

Managing National Assessment Report

Tauraroa Area School

July 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Tauraroa 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 2018* (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
- Tauraroa Area School's policies on Assessment and Moderation
- *Tauraroa Area School Staff NCEA Handbook updated 2018*
- *NCEA Assessment @ TAS – Quality Control – The Main Points*, a poster to help staff understand the key ideas underpinning quality assurance for NCEA assessment
- *Tauraroa Area School Year 11, 12 and 13 Student Handbooks 2018* - Outlines of the expected courses for each subject for students to select their course.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, three students, and Heads of Department for Biology and Science, English, Geography, Mathematics, Physical Education and Technology.

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

Tauraroa Area School

5 July 2018

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

Tauraroa Area School offers a range of academic and vocational assessment pathways to meet students' needs. Learners are supported to set academic and career goals and encouraged to monitor their own progress. Where manageable, students are assessed when ready. The school provides additional support to students who its data analysis identifies as at risk of not achieving a qualification.

The school demonstrates that it is capable of self-review. The recent focus has been to ensure there are relevant pathways available to students and to support students who are at risk of not achieving a qualification.

Students entitled to special assessment conditions are well supported and students appreciate the individual support provided by their teachers.

Internal moderation practice is becoming an embedded culture. Teachers have developed professional contacts with colleagues both within the school and in other schools to verify a selection of grade judgements. Teachers are expected to plan to address any issues raised in external moderation and this is followed up by the Principal's Nominee. Teachers value both the internal and external moderation processes for their professional learning as well as to confirm assessment decisions.

The Principal's Nominee is gaining experience in the role. He oversees the school's credible assessment practice and his leadership is appreciated by the teachers.

Areas for improvement

At the time of the 2015 Managing National Assessment review, the school's managers agreed to maintain the currency of assessment procedures for students and their parents in a readily accessible document. This has not been fully addressed. The school agrees that it will review how it communicates information to students about assessment programmes and key processes to ensure teachers, students and their parents have a common understanding. While the current documentation is incomplete, students do understand expectations.

Students use the portal into the school's student management system but should also be encouraged to use their NZQA Learner login to check the accuracy of data. This also allows them to order certificates or apply for reconsideration of externally assessed results.

Teachers should be reminded that they compromise student privacy if they read results to the class. Students commented that this sometimes happens but there is no evidence that it is widespread.

The school should ensure that the selection of student work for verification is purposeful and reasons for assessment decisions noted. This provides assurance to the Principal's Nominee that the process is robust, and teachers collect useful benchmarks samples while managing workload.

Agreed action

The school agreed on an action to improve the quality of their assessment systems:

- ensure that all items agreed in the Managing National Assessment review are fully addressed
- develop and publish a student handbook
- remind teachers to ensure student privacy is protected when returning results.

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25 October 2018

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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 14 August 2015 Managing National Assessment Report

Most of the action items from the 2015 report have been actioned. However, the school agreed to maintain the currency of assessment procedures for students and their parents in a document that is readily accessible, and this has not been effectively addressed. This will be further discussed in the communication section of this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has reviewed and improved how it responds to external moderation. Teachers use a *Response to External Moderation* form to actively plan how they will address issues. The Principal's Nominee checks that the planned actions have been completed. This gives useful feedback or provides evidence that the planned actions have been effective in helping teachers to make assessment judgements consistent with the standard. The next step is to use the outcomes to identify standards for external moderation.

Response to data issues NZQA provided the school with 2017 data identifying one subject where the pattern of internal and external results differs from the national pattern for schools of a similar decile band. The Principal's Nominee and Head of Department identified the reasons for the variance. The school is confident that closer monitoring of entries to ensure they accurately reflect the learning programme will address the anomaly.

Māori and Pasifika engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects The success of all students in STEM subjects at Tauraroa Area School is higher than other similar schools, however, there is some inequity in the success rate for Māori students. The Kāhui Ako the school is establishing with local primary schools will have a focus on Science and this is expected to address the inequity of achievement in STEM subjects. Careers New Zealand suggests that students should study English, Mathematics and at least one Science subject, particularly if they don't have a specific career in mind. Developing and implementing strategies to increase success in Science will result in better outcomes for all students.

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)

Tauraroa Area School has been running a vocational primary industries class for the past four years. This has helped students access a learning and assessment programme using a mix of providers with a focus on rural industries training. The success of the programme has led the school to introduce more "academies" in 2018 to give students pathways into building, health, hospitality and photography careers.

Teachers and Deans now use a shared credit tracking document which allows them to more effectively monitor progress and identify at risk students. Identified students are supported through academic counselling and mentoring, with some mentoring being carried out by an external agency. The students commented that their teachers are always willing to provide additional support to give them the best chances of succeeding.

The school has developed a better understanding of the procedures to apply for and how best to use special assessment conditions. The number of students with an approved entitlement is higher than in similar schools and almost all applications are supported by school-based evidence thus removing any financial barrier for families. Teachers appreciate the support provided by the Learning Support Department.

An increasing amount of evidence of achievement is being collected using digital methods particularly Google Documents. The school considers that this has been effective in helping teachers to monitor work in progress and to collect and assess student evidence. The Principal's Nominee has identified the added advantage of easy submission of digital work for external moderation.

The school's the self-review processes provide confidence that any concerns relating to assessment practices will be identified and addressed. The school is making improvements informed by data and student voice.

Agreed action

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

- ensure that all items agreed in the Managing National Assessment review are fully addressed.

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 2018 5.5)

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

- applying for special assessment conditions
- providing courses with differentiated assessment programmes
- providing vocational programmes using an "Academy" model where students engage with outside providers for one or two full days
- ensuring that resubmissions are managed in accordance with NZQA's expectations
- having flexible timelines or assessing when ready where manageable.

Tauraroa Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions
- ensuring valid evidence is available for derived grades.

Privacy Act (1993) reminder is required Students commented that some teachers read out achievement grades to the class. This could compromise students' privacy and the school agreed to remind staff that this is not appropriate.

Agreed action

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

- remind teachers to ensure student privacy is protected when returning results.

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 2018 6.4b)

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists both within and outside the school to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work
- documenting the completion of the steps of internal moderation on either a digital or paper copy of the *internal moderation cover sheet*
- monitoring that cover sheets are completed before grades are submitted to NZQA.

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

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency Most Heads of Department assure the quality of grades awarded by including work at grade boundaries when verifying assessor judgements. However, some of those interviewed verify more samples of student work than this. The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on sufficient verification by the strategic selection of student work.

Strategic selection 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, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed. As part of the monitoring of internal moderation, the Principal's Nominee could discuss the selection with the teacher.

Encourage teachers to note reasons for an assessment decision Some teachers are recording brief notes on the reason for an assessment decision as part of the verification process. This good practice assists with future judgments and helps assure the Principal's Nominee that the process is robust. All teachers could be encouraged to note reasons, and this could be part of the monitoring process.

For consideration

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

- reminding teachers that the selection of student work for verification should be sufficient as well as purposeful, thereby providing an opportunity to reduce teacher workload
- recommending that all staff note brief reasons for an assessment decision to assist with future judgements.

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)

Tauraroa Area School effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - providing a portal into the student management system so that students can track their progress
 - having teachers track individual student progress and making changes to courses or providing additional assistance where students are not succeeding
 - requiring teachers to analyse student attainment, compare outcomes with similar schools and identify where improvements can be made
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - managing withdrawals from internal standards appropriately so a minimal number of entries have no result
 - encouraging students to check results using the portal.

Encourage students to use their Learner login The NZQA Learner login is the definitive way for students to check that entries and results have been reported accurately, make requests for review and reconsideration of external examinations, and order certificates and a Record of Achievement.

While most students have registered for a Learner login, they are more likely to use the portal into the student management system to check results. It is suggested that more be encouraged to check the data held by NZQA, particularly later in the year.

For consideration

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

- encouraging more students to use their 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))

Tauraroa Area School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- helping students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Improved communication would help students to be better informed While students know how to achieve their academic goals, there is currently no student handbook or easily accessed source of information. There is a set of posters outlining some key processes and these could be more widely distributed and form the backbone of a handbook. This could be physical or digital as appropriate. The Principal's Nominee has been provided with a checklist of what could be included.

Not all students have access to comprehensive information about the assessment programmes in each course. They receive information about proposed courses to inform their choice and most, but not all, teachers provide them with an outline at the start of the year. These take a variety of forms with some having insufficient information about timelines or whether some standards are optional.

Easy access to information in appropriate language helps teachers, students and their parents to have a common understanding. Information about the assessment programme in each course helps students to plan effectively.

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:

- develop and publish a student handbook.