

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Pukekohe High School

April 2021

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Pukekohe 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

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 review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *Pukekohe High School NCEA Policies and Procedures 2021*
- *Managing National Assessment Staff Handbook 2021, Pukekohe High School* (staff handbook)
- *Pukekohe High School Student and Whānau Assessment Handbook 2021*, (student handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Tumuaki Tuarua/Tumuaki Tuuhono Principal's Nominee/Assistant Principal
- Heads of Faculty for:
  - Technology
  - The Arts
  - English
  - Social Science
  - Science
  - Health and Physical Education
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Tumuaki / Principal, Tumuaki Tuuhono / Associate Principal and Tumuaki Tuarua / 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

## Pukekohe High School

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

Due to the impact of COVID 19, at the request of NZQA, and with the school's agreement, this review was rescheduled from 2020.

### What the school is doing well

Pukekohe High School's is more fully utilising the flexibility of NCEA to meet the needs of its rapidly changing student community and develop its strategic equity focus. The new Senior Management Team is leading culturally responsive change in assessment. Its student-centred philosophy provides appropriate and meaningful pathways to meet the interests, aspirations and abilities of its students. Careers leaders and whānau teachers support student choices through academic mentoring, tracking and culturally responsive assessment opportunities. There have been improvements in student achievement since the last Managing National Assessment review.

Improvements in internal moderation processes have resulted in consistent and transparent storage of all teacher steps in the internal moderation process. This includes purposeful verification of student work. The Principal's Nominee makes a visual check of these. External moderation outcomes are documented by the Principal's Nominee, and action plans are developed and monitored when issues are identified, allowing those issues to be resolved.

Data analysis and annual reporting to Faculty Heads, and Senior Leadership supports changes to course design to meet student needs. Several faculties have made changes to improve access to courses for students and provide optional standards. NCEA student achievement is regularly monitored to ensure that students are tracking towards their academic or career goals.

Schoolwide understanding of assessment policies and procedures has improved. Two reviews of communications have led to better standardised policies and processes Updated documentation includes recent changes in NZQA practice such as the Rule changes relating to resubmission.

The Principal and Principal's Nominee work effectively with the whole Senior Leadership Team with the aim of providing systems for students to achieve credible qualifications. They require a clear line of sight to all internal moderation documentation and commentary around internal moderation verification.

These recent changes requiring digital storage of all evidence for moderation and sharing so that these are visible at all levels mean the school is best placed to build on current good practice around assessment through the Review of Assessment Standards.

It has identified next steps as the introduction of digital assessment for externals and the Review of Assessment Standards.

### **Areas for improvement**

The Principal's Nominee and School Leaders can further strengthen their process for monitoring internal moderation by keeping a written record of the Principal's Nominees visual check of internal moderation materials and processes. This will provide a record of his quality assurance check by reconciling submitted teacher documentation with actual practice and allow for actions to be monitored and signed off so that results are transparent.

This review showed there is a need to strengthen the understanding of strategic selection of samples of graded work for internal moderation. A change in this practice has the potential to reduce and better focus staff workload.

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19 May 2021

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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 October 2018 Managing National Assessment Report** In 2018 NZQA identified a significant issue which if unaddressed could have put its ongoing Consent to Assess at risk.

- Monitor internal moderation systems to ensure that only results that have been subject to the internal moderation process are reported to NZQA (*Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2018, 6.4b*)

This has now been fully resolved.

The process to monitor internal moderation assures senior management that effective quality assurance has been undertaken for every standard where results are reported to NZQA. The Principal's Nominee monitors that internal moderation systems ensure that only results that have been subject to the internal moderation process are reported to NZQA (*Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2018, 6.4(b)*).

The Principal's Nominee conducts a visual check of digitally stored internal moderation material and processes. Senior Management Line Leaders also check records with actual practice and discuss their findings with the Principal's Nominee.

As a next step the school has agreed to document its monitoring process for internal moderation. This would help to define the role of the Senior Management Line Managers and the Principal's Nominee.

Three agreed actions from the 2018 review have been fully resolved. Faculty leaders have developed a documented process to identify and support subject areas with ongoing external moderation issues and resolution of actions is checked by the Principal's Nominee. Internal entries are withdrawn or have results reported. Communications are regularly reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose.

One agreed action is ongoing. The school has made progress in reinforcing and supporting effective internal moderation practices. Further strengthening of this progress by documenting outcomes is outlined in the moderation section of this review.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has, since 2018, effective process in place for responding to external moderation. The Principal's Nominee/Deputy Principal share all reports with Heads of Faculty and teachers online.

External moderation is monitored, and *Response to External Moderation* action plans are developed and signed off by the Principal's Nominee. The broader Senior Management Line Leaders' Team shares in this process by recognising and

supporting any subject areas with ongoing inconsistencies of judgements. This confirms the school's internal assessment results.

Encouragement of schoolwide discussions over grade boundary decisions shows a developing capacity to make grade boundary judgements. This may not change all outcomes but does mean that a process of monitoring can explore further options such as a change in verifier if this is needed. The Principal's Nominee keeps a watching brief and with time this will further ensure consistent grade boundary decisions.

**Response to data issues** The school's Education Review Office report noted developing capacity to monitor student progress. "Leaders and teachers are regularly monitoring and tracking achievement information. Strengthened systems and improved processes are ensuring students' progress and wellbeing is at the forefront of decision-making."

Where outlier data has been drawn to the school's attention in one department by NZQA, a close analysis of the results has been made and indicates that internal and external results for the school are congruent and that an effective and experienced teacher is providing students with their best opportunity to achieve at all levels. This analysis has provided confirmation of the internal assessment results awarded.

**Examination Centre Audit** In November of 2020 an NZQA Examination Centre Audit showed the school's examination centre was run effectively and that there is effective dialogue between the Examination Centre Manager and the Principal's Nominee.

### **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)*

Student achievement and culturally responsive assessment practice are forming part of a pattern of change at Pukekohe High School. Since the last Managing National Assessment Review the school has a new Senior Leadership Team who have developed a culture of transparent assessment and moderation practice within the school. This includes a focus on equity, and access to a wider variety of academic and trades courses, particularly for the growing Māori and Pasifika population in this region.

Assessment practice is better meeting the needs of students and regular professional development on assessment practice has improved collective understanding of assessment processes and procedures.

A review of internal moderation practice and policy has provided staff with a developing understanding of the purpose of internal moderation and senior management with a clear line of sight into teacher documentation of internal moderation and the processes followed in departments.

The school maintains, and evidence of learner outcomes suggests, that these initiatives are making a measurable difference to student achievement. They ensure that students are more engaged in and are accessing their own learning and assessment pathways.

Communications and assessment policies have been reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose.

The COVID 19 lockdown resulted in rapid, school-led change and a range of reviews of assessment and moderation policy and practice. This is further supported through a review of the essential skills in the year 9 and 10 curriculum. As a next step the Senior Leadership Team now aims to embed a calendar of annual reviews to manage workload. This will include future focus on such changes as the introduction of digital examinations and the Review of Assessment Standards.

**No action required**

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews or its self-review of assessment systems and practice 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 2020 5.5)*

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

- using culturally responsive assessment contexts
- providing a range of local contexts to engage student interests
- improving assessment practice through portfolio and research-based assessments that use milestone checks and templates to monitor student progress
- extending consent to assess to provide a range of standards leading on to trades and technical careers
- providing individualised learning programmes to meet student needs through differentiated assessment, credit reduction and optional standards in courses
- using school-based evidence to support applications for special assessment conditions and ensuring those with entitlements are provided with approved resources
- assessing when they are ready.

### **Pukekohe High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- managing missed and late assessment, new resubmission rules and further assessment opportunities
- helping students to present authentic work by using a range of suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process, including online authenticity checks
- providing unexpected event grades for students
- offering students an appeals process and investigating any appeals
- investigating any breaches of the school's assessment rules using the principles of natural justice
- ensuring that evidence for derived grades is appropriately collected, submitted and stored
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993* by keeping student results confidential.

### **Better meeting student needs including for Māori and Pasifika students**

Differentiated courses and removal of pre-requisites for STEM subjects increasingly allow students to pursue pathways that more effectively meet their needs. Teacher inquiry showed that several Science and Mathematics courses at Year 11 did not previously allow access to ongoing pathways – particularly for a group of Māori and Pasifika students.

More open entry into ongoing courses through the removal of streaming has been supported with the introduction of new pathways, promotion of Tapasā, regular Pasifika fono and Māori hui. The Tula'i Mentoring process encourages commitment

to peer mentoring and leadership and adds a further layer of support for students. The school credits these changes, and the introduction of a greater range of trades pathways through Manukau Institute of Technology, with improving attendance and achievement outcomes for students some of whom are now taking up tertiary courses in STEM subjects.

**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 2020 6.4b)*

### **Pukekohe High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- holding regular benchmarking meetings in departments
- encouraging discussions over grade boundary decisions to develop teacher capacity to make accurate assessment judgements
- engaging with suitably qualified subject specialists from within and outside the school to verify grades for a purposefully selected sample of student work
- keeping notes of new verifier judgements and professional discussion to provide a collective resource for departments
- staff documenting internal moderation processes digitally so that all stages of this process are visible to Heads of Faculty, the Principal's Nominee and the Senior Leadership Team
- discussing internal moderation as a regular standing item in weekly Curriculum Leadership Team meetings.

### **Pukekohe High 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 or as hard copy, as appropriate
- encouraging teachers to submit external moderation online.

**Strengthen the process of monitoring internal moderation** The Principal's Nominee has agreed to strengthen process by documenting the annual internal moderation monitoring check. This will provide a record of their audit, discussions with the Senior Leadership Team in regular meetings and give a final quality assurance check that internal moderation has been completed for all standards where results have been reported to NZQA.

**Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency** The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on how to undertake sufficient grade 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. Some Heads of Faculty continue with the misapprehension that a set number of pieces of student work must be internally moderated and that these samples are to be randomly selected. This is a process and legacy issue. School policy is clear that 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.

Departments currently assure the quality of grades awarded by including work at grade boundaries when verifying assessor judgements. However, most of those interviewed verify more samples of student work than this.

**Encourage teacher selection of standards for the external moderation plan** To gain effective feedback teachers could engage in making suggestions for standards they would benefit from being included in the school's external moderation plan. There has been no recent teacher engagement in selecting standards in the assessment plan. The Principal's Nominee aims to better emphasise this opportunity and encourage teachers to request standards on their assessment plan later this year.

### **For consideration**

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

- reinforcing the process of strategic selection of standards for internal moderation
- documenting the Principal's Nominee's process for monitoring of internal moderation to provide clarity about the expectations
- recording the findings of internal moderation monitoring checks.

## 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)*

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

- tracking and monitoring student progress towards gaining their NCEA, qualifications or assessment pathways
- identifying targeted learners as part of a three-weekly cycle of predictive individual and group results and providing appropriate intervention to those at risk of not achieving their qualification
- using NZQA statistical reports and analysing results comparatively and longitudinally through *The Equitable Outcomes Report* to inform faculty decisions about course content and design.

### **Pukekohe High School reports accurate achievement data by:**

- using Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify data errors and resolve these
- reporting only those results that have been quality assured, to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- reconciling the currency of memoranda of understanding held with external providers, and stored in departments, through a documented Principal's Nominee check
- ensuring the numbers of late entries for external assessment are managed to better meet student needs by ensuring they are best prepared for external assessment
- ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or are withdrawn as appropriate
- requiring that students check their results and sign off to confirm their accuracy when assessments are returned
- encouraging students to check their results and monitor their progress through the School Management System and increasing use of the NZQA Learner login.

### **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))*

### **Pukekohe High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive standardised outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure face-to-face, as hard copy and through digital channels to help ease of access
- ensuring the Principal's Nominee makes regular visits to discuss assessment requirements with teachers at both Curriculum Leadership Team meetings and departmental meetings
- supporting all teachers by encouraging them to contact subject associations.

### **Pukekohe High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- checking whether teachers, students and are following processes
- informing teachers about assessment best practice, providing professional learning and opportunities to discuss changes.

### **Communication is timely and improves access to NCEA information**

Communication strategies use a variety of media and messaging to share information. The Principal's Nominee presents NCEA information to students at assemblies and to whānau through parents' evenings in English, Māori and three Pasifika languages. Students from overseas or those transferring from schools who are not familiar with NCEA are encouraged to attend. These communication strategies are working to improve understanding of assessment information across the school community.

### **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.