

Managing National Assessment Report

Opononi Area School

August 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Opononi 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
- Handbook of Assessment Procedures for NCEA at Opononi Area School (Staff Handbook)
- Opononi Area School NCEA Student Handbook 2019
- the school's *Key Dates* calendar
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Teachers of:
 - Health and Physical Education
 - Mathematics
 - Te Reo Māori
 - Visual Arts
- 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

Opononi Area School

21 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 school has addressed the action items from the 2016 Managing National Assessment report and is developing the capacity to solve issues as they arise or are identified by external review. Most assessment processes within the school are effectively managed ensuring credible assessment for national qualifications

The school makes the best use of its staffing resources to meet individual student needs through differentiated assessments within multi-level courses. The range of academic and vocational courses has been extended using outside providers. Timetable restructuring has provided increased flexibility for staff to work with individuals or groups of students, and for students to undertake courses outside of the school without missing assessment opportunities.

Internal moderation is effectively monitored by the Principal's Nominee, ensuring results reported to NZQA have been quality assured. External moderation is well managed. Moderation materials are submitted digitally and a robust process is in place to deal with any issues identified. External moderation outcomes reflect improving internal moderation processes, particularly the use of verifiers from outside of the school.

Submission of assessment data is timely. This data is used to track student progress and identify those at risk of not meeting qualification requirements, enabling the provision of appropriate support. Annual analysis of NCEA data informs course and programme design.

School communication through a range of formats ensures information on qualifications and assessment procedures is appropriately provided to its community. This has helped develop a shared understanding of the school processes and NCEA requirements.

Areas for improvement

The school needs to check the assessment data it holds to reduce the number of internal entries for which no result is reported. The number of entries without a result provides an inaccurate view of student progress. A range of strategies, including checks within the school's student management system, could be utilised to support the reduction.

The staff and student handbooks should be reviewed annually to ensure the information they contain is consistent and up to date.

Agreed action

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

- ensure all entries for internally assessed standards have a result reported or are withdrawn as appropriate
- annually review staff and student assessment handbooks to ensure currency.

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6 November 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 19 August 2016 Managing National Assessment Report The school has addressed the action items from the 2016 report. As a result:

- courses now offer a maximum of 20 credits, with additional credits available through Gateway placements and Māori Performing Arts standards.
- staff have widened the range of methods by which they collect evidence of achievement, including experimenting with using technology such as speech to text
- grade verifiers are providing feedback where they suggest changes to assessment decisions
- a report on students' achievement progress is extracted from the student management system weekly, and shared with staff and students to ensure timely interventions can be made if required
- the staff handbook now aligns with staff practice and has minimal repetition
- the assessment information in course outlines meets school expectations
- teachers apply the school's missed and late assessment policy more consistently for assessments with fixed deadlines, as well as providing flexible deadlines so that students are assessed when ready.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has a robust process to follow up when the moderation outcome is other than *Consistent*, or an issue is identified. This starts with a discussion between the Principal's Nominee and the assessing teacher, followed by the teacher completing a *Response to External Moderation Report* to outline any actions they plan to take to address the concerns noted in the report. The Principal's Nominee monitors these actions to provide support, where required and confirm completion.

The school noted that 2019 external moderation showed a marked improvement over the previous two years with all outcomes *Consistent* and no issues identified. This reflects improving internal moderation processes and particularly the increased use of outside verifiers. Senior management will continue to support staff to find and use verifiers with subject-specific knowledge.

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 considered how it can best use the specialist knowledge of staff while still responding to the learning and assessment needs of students. As a result, for term three, it is trialling a more collaborative delivery of the senior curriculum. The timetable has been restructured so that students receive intensive formative

instruction through team teaching in two-hour blocks, with summative assessment overseen by the subject specialists.

This has allowed:

- students to focus on specific subjects or tasks without interruption
- subject teachers to remove and work with individual students or groups while the rest of their class is still under supervision
- groups, such as those in the Papataiao and Gateway programmes, to work outside of the school without missing timetabled learning in other subject areas.

The school's pastoral system has also been reviewed this year to provide students with increased mentoring. Academic Encouragement (ACE) groups meet with a Learning Advisor for 30 minutes once a week. Initially a mixture of students from Years 7 to 13, the groups were restructured for term three to better meet the needs of Year 11 to 13 students. The Advisors assist students to set academic goals and provide students with updated information on how they are tracking towards achieving them. The students interviewed during the review were positive about these interactions and knew exactly what they still needed to do to meet their qualification objectives.

Following review, a new Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator has recently been appointed. Testing of students, with the aid of the school's Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour, has identified students for whom Special Assessment Conditions may reduce barriers to learning and achievement and applications have been made to NZQA.

The school has shown it is developing the capacity to resolve issues as they arise or are identified by outside review. As its evaluation processes become more embedded it should consider implementing a more systematic annual analysis of its assessment and moderation procedures. Actively involving staff in these reviews would improve their understanding of the processes and lead to a more consistent application of the procedures.

For consideration

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

- annually reviewing assessment procedures with staff to develop deeper understanding and consistency of practice.

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)

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

- all senior students engaging with the school's Gateway programme to offer experience across a range of vocational pathways
- using a community resource to provide tuition to students studying Level 2 Physics, for which the school has no teachers with standard-specific knowledge
- establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with a local Kura to provide students with an opportunity to be assessed against Education for Sustainability standards in their Papataiao programme
- providing differentiated assessment within multi-level courses for core subjects
- giving identified students one-on-one literacy tutoring by a subject specialist to help them meet their NCEA literacy requirements
- having sufficient portable devices available so that students can engage with digital learning and assessment, as appropriate.

Opononi Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- assisting students to present authentic work by using a range of suitable strategies during the assessment and marking processes
- managing consistent assessment practice on appeals, resubmission and further assessment opportunities
- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules
- collecting credible evidence to support derived grade applications
- providing support to ensure the effective management of the exam centre
- complying with the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993* when handling students' assessment information.

Māori and Pasifika engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects Student engagement with, and success in STEM subjects is limited by a lack of specialist staff with sufficient subject expertise to offer Science or Technology courses at Level 3. The school noted that without support from teachers with some subject knowledge, students have, in the past, struggled to complete assessments when enrolled in Level 2 and 3 STEM courses through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu. Student assessment needs in Technology at Level 3 are met through unit standards.

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)

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

- teachers:
 - critiquing assessment materials prior to use to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and provide students with the opportunity to present evidence at all grade levels
 - using exemplars to inform their grade judgements during marking
 - using subject specialists from within, or outside of the school, to verify grades from samples of student work
 - documenting the steps of their moderation processes, including noting verification discussion and decisions on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*.
- the Principal's Nominee checking cover sheets to ensure that all standards have been through the internal moderation process prior to reporting results to NZQA.

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

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- storing assessed work securely so that it is available, if requested
- providing staff with access to the NZQA External Moderation Application and submitting all material digitally
- using the same process for following-up on moderation feedback for Industry Training Organisation and NZQA moderated standards

Encourage teachers to request standards for external moderation Supporting teachers to request standards will promote greater ownership in the moderation process by encouraging them to intentionally think about the selection. External moderation is a source of professional feedback and supports teacher practice. The online external moderation application enables schools to recommend standards for external moderation each year. While the school suggested 16 standards in 2017, there were no recommendations in 2018. Considerations to influence selection may include:

- ensuring timely feedback for any standards with previously identified issues to evaluate the effectiveness of the response
- selecting currently assessed standards rather than those assessed in a previous year or those which may no longer be in use
- requesting feedback for standards to support internal moderation verification decisions
- ensuring that all standards assessed are externally moderated over time.

Clarify verification requirements Staff should focus on grade boundaries when selecting work to verify assessor grade judgements. However, some of the staff interviewed randomly select part of their sample and most have more samples of student work verified than is sufficient to confirm that their grade decisions align with the national standard. The school should consider providing staff with guidance on what constitutes sufficient grade verification by the strategic selection of student work.

Strategic selection of work around grade boundaries has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as assessor experience, the number of students assessed, feedback from external moderation, the number of boundaries to be checked and the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars.

For consideration

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

- encouraging teachers to suggest standards for external moderation.
- providing staff with guidance on sufficient grade verification by the strategic selection of student work.

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)

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

- staff completing an annual, focussed review of results from the previous year designed to assist them develop assessment programmes that better meet the needs of students
- the Principal's Nominee annually providing the Principal and Board of Trustees with a summary of NCEA achievement
- tracking student progress to identify those at risk of not meeting qualification requirements, enabling the provision of appropriate support.

Opononi Area 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 and data file submission reports from NZQA
- confirming the accuracy of external entries prior to key dates to reduce late entries
- 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.

Ensure entries for students have a reported result All internally assessed entries should have an appropriate grade reported against them or be withdrawn by 1 December if the student has not had an adequate assessment opportunity. In 2018, the school did not report a result for 19 per cent of internal entries. This number of entries without a result provides an inaccurate view of students' assessment programmes and makes tracking progress difficult.

To reduce the number of entries with no reported result, this year teachers receive a monthly checklist to complete, including checks on the accuracy of data held on their markbooks in the school's student management system. However, this will only identify entries still showing in teacher markbooks. The Principal's Nominee is now aware she can check for "orphaned entries" where students have left the school or changed courses but still have active entries for standards they will not be assessed against. Regular checking for these in the student management system will facilitate their withdrawal.

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. The percentage of senior students registering to use their NZQA Learner Login dropped from 97 per cent in 2017 to 67 per cent in 2018. While students can view their academic progress more quickly through the online portal to the school's student management system, it is only through their Learner Login that they:

- check the accuracy of their entries, and the results used by NZQA to award qualifications

- order copies of their qualification certificates and Record of Achievement
- request reviews or reconsiderations of external examination papers
- print an official copy of their Record of Achievement.

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:

- ensure all entries for internally assessed standards have a result reported or are withdrawn as appropriate.

For consideration

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

- 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))

Opononi Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- providing students with assessment outlines for all course they undertake
- ensuring students can easily access appropriate plain English information on assessment processes
- inducting and supporting new staff so they understand the school and NZQA's assessment and moderation processes
- communicating information on assessment policies and procedures to the school community through a range of physical and digital formats, including texts, links on the schools Facebook page and face-to-face meetings.

Opononi Area School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- using NZQA pamphlets, in both Reo Māori and English, to help students and their whanau understand what is required to achieve the different levels of NCEA qualifications
- providing teachers with information about assessment best practice and NZQA assessment process requirements, and providing opportunities at Syndicate Hui to discuss these
- the Principal's Nominee reminding staff of key school and NZQA assessment dates at morning briefings and posting information on these in the staffroom.

Review assessment handbooks to improve currency Some of the information in the staff and student handbooks is no longer current. The handbooks should be reviewed annually and checked to ensure the information they contain is consistent and up to date. Using links to the NZQA website helps maintain accuracy, but these must be checked for currency.

Improving assessment information in course outlines The school intends to improve the assessment information provided to students in course outlines in 2020. Staff provide students with information on the assessment that may be offered using a common template. However, the current template is not as comprehensive as that available through the school's student management system. Use of this new template will reduce staff workload and provide more information to students.

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:

- annually review staff and student assessment handbooks to ensure currency.