



Managing National Assessment Report

Onewhero Area School

August 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Onewhero 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
- *Onewhero Area School Managing the National Qualifications Framework Staff Handbook*
- *Onewhero Area School School Assessment Guide for Students*
- *Onewhero Area School Curriculum and Student Achievement Policy*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the:

- Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum
- Deputy Principal – Student Achievement
- Heads of Department for:
 - Arts
 - Physical Education and Health
 - Science
 - Social Studies
- Teacher in Charge of Music
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the 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

Onewhero Area School

9 August 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

Onewhero Area School has processes in place to ensure credible assessment for national qualifications and to meet the academic and vocational pathways of individual students. Student's educational needs and future goals are very well known to their teachers.

The school has initiated a school-wide review of curriculum and timetable structure and will move towards a semester-based structure in 2019. This aims to improve the engagement of students through providing courses that will better meet their interests, abilities and future pathways.

The Principal's Nominee leads regular discussion at Senior Syndicate meetings to reinforce and clarify assessment processes. This has enabled school-wide consistency and ownership of credible assessment practice.

Moderation is an embedded process with staff purposefully selecting borderline examples of student work for internal moderation and documenting the subsequent discussion. Staff are invested in moderation, evident by their strategic selection of standards for inclusion for external moderation and willingness to appeal findings or request further clarification.

Data is analysed and used to inform course structures and track student progress towards achieving qualifications. Checks by staff and students ensure accurate data is submitted to NZQA.

The school has communications that allow staff, students and their families to gain a common understanding of NCEA and school assessment procedures. Improvements have been made to the accessibility of these documents through the use of a Google folder on the school's intranet.

The Principal's Nominee supported by members of senior management provides sound leadership in ensuring the credibility of results reported to NZQA.

Areas for improvement

To ensure the verification discussions held for internal moderation are at the standard, NZQA advises a verifier should be a subject expert with recent standard specific experience. The review identified areas where the school should be looking to teachers outside of the school to ensure verification meets NZQA's requirements.

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In 2017 entries were received without results for a number of standards. The Principal's Nominee will continue to remind teachers prior to the 1 December file submission to report a result or withdraw the entry if the student has not had an adequate assessment opportunity. This was an agreed item from the previous Managing National Assessment report.

Agreed action

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

- that any verifier used is a subject specialist with recent standard-specific experience
- all internal entries to NZQA have a result reported or are withdrawn, as appropriate, by 1 December.

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3 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 23 July 2015 Managing National Assessment Report

The school has supported staff in the addressing the following four action items:

- encouraging teachers to consider ways of gathering evidence of achievement from a broader range of settings
- providing professional development on ways to ensure authenticity of student work for assessment
- enabling teachers to access, and promote the use of, the NZQA website
- encouraging teachers to submit material digitally for external moderation.

Despite reminders to staff, a number of internal entries have still been reported to NZQA without a result in recent years. This is discussed further in the data section of this report.

Literacy and numeracy requirements have been added to course selection material, however, there remains the need to include this in course outlines. The school plans to address this as part of the review of student course information discussed in the communication section of this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes

The Principal's Nominee monitors the return of external moderation reports and informs teachers when they have been published. Where issues are identified, or consistency concerns are noted, direct follow up occurs. Teachers are required to report to the Principal's Nominee a response to the findings including changes that will be made to address any issues raised. Changes are monitored by the Principal's Nominee for completion.

With several personnel changes since the last Managing National Assessment review including the Principal, Deputy Principal and Principal's Nominee, the school acknowledges the next step is to review and keep records of any longitudinal trends, including patterns of poor agreement rates over several years. This will ensure senior management are aware of subject areas and teachers that may require ongoing support including professional development.

Response to data issues

Comparison of student achievement in internally and externally assessed standards identified one subject area as an outlier in 2015. The previous Principal's Nominee and Head of Department investigated reasons for the variance and produced a response to NZQA including identifying areas for future focus. Their investigation reinforced the effective assessment practices operating within the department.

Internal review

Evidence for the school using its self-review and evaluation processes to identify areas for on-going improvement in assessment practice and procedures, which are then actioned. (CAAS Guidelines 3iv)

The school reviews its assessment-related processes in response to identified issues and to explore potential improvements. Regular Senior Syndicate meetings involving all teachers of NCEA is the primary forum for the Principal's Nominee to introduce and reinforce key assessment principles and remind staff about upcoming deadlines with the associated procedures.

The school has begun significant review of its curriculum and timetable. This is partly in response to questions raised about achievement and student engagement in the 2018 Education Review Office report. Aspects such as focusing on teaching rather than assessment, reducing the credit count for courses, and introducing Vocational Pathways into course material are being considered.

The Principal's Nominee has gained experience in the role and is valued by staff as a source of information and support for managing and reinforcing credible assessment practices. The school is continuing to develop its capacity to effectively identify and respond to issues while ensuring assessment procedures and practices meet individual student need, and are manageable for both students and teachers.

For consideration

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

- undertaking longitudinal analysis of external moderation outcomes.

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)

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

- engaging with outside providers to extend the school's capacity to provide a range of vocational assessment opportunities through Gateway and Trades Academy courses
- adapting assessment to make use of local and topical contexts to meet interests of students
- supporting teachers to collect a range of evidence of achievement, particularly through naturally occurring evidence, group activities and the use of digital tools
- co-constructing the standards to be undertaken within an assessment programme
- where appropriate, having flexibility with the timing of assessments.

Onewhero Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing authenticity through a shared understanding of process and strategies for staff and students
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- awarding derived grades based on valid standard-specific results
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Curriculum and timetable review underway The 2018 Education Review Office report states that "the school is not achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all of its students". As a response the school is undertaking a review of its timetable and programme structure and is moving towards a semester structure in 2019. Senior Management are reviewing ways to help improve the engagement of students with the goal of improving achievement. Some aspects for discussion and consideration of the review include:

- looking to reduce assessment by reviewing the number of credits offered to students per course, per semester and in their overall programme
- focusing on the quality of teaching rather than quantity of assessment undertaken
- promoting the idea that while a programme may cover a wide range of topics, not every aspect needs to be assessed, therefore enabling more in-depth learning, application and understanding
- exploring ways to better align courses with Vocational Pathways and communicate this to students and families
- investigating a wider range of courses, especially at Level 2, to better meet the proposed future pathways of students

- investigating extending integrated study using real world contexts following trials in the junior school.

The school acknowledges the importance of maintaining credible assessment practices and ensuring accuracy of data. Aspects such as strategies for reducing student and teacher workload, managing course endorsements and student entries in light of the semester approach were discussed during the review.

Using school-based evidence to support special assessment conditions

applications The school has relied solely on professional reports to demonstrate evidence of need for special assessment conditions applications submitted in recent years. Relevant staff are aware that school-based evidence is a valid source of evidence and can have the additional advantage of reducing the possible barrier of availability and/or cost that may prevent for students accessing support. The school is looking towards developing tracking from Year 7 to identify and collate school-based evidence that would be available if needed to support any future applications for eligible students.

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 2018 6.4b)

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- purposefully selecting samples of student work at grade boundaries for verification of assessor judgements
- documenting the internal moderation process, including noting verification discussion and decisions on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* for all standards assessed, prior to reporting results
- monitoring of internal moderation: The Principal's Nominee
 - requires teachers to submit the completed internal moderation cover sheets to confirm internal moderation has occurred
 - checks accuracy of results before publishing them for submission to NZQA
 - undertakes random checks to ensure the documented moderation process reflects actual practice.

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

- encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan
- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored
- encouraging teachers to appeal external moderation decisions when they do not agree.

Review the appropriateness of verifiers used Although staff are aware of the requirement that verification must occur for all standards where results are reported to NZQA, the appropriateness of the verifier used in some areas should be reviewed. Any verifier used for the internal moderation of student work should be a subject specialist with recent standard-specific knowledge. In areas where another subject expert is not available in the school, teachers need to establish links with colleagues in other schools. Even if another subject expert is available within the school, it is good practice to vary the assistance to avoid becoming insular and in order to ensure professional discussion around student work is founded in other school's understanding of the national standard. This may be particularly relevant for standards at Levels 2 and 3.

Reinforce verification requirements for sufficiency Internal moderation is an embedded process with teachers including student work at grade boundaries when undertaking verification of assessor results. This is good practice.

NZQA and the school expect that verification should involve checking sufficient samples of student work purposefully selected at grade boundaries. Reinforcing this with teachers will reduce the instances where their verification sampling exceeds

these expectations, or where there remains a focus on a set number of pieces of student work. Verification does not require a fixed or predetermined number of pieces of student work. Factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed should determine the sample size. Sufficient selection has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process.

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 that any verifier used is a subject specialist with recent standard-specific experience.

For consideration

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

- reinforcing with teachers that verification should focus on a sufficient number of purposefully selected material at grade boundaries.

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)

Onewhero Area School effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - Heads of Department undertaking an annual analysis covering subject specific NCEA performance that helps inform decisions about future course content, design and improvements
 - tracking student progress, including identifying priority learners.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - submitting results to NZQA on a regular and timely basis
 - using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
 - having students sign off on the accuracy of results reported to NZQA
 - checking entries in externally assessed standards to limit late entries
 - supporting eligible families to apply for financial assistance
 - using the correct provider code for assessment undertaken by external providers.

Remove entries for students with no result The school should ensure that there is a result reported for all entries by 1 December. If a student has not submitted work for an assessment, a Not Achieved grade should be reported. Where there is no result because there has not been an adequate assessment opportunity, the entry should be withdrawn.

An agreed action item identified in the 2015 Managing National Assessment report was addressed that year. However, despite reminders to staff, the number of entries reported without a result has risen again. In 2017 there was no result reported in more than six percent of unit standards and more than five percent of internally assessed achievement standards for which entries had been created. This may provide an inaccurate view of possible student achievement if tracking of progress includes those entries for which no results are ultimately reported.

Options to assist in managing this include:

- reminding staff prior to 1 December data file to report a result for all internal standards or withdraw the entry if appropriate
- using the NZQA reports available through the school's Provider login such as:
 - *Candidate Entries and Results Report*
 - *Counts by Subject or Course Report*
- making use of options such as *View Orphaned 'Show on Printout' Entries* available through the school's student management system.

Encourage greater use of Learner login The school is encouraged to support students to register for, and use, their NZQA Learner login to track progress and monitor the accuracy of entries and results. Although just over 80 percent of students

registered for their Learner login in 2017, this represents a decrease from previous years. Furthermore, although the students interviewed for this review were aware of the login, they either had not attempted to login or had forgotten their password so were no longer engaged. Each said they relied on their teachers to inform them of their credit count and progress. Encouraging and enabling students to use the NZQA Learner login will support them in the ownership of their results and progress towards achieving qualification.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management and use of assessment-related data. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure all internal entries to NZQA have a result reported, or are withdrawn as appropriate by 1 December.

For consideration

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

- supporting students use of the NZQA Learner login to track progress and monitor entries and results.

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))

Onewhero Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating assessment policy and procedure
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current
- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- ensuring a memorandum of understanding is held for all outside providers against whose codes grades are reported.

Onewhero Area School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- ensuring relevant NZQA updates are circulated to NCEA teachers and discussed as necessary
- the Principal's Nominee having a regular slot at Senior Syndicate meetings
- improving accessibility of assessment related documents including handbooks, internal moderation procedures and forms, links to NZQA website and key dates, by moving these to a Google folder
- holding a Year 10 student/parents evening to introduce information about NCEA and course selection
- establishing an assessment calendar which both staff and students can access
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes.

Review course information presented to students The school is encouraged to review and consolidate information given to students regarding their courses. This may include using the same format for both course selection and course outlines and ensuring information such as literacy and numeracy requirements appear on both.

Currently, a common template for course information is used for the student course selection booklet. Following the recommendation from the previous Managing National Assessment report, literacy and numeracy requirements were added to this information. However, at the start of each academic year, departments develop their own, additional, course information for issue to students, which differ in layout and the information they present.

The school recognises it is good practice for course information to follow a common template. The Managing National Assessment visit confirmed the following advantages of a consistent format:

- information is easier for parents and students to understand
- obsolete terms such as compassionate consideration, sighted in one document, would be removed and details such as further assessment opportunities can be communicated in a standardised manner
- teacher workload is lessened with a single document

- additional subject-specific information can remain for students as the use of a common outline does not preclude that.

An option, available through the school's student management system, was discussed during the visit.

For consideration

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- developing a course outline template to standardise the information provided to students.