

Managing National Assessment Report

James Cook High School

June 2024

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

James Cook High School

27 June 2024

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is effectively meeting the requirements of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022.

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.

As a school with effective assessment systems and practices for national qualifications, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three to five years.

Actions

Agreed actions

The school agreed that this action will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. This is:

Action	Timeframe
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Ensure that quality assured practice external assessment grades are reported to NZQA for use as derived grades.	In a data file submission before the end of year examination period.



Amanda Picken
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

14 August 2024

NZQA

0800 697 296

www.nzqa.govt.nz

External and internal review

External review

Evidence of external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Items from 2 June 2021 Managing National Assessment Report There were no actions identified in this review.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes The school's response to external moderation is effective and thorough, supporting the credibility of results reported to NZQA. When assessment judgements are inconsistent with the standard, the Head of Faculty/Department takes responsibility to reflect on moderator's feedback, and document and lead the actions required to resolve the issue identified. Senior leaders provide professional support, as needed.

The Principal's Nominee uses the moderation tracker document and an annual audit of assessment practice and moderation systems to monitor the completion of actions taken to address inconsistencies. Together with his senior leader line manager the Principal's Nominee evaluates the impact of changes for trends and overall improvement in subjects. In 2023, external moderation outcomes returned to pre-Covid levels, meeting both the school and NZQA expectations. This sound rate of assessor judgements consistent with the standard reflects the school's robust internal moderation processes and improvement in responding to external moderation feedback.

Staff have accessed Pūtake, NZQA's Learning Management System to clarify the requirements of the standard and assessor judgements. The Principal's Nominee intends to encourage teachers to further engage with this support tool, and the query and appeal function in the moderation application, to gain feedback. This approach is particularly relevant to build understanding of the new Level 1 standards.

Internal review

Evidence of 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)

Self-review is iterative, purposeful, and embedded practice. It is underpinned by data analysis, informs strategic direction, and is well led by senior leaders. The school challenges themselves to continuously improve teaching and assessment practice, through school-wide collaboration, problem-solving and innovation. Senior leaders promote the use of digitised systems to enable transparency and access to information. Self-review, including the use of student and staff voice, are integral to improvements in student engagement, teaching and learning programmes and achievement in qualifications.

Strengthened assessment leadership, ownership and capability James Cook High School is intent on growing leadership, sharing ownership and building capability in assessment and moderation practices across every level of the school. An example is the NCEA Committee comprised of the Principal's Nominee, to support staff in the changes to the qualification, and a digital assessment expert to manage assessment through NZQA's digital platform. Further evidence planned extension of capability is to develop clear understanding of the appropriate use of generative artificial intelligence across the staff and students.

Senior leader line managers regularly meet with their Heads of Faculty to reflect on curriculum design and assessment practice outcomes. Faculty leaders work alongside the teachers in their area, building assessment understanding and capability, and supporting the consistency of assessment practice school-wide. A number of teachers are from overseas or primary-trained with no prior knowledge of the NCEA qualification system or standards-based assessment. The school supports these teachers through a comprehensive induction programme and ongoing professional development.

The new Principal's Nominee is committed to school-wide understanding, consistency, and ownership of NCEA processes. He is well supported by senior leaders. In turn, the Principal's Nominee works extensively with the Heads of Faculty to effectively lead changes to assessment and quality assurance processes and resolve issues to improve current practices. Teachers participating in the review appreciated the Principal's Nominee's knowledge and willingness to guide and support them.

School-wide professional learning has enabled the school to move beyond a compliance focus to adopt innovation and value the purpose of credible assessment and the need for robust quality assurance systems.

Data analysis drives change, and improvement Internal review is data-driven, interconnected and informs responsive practices to support student attainment and strategic direction.

Staff inquiry groups feed into faculty and departmental reviews, and onwards to the Board of Trustees, annually highlighting strengths, areas of development, and challenges experienced. The Deputy Principal - Curriculum and Assessment prepares a student achievement report for the Board. Outcomes are evaluated by senior leaders and the Board to inform schoolwide strategic focus.

Senior staff lead critical inquiry projects into a Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan, and student tracking and intervention planning. The school aims to develop student literacy skills and competencies to better able them to gain the co-requisite requirements of the qualification. A focus of the Literacy Numeracy Plan involves working with an external provider and identifying interventions to enable learners to achieve this requirement of the qualification through the only pathway accessible to them, using achievement standards. The literacy levels required by the co-requisite Common Assessment Activities mean that this pathway is not attainable by the majority of second language students. A limitation is students cannot use these additional co-requisite standards to meet the 60 credit requirement of the qualification. The school is also exploring a number of other targeted strategies to best support students' literacy and numeracy needs. These initiatives include literacy and numeracy integration across the curriculum and a hybrid timetable for some classes in the junior school next year focusing on literacy learning across the curriculum for a term, to address the lower literacy levels of students entering the school.

The school has identified priority target groups and have planned interventions to support student engagement and achievement. These groups include:

- senior students without Level 1 who, with the support of the Ministry of Education, are accessing targeted learning support and individualised interventions. The aim is to keep these learners engaged in schooling to improve their opportunities in life

- Level 1 and 2 students struggling to engage in learning post -Covid disruptions are being offered careers-based courses to facilitate a return to positive achievement
- University Entrance pathway students, and
- special learning group on individual education plans, overseen by the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator.

Senior Student Achievement data reports are published each fortnight to inform senior leaders of the current status, to develop next steps to support student achievement, and to provide the Board of Trustees with interim updates of the progress of the planned interventions for target groups. The school's future intent is for Heads of Faculty, with professional learning support, to self-manage the production of these reports and to analyse outcomes and identify actions. Year 13 student achievement progress is also comprehensively monitored as are the outcomes of the new achievement standards.

Addressing the challenge of English Language Learning (ELL) The school identified significant learning disruption for a large and growing group of ELL students, and barriers to accessing teaching and learning, and consequently achievement in assessment. This was confirmed through a Ministry of Education audit and has led to increased staff resourcing, including through two ELL Co-ordinators. An initiative that has enabled successful transitioning into the school is the Manaaki programme where new students are inducted into the life of the school over two days, and comprehensive testing during this time allows appropriate class placement and additional language support, as required.

Preparedness for NCEA Change Programme To prepare for the changes to the qualification, the staff engaged fully in the Ministry Accord Days for the NCEA Change Programme and continue to use Ministry facilitators. The school purposefully participated in piloting subjects and the literacy and numeracy | Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau co-requisites to build staff capability and digital systems capacity. The NCEA Committee supports the implementation of the NCEA Change Programme. The school considers a critical mindset of knowledge and understanding exists across the school, to support the assessment of the new Level 1 standards. A culture of development is highlighted by the collaborative approach across faculty leaders regarding unpacking the requirements of the new standards. This was evident in the Heads of Faculty interviewed for the review.

The school has identified several challenges remain. Teachers are pressed to find new and appropriate resources in already under-resourced curriculum areas. Teachers and students require extended time to undertake the teaching and learning for ELL students. Fewer assessments will be offered as a result, making the stakes very high for students to achieve in those assessments completed, and course endorsement unobtainable in some subjects. The school has identified the impact on calendared events, important in the life of the school, in teaching and preparing the students for the submitted standard external assessment. Challenges exist with the digital first approach of the new assessments. The majority of students do not have their own devices, which also poses difficulties when managing students creating a login account. To all these issues, the school applies a solution-focussed approach using staff resourcefulness and other available avenues.

Credible assessment practice to meet student needs

Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024)

Coherent programme pathways to meet student needs The school provides a wide range of pathways to cater for the diverse and changing needs of their students. This approach enables assessment evidence to be collected from a variety of contexts beyond traditional classroom environments and access to future educational, vocational and employment opportunities. Learning and assessment is student centred, culturally responsive based on a localised curriculum and differentiated to meet students' needs, using the flexibility of the NCEA model. The commitment of the teachers to meet the needs of their students was evident from those interviewed for the review.

Tailored curriculum pathways include Pūtake (Māori) and O le Tupu'aga (Samoan) Units offering culturally inclusive environments supported by fluent language teachers to purposefully focus on achievement of these students, to enable equitable access to future opportunities. Other specialised programmes include Korowai, offering home room-based, integrated learning for students with learning challenges or requiring additional support, and attached teen parent, special needs, Blind and Low Vision and alternative education provisions.

Academies for Health Science, Services and Vocational Pathways have also been established. The Services Academy, at Year 12 and 13, now offers a more balanced assessment programme, shifting from a unit standards focus, and requiring compulsory Science at Level 2, to ensure access to a broader range of future pathways. There is high demand and engagement in the Vocational Pathways Academy. Academy pathways, together with Gateway courses, STAR programmes and Learner Licencing aim to develop career pathways for students. These students have individualised programmes to support their off-site specialised learning. Careers support is integral to the success of this approach, including the availability of facilitators in the majority target languages.

An Ako option class, held daily, at Year 13 offering targeted mentoring and study support enhances student achievement. Senior teachers provide personalised mentoring through academic conversations, track the completion of student work and opportunities are available to undertake vocational and career-focussed units. Students are supported to manage their workloads. Evidence of the success of this tailored support is the improved attainment of University Entrance for Māori and Pacific students. The positive outcomes of the Year 13 programme have led the school to offer this optional subject at Year 12 in 2024, with uptake by over two-thirds of the year group. A small group of Year 11 students requiring additional support join a Year 12 class.

Reporting quality assured practice external grades for use as derived grades

The school must report quality assured derived grades from practice assessments for externally assessed standards to NZQA for use as derived grades. This will ensure that these grades are readily available for all students to access if external assessment opportunities are disrupted.

The school has procedures that ensure that the tasks to gather evidence for derived grades are fit-for-purpose, that the condition of assessment for practice examinations or similar assessment events mirror NZQA examinations and grades reported to

NZQA are based on standard specific evidence that has been quality assured by a “second pair of eyes.”

Although the school holds the grades, a low level of derived grades were submitted to NZQA in 2023 and only 41 percent were reported in 2022. The Principal’s Nominee intends to monitor the submission of grades through the link in the *Key Indicators* and document the evidence of faculty processes.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024)

Robust processes and strengthened monitoring of internal moderation

Internal moderation is effectively quality assured. Senior leadership can be confident that internal moderation procedures carried out in all faculties are complete and rigorous, and results reported are credible.

This year the Principal’s Nominee has introduced the recording of moderation steps including verifier comments, and the storage of moderation materials in the student management system. Heads of Faculty/Department also complete the aligned internal moderation tracker sheet to confirm the completion of all processes for each standard and providing links to stored student work, as practicable. The Principal’s Nominee also undertakes an audit of assessment and moderation practice. These school-wide practices provide the Principal’s Nominee with a transparent account of the timeliness and completion of quality assurance processes and allow for the identification and resolution of any issues.

The Principal’s Nominee has shared ownership for effective processes by working extensively with faculty leaders to establish the new system and clarifying moderation processes, supporting consistency of practice across all faculties and enabling teachers to confidently meet school expectations of moderation processes.

A sample of strategically selected student work is verified for each teacher assessing a standard. Student work is purposefully selected at grade boundaries or work requiring review and can also include randomly selected samples from each grade to confirm the consistency of assessor judgements and provide benchmark samples. In many faculties the new Level 1 standards are moderated in teams, leading to understanding of the evidence required at each grade and sharing of best assessment practice across the group.

Teachers assessing against Workforce Development Council standards follow the same quality assurance processes within the requirements of these standard-setting organisations and receive consistent outcomes.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

James Cook High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its students by:

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are culturally appropriate focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations
- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers to offer courses the school is unable to offer
- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so students can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement
- assessing students when they are ready
- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet student needs
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support
- providing opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- engaging in Review of Achievement Standards pilots to prepare for future assessment
- identifying and providing targeted support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals
- implementing strategies to provide opportunities to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

James Cook High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed or late assessment
- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules
- monitoring the authenticity of student work using a range of strategies
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have submitted no work
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

James Cook High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment judgements
- using subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a strategic selection of a sufficient sample of student work
- using grade verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes
- monitoring and documenting completed internal moderation processes to ensure only quality assured results are reported to NZQA.

James Cook High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- selecting sufficient samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes and providing support for assessors where appropriate
- monitoring and documenting actions taken to address external moderation feedback
- using external moderation outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation processes.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

James Cook High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- monitoring and tracking student progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure these allow students to meet their assessment goals, and inform changes to courses and standards offered
- gathering student voice to evaluate courses and assessment workloads to inform changes to programmes, contexts, and standards
- reporting to the Principal / Tumuaki and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

James Cook High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date data

- checking Key Indicators and NZQA reports to identify and resolve any errors
- conducting student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year
- ensuring low levels of late external entries, and internal entries with no results
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding
- seeking NZQA approval through a subcontracting agreement to engage with a non-consented provider to deliver specific standards.

Effective communication to inform staff, and students and their families / whānau about assessment

James Cook High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- keeping assessment-related communications current and accurate, and reviewing communications to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- ensuring students receive outlines for courses they undertake
- supporting students to monitor their achievement
- discussing assessment policy and procedure with staff, and providing updates of NCEA information throughout the year
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing opportunities for parents to discuss their children's NCEA goals, progress, and achievement
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction programme to understand school and NZQA assessment processes
- celebrating students' success.

James Cook High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- communicating assessment information, such as holding NCEA information evenings for parents and NCEA assemblies for students
- informing students about suitable learning pathways
- supporting students to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively James Cook High 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 / whānau.

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 effectively meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022* (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 *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024*.

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- identifying the effectiveness of the school's review processes, assessment practice and quality assurance
- 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's consideration 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 five 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
- *Board of Trustees Policy: Curriculum*
- *NCEA Assessment Rules and Procedures, Staff Edition, James Cook High School, 2024*
- *NCEA Student and Whānau Information Booklet, James Cook High School, 2024; condensed and extended versions.*

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum and Assessment
- Digital Assessment Support, NCEA Committee
- Heads of Faculty/Department for:
 - English/English Language Learning
 - English Language Learning
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Education and Health
 - Science
 - The Arts
- Teacher of:
 - Physical Education and Health
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal / Tumuaki, the Deputy Principal - Curriculum and Assessment and the 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.