verification

- the recording of the final grade and documentation of discussion in reaching the grade

- confirming the suitability of the verifiers used

- where and how student work is stored.

Embedding these department visits into the school's quality assurance practice will provide ongoing confirmation to Senior Management the grades reported to NZQA are credible.

Develop digital storage protocols   The school is encouraged to develop digital storage protocols to enable assessment evidence to be readily accessible and available for external moderation. Digital evidence is collected in a number of subjects. Teachers described storing digital student work in different ways and locations. Centrally storing digital material with appropriate permissions and file names will facilitate the work being easily accessible for submission, if selected.

For consideration

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

- developing storage protocols for digital evidence.

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)

Putaruru College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- the Principal's Nominee providing a fortnightly credit count of those at risk of not achieving their NCEA assessment goal to Learning Advisors and Deans, who support and negotiate programme changes as appropriate,

- keeping at-risk students within school in Term 4 to continue learning and completing assessments, and offering "credit catch-up" opportunities for students who are just falling short of meeting NCEA requirements

- identifying and supporting in Year 9 and 10 students who require additional literacy assistance to enable them to access Level 6 of the curriculum when in Year 11

- assisting students at risk of not meeting the Level 1 literacy and numeracy requirements by providing additional support

- requiring Curriculum Leaders to annually report an analysis of NCEA achievement data to the Principal and Board of Trustees including future teaching and assessment changes.

Putaruru College reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting results to NZQA on a regular and timely basis

- using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors

- ensuring all internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate

- using the correct provider code for assessment undertaken by external providers.

- supporting students to monitor their NCEA progress by facilitating the use of their NZQA Learner Login and the online portal to the school's student management system.

Data analysis supports student achievement   The school's data analysis is used to support student achievement and evaluate outcomes against school and curriculum area goals. It is suggested the school consider requiring Curriculum Leaders, as part of their analysis and planned next steps, to identify actions specifically to further support Māori and Pacific student achievement and the school goal.

Curriculum Leaders use a template of focus questions to review NCEA achievement results. They described:

- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure they allow students to meet their achievement goals

- regularly collecting student voice to inform changes to standards and contexts

- identifying areas of strength and proposed changes to better meet student assessment needs.

For consideration

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

- adding a section to the Curriculum Leader's NCEA analysis template asking them to identify next step actions specifically for Māori and Pacific students.

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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))

Putaruru College has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating assessment information to staff, students and their families in print, face to face and digitally

- supporting teachers new to the school by providing professional support and mentors

- reviewing communications to ensure they are easily accessible, fit for purpose and current

- ensuring a memorandum of understanding is held for all outside providers against whose code grades are reported.

Putaruru College assists a common understanding of assessment practice by:

- checking whether teachers and students are following processes

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes

- timing the provision of NCEA material and school assessment procedures to students to ensure it is relevant and to avoid information overload

- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Clarification of further assessment and resubmission terminology is required
A range of terms, including resit, reassessment, resub and conference were used to describe resubmission and further assessment opportunities by teachers and students. It is recommended that teachers use the NZQA terms "resubmission" and "further assessment opportunity" in the student and staff handbooks and reduce confusion. While both teachers and students could correctly describe how to apply each of these there was confusion initially as to what process they were describing because of the different terminology used.

Staff and student information is available on-line   From 2020, NCEA information is provided on-line using Google Sites. This initiative aims to ensure version control, while providing easy access to the information for staff, students and parents. Students interviewed described the convenience of accessing the site to find information, especially on their phones.

The online NCEA information for staff and students is comprehensive and relevant. The school agreed that when the information is next updated the following would be included to reflect the school's current good practice.

- when Not Achieved grade must be reported

- adding to the staff information the requirement to ensure derived grades submitted are based on authentic, valid and justifiable evidence.

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:

- use NZQA terminology for resubmission and further assessment opportunities
- update staff and student NCEA information.