

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Takapuna Grammar School

July 2021

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Takapuna Grammar 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 2021* (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 that 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
- *Takapuna Grammar School NZQF Assessment Faculty and Teaching Guidelines and Courses 2021* (Staff Handbook)
- *Takapuna Grammar School Assessment Procedures for Students and Parents 2021 Student Handbook* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13
- NCEA resources for students and parents.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum
- Heads of Faculty for:
  - English
  - Languages
  - Physical Education and Health
  - Science
  - Technology
- Head of Department for Te Reo Maori
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy Principal Curriculum 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

## Takapuna Grammar School

29 July 2021

### 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 issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

At the request of NZQA, and with the school's agreement, the review was rescheduled from 2020 due to COVID-19.

### What the school is doing well

Takapuna Grammar School effectively meets students' assessment needs through a broad range of academic and vocational assessment programmes. It does this in a co-educational setting that values its Grammar School traditions and student attainment. The school seeks to provide seamless pathways for its students through diversity and collaboration, as evidenced in their strategic plan.

The school uses a model of continuous self-review and capability-building to meet its goal of creating and innovating assessment practice. This is evidenced through regular professional development for all staff with a focus on middle managers as well as teachers new to the school or NCEA. This model of review is also supported by targeted departmental review.

Effective leadership by the Senior Leadership Team and the Principal's Nominee has resulted in a schoolwide review of digital assessment systems since the last Managing National Assessment review. Changes to software and hardware and a school rebuild of systems, have led to efficiencies and made digital tools more accessible to teachers and students. This is reflected in refinements to the school's assessment and moderation systems which better meet student needs and provide students with timely feedback. These systems also ensure that only credible results are reported to NZQA.

The school is developing equitable opportunities for students. This includes improved access for students eligible to use special assessment conditions and developing STEM pathways for Māori and Pacific students. Data analysis of Science, Technology, and Mathematics has supported further pathways for students. Students work with their teachers, Whānau Form Teachers and Deans to develop individualised education programmes for all students as appropriate.

Effective use of NZQA and school-generated data reports enables Deans, Heads of Faculty and teachers to track student progress towards qualifications and vocational goals. Heads of Faculty submit annual analysis of achievement data. This effectively informs a review of course design for the year ahead. One outcome of review has been a schoolwide initiative to reduce the number of credits offered within courses to better focus student assessment opportunities. This initiative includes an expectation

that students will take agency over their own assessment data and make decisions as to whether they complete external examinations.

Effective communications for staff students and their whānau, written in Plain English are shared on the school's website. These are supported through face-to-face meetings at all levels of the school's delivery of the NCEA qualification by teachers who meet with students and their whānau to discuss assessment progress.

Some next steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

### **Areas for improvement**

Senior Management agrees that as a next step they will add a Principal's Nominee process to confirm to the Senior Leadership Team the timely completion of each external moderation action plan. This will support the Principal's Nominee's evaluation and review of external moderation and confirm the effectiveness of the school's internal moderation processes.

### **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 the Principal's Nominee checks for evidence of the completion of planned actions by agreed dates, and documents this process
- ensure completed actions can be evaluated.



Kay Wilson  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

15 September 2021

**NZQA**

**0800 697 296**

**[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)**

# 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 2016 Managing National Assessment Report** The school has addressed the two action items from the 2016 Managing National Assessment Report.

Teachers withdraw entries for which students have not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed, and for the rest they report a result.

The Principal's Nominee has effectively updated the staff handbook as outlined in the report.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has a process to respond to external moderation. Where an issue is identified by the external moderator, teachers must hold a discussion with their Head of Faculty and the Line Manager. The Principal's Nominee monitors this process by documenting any action plans, discussing these with the teacher and ensuring appropriate professional support is provided. There is a schoolwide understanding that these plans will be detailed in the annual departmental report to the Line Manager and that actions must be completed before the standard is offered again.

To strengthen this process senior management agrees that as a next step the school will add a process that confirms to the Senior Leadership Team the evaluation and completion of external moderation action plans is undertaken in a timely manner. This is discussed further in the Moderation section of this report.

### 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)*

Takapuna Grammar School has a culture of self-review focused on meeting student assessment and qualification needs. Analysis of achievement data is an embedded practice and occurs at all levels. Each faculty's annual review, submitted to the Senior Leadership Team and summarised to the Board of Trustees, informs ongoing course design and improvements to assessment practice.

The Senior Leadership Team's effective review of succession planning saw the 2019 appointment of a new Principal's Nominee. This new Principal Nominee has, managed the schoolwide introduction of learning management systems and a new Student Management System to better support student assessment pathways.

Ongoing review of the school's engagement with online teaching, learning and assessment has resulted in the Senior Leadership Team developing schoolwide digital practices to manage students to use their own devices. They have focused on the development of secure file storage and managing authenticity to ensure credible

internal assessment practice. In 2020 the school successfully trialled end-of-year digital examinations with over 100 students. This experience has provided the school with confidence to scale up digital entries in 2021. To support this they have completed an N4L check of their connectivity to ensure readiness for this number of digital examinations. These developments will help ensure the school is well positioned for the “digital-first” approach to external assessment. In addition, teachers have developed online practice examinations at two levels in one subject area using the school’s own platform.

The Senior Leadership Team have reviewed and introduced a ‘*justified course confirmation process*’ to support pathways development across the curriculum that will best meet student needs. In consultation with Heads of Faculty, the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Principal’s Nominee have oversight of changes to courses to ensure these pathways are appropriate. Regular collection of student voice also informs this review.

Ongoing review of consistent assessment and moderation processes that build the capacity of middle management is developing ownership and oversight within and between departments. As part of the Senior Leadership Team the Deputy Principal Curriculum supports effective schoolwide professional development on assessment practice actioned through a regular cycle of weekly staff meetings and professional development meetings. The Deputy Principal Curriculum and the Principal’s Nominee communicate effectively with middle managers through fortnightly meetings of Heads of Faculties with Senior Leaders. Senior Leadership/Deans meetings effectively advance the school’s strategic goals of developing student pathways. This is supporting standardised assessment and moderation processes, especially in departments covering diverse subject areas. For example, the Principal’s Nominee and the Head of Te Reo Māori have led an equity review of the Te Reo Māori department with an intention to support improved pathways towards NCEA Te Reo Māori and Tikanga. As part of this review teachers have developed professional relationships with local cluster groups to support their understanding of the standards in this subject area.

### **No action required**

No issues with the school’s response to NZQA external reviews 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 2021 5.1 – 5.7)*

### **Takapuna Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- providing a broad range of academic and vocational pathways and Scholarship workshops to encourage students to achieve their qualifications and pathways goals
- engaging with the Devonport-Takapuna Kāhui Ako to develop a seamless academic pathway for students by supporting literacy and numeracy development
- continuing to develop - portfolio and research-based assessments using milestone checks
- using feedback and feedforward to monitor student assessment progress
- providing individualised learning programmes through differentiated assessment, multi-level courses and optional standards
- utilising the flexibility of NCEA to provide students with extension subjects in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13
- introducing relevant context through Te Reo Māori, Asian languages and Aotearoa/New Zealand Histories
- using school-based evidence to support applications for special assessment conditions and ensuring that those with entitlement are appropriately resourced.

### **Takapuna Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- helping students to present authentic work by using a range of appropriate strategies during the assessment and marking process, including use of online authenticity checks
- managing missed and late assessments, resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- providing a fair and transparent process for students to appeal assessment decisions
- investigating and resolving any breaches of assessment rules
- ensuring the collection of credible evidence to support derived and unexpected event grades to efficiently manage disrupted external assessment beyond students' control.

**Improving equity in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects** The school has reduced barriers to access STEM subjects for its small cohort of Māori and Pasifika students, many of whom now continue to take STEM subjects at Year 13. Streaming of students has been removed from all courses, as have pre-requisites. Student course selection is now solely based on their future career pathways. Mentoring, conferencing, university visits and careers interviews support this process. These practices are making a difference to outcomes for Māori students when compared with others, as evidenced in the school's Year 13

STEM data. This shows a recent reduction in the achievement gap, to less than 10%, between Māori student achievement and that of other students.

**Meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 2020** Students interviewed identified that not all teachers protect the privacy of grades when returning marked work. The school can consider strengthening their reminder to all staff of the requirements of the Privacy Act 2020 and of its own documented requirements when returning student work.

### **For consideration**

To extend good practice in meeting student needs and supporting assessment practice, the school is encouraged to consider:

- reminding all teachers of the school's policy on the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020*.

## 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 2021 6.4b)*

### **Takapuna Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using suitably qualified subject specialists from within and outside the school to verify assessor judgement of a sufficient and purposefully selected sample of student work
- maintaining current exemplars of student work at grade boundaries
- the Principal's Nominee monitoring the completion of internal moderation cover sheets before results are reported to NZQA
- Heads of Faculties discussing internal moderation processes and any concerns with their Line Manager during their documented annual faculty review.

### **Takapuna Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples of student work to meet NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored
- digitally submitting most samples of student work
- using the queries and appeals function in the external moderation application to request more information or clarify teacher understanding
- ensuring that moderation follow-up is the same for all standards assessed regardless of the standard-setting body.

**Response to assessor judgements** The school's own NCEA analysis requires Heads of Department to compare the congruence of internal and external results. This highlighted the need for the school to provide professional development support in one department to ensure understanding of grade boundaries and help make accurate decisions.

**Effective digital storage systems for student assessment materials** Most student work for assessment is now completed and stored digitally on Google Drive to provide secure storage and quick access for samples of student work for external moderation. Senior management can also more easily upload samples of work for external moderation and check authenticity. Appropriate access rights are provided to markers and managers. Submission of a moderation cover sheet prompts the Principal's Nominee to make a random selection in preparation for external moderation. This is effective practice.

**Improve monitoring closure of actions identified in external moderation** As discussed in the review section of this report, the Principal's Nominee develops action plans with teachers in response to external moderation feedback. As a next step, the Principal's Nominee plans to check for evidence of the completion of the planned actions by agreed dates and document this process. These actions include seeking advice through professional clusters, identifying and working with new

verifiers and updating assessment materials. This will strengthen moderation processes and ensure completed actions can be evaluated to confirm the school's internal moderation processes to the Senior Leadership Team.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure the Principal's Nominee checks for evidence of the completion of planned actions by agreed dates, and documents this process
- ensure completed actions can be evaluated.

## 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)*

### **Takapuna Grammar School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- providing students with regular data summaries to track their progress towards achieving NCEA and University Entrance
- analysing data to check the balance between internal and external assessment to manage and balance student workload
- providing teachers with pre-populated data profiles for their classes to simplify data analysis and reporting in order to identify barriers and enablers
- encouraging credit reduction in courses by monitoring the number of credits offered
- Heads of Faculties and Departments annually reporting to Line Managers on comparative and longitudinal results through two annual reporting points.

### **Takapuna Grammar School reports accurate achievement data by**

- ensuring data files are submitted in a regular and timely manner
- using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve any data issues
- encouraging students to check their results and monitor their own progress through the student portal, and Learner login.

**Effective credit tracking processes support student pathways** The Deputy Principal Curriculum leads monitoring and tracking of patterns of academic achievement for students to ensure they are meeting their qualifications goals. As part of this process all teachers are required to conduct a credit prediction analysis for each of their senior students. This is used by the Deputy Principal, Deans and Whānau Form Teachers to monitor progress and seek appropriate intervention for students to best meet their individual aspirations. This data informs discussions during course selection and goal-setting interviews between Senior Leadership, Deans and the student in Term 3.

### **No action required**

No issues with the school's management and use of assessment-related data were identified during this review.

## How effectively does the school's communication inform staff, and students and their families about assessment?

*Evidence for school communication promoting understanding of assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7ii(b))*

### **Takapuna Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive standardised course outlines for all courses they undertake
- managing student assessment workload by providing a calendar and examination timetable on the school's website to help avoid overscheduling
- communicating assessment policy and procedure using a variety of media and digital platforms
- supporting teachers new to the school to understand the school's assessment policies and procedures
- reviewing communications to teachers, parents and caregivers to ensure they are fit for purpose and current
- running NCEA information evenings for students beginning NCEA assessment
- informing students and their whānau about student progress in a report evening and two extended reporting conferences
- celebrating student success through awards and endorsements assemblies.

### **Takapuna Grammar School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- checking whether teachers and students are following processes
- providing digital citizenship and responsible digital use policies
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification
- encouraging parents to make use of the student management parent portal to monitor their students overall NCEA progress.

**NZQA information for students** Students are encouraged to take ownership of their own academic progress using the school's Student Management System App, their Learner login and the NZQA Student Hub. The Principal's Nominee provides guides for students, who are further supported by their Whānau Form Teachers and Deans to access and check their results. This is effective practice.

### **No action required**

No issues with the way in which the school maintained the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicated them to staff, students and families were identified during this review.