

Managing National Assessment Report

Thames High School

March 2023

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Thames High School

28 March 2023

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.

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2022.

Actions and considerations

Agreed actions

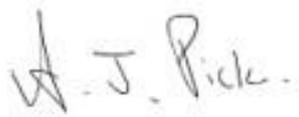
The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications.

Action	Timeframe
Credible assessment practice to meet student / ākonga needs	
Ensure that where a further assessment opportunity is offered it is offered according to NZQA requirements.	Immediate
Report a result for all internal entries, or withdraw the entry, as appropriate.	Ongoing throughout the year and to be completed by 1 December

For consideration

To extend good practice in meeting student / ākonga needs and supporting assessment practice, the school is encouraged to consider within the next year:

- Investigating ways to further support course endorsement.



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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 8 March 2019 Managing National Assessment Report The school has addressed two of three action items from its 2019 review and has partially addressed the third item. The staff handbook has been reviewed, updated and linked to the NZQA website to assist understanding and support consistent assessment practice. Consistently formatted course outlines are now made available to students/ākonga to avoid duplication.

Introduced in 2022, a new internal moderation workflow provides a tracked system so that the Principal's Nominee can monitor and reconcile documentation of quality assurance with actual practice. This will need to become embedded and should be supported with moderation monitoring visits to departments. This is discussed further in the self-review section of the report.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes External moderation feedback confirms that the school has recognised and implemented changes needed to respond to inconsistent external moderation outcomes, most evident from 2021.

The Deputy Principal, Principal's Nominee and Heads of Department work together to help ensure continued progress in the growing consistency of teacher responses to external moderation outcomes. The Principal's Nominee addresses fortnightly Heads of Department meetings to support strategic discussion and follow-up of any issues raised in external moderation reports, and its completion. She has provided professional development to all staff on the new system. Where necessary, teachers hold discussions with the Principal's Nominee, update assessment materials and seek new grade verifiers outside of their region to support their understanding of the standard.

The Principal's Nominee uses a documented monitoring system to record actions required for teachers to address issues identified in external moderation and tracks their completion. Strategic findings from this new system are shared with the senior leadership team. Teachers are now beginning to request standards, where they would value feedback, to be added to the school's external assessment plan. These systems are becoming effective in ensuring that external moderation is used as a lens on the effectiveness of the school's internal moderation.

Review of External Examination Centre A review of the school's external examination centre showed the need for greater security. The school and NZQA have addressed this issue by putting in place systems to ensure materials are kept in a locked location, accessible to the Principal's Nominee and Examination Centre Manager only, so that all examination materials are effectively secured.

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 of assessment systems Thames High School is developing its self-reviewing procedures to consider processes that will better meet students' needs and

to improve student engagement. It uses processes to identify and develop an inclusive environment that provides a broad range of academic and vocational opportunities to meet the needs of all students. In 2022, senior management appointed a new Principal's Nominee who is part of a leadership team working alongside the Deputy Principal to track and monitor moderation and assessment data.

Engaging and supporting Māori student achievement Departments use annual self-review data to report to the Principal and the Board of Trustees with a focus on improving assessment and course design processes linked to their strategic plan.

This has resulted in ongoing discussion over the disparity in results between Māori and non-Māori students/ākonga. A range of culturally affirming assessment teaching and assessment contexts are in place. The Principal noted next steps will include further conversation with the local community and validation of cultural knowledge through such subjects as Te Ao Haka. Where these have historically been extra-curricular activities, equitable access through a timetabled programme, as yet to be introduced, can be further developed to validate skills and understanding and provide an opportunity to meet student needs.

Teachers analyse their data for each course and set goals and identify barriers and enablers for the year ahead. They are provided with data by gender and ethnicity to refine courses based on these outcomes. Examples of changes to courses to better acknowledge current teacher capacity, and to address the need to develop teacher ability to reinstate courses in future, were sighted in Health and Physical Education. This is providing greater consistency to meet student needs whilst acknowledging existing resourcing constraints.

Course design to meet the needs of students To support the development of literacy and numeracy competencies, the school has designed a Level 1 Integrated Studies course that includes Mathematics and English. Focused timeframes within the school's blocked timetable, and specialist teaching, support student success in assessments. Analysis of programme data shows more students/ākonga are making progress towards their qualifications by meeting literacy and numeracy requirements. The programme provides a model of innovation that could be used to make other changes to course design that will better meet student needs.

Review of internal moderation systems The school has identified a need for change by developing more consistent teacher understanding of the purpose of internal moderation in quality assuring results. It is taking a proactive approach to its review of internal moderation systems. This system now provides a double-checked workflow including checks on critiquing, verification and storage of assessment materials and student work in departments to better quality assure student results to senior management. Teachers commented that throughout 2022 they had much greater clarity over the steps in the internal moderation process. This process is supported with professional development and has worked effectively for most teachers, freeing the Principal's Nominee to provide further targeted support where this is needed.

Communications review of assessment handbooks and personnel As part of a broader review of communications a new Communications Officer is working with the school in 2023. Leading into this process, the Principal's Nominee has reviewed the school's assessment handbooks and has better linked school documents to NZQA requirements. Both students/ākonga and teachers spoke of new clarity in terms of their understanding of assessment process and practice especially over

resubmission and authenticity requirements. Teachers have been provided with links to handbooks and to hard copies in departments. The next step is to add these documents to the school's website when it is reviewed. This will make assessment materials and processes more easily accessible to teachers, students/ākonga and whānau.

Credible assessment practice to meet student/ ākongā needs

Evidence of 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)

Effective mentoring systems to ensure student access to the Learner Login

Whānau Kaitiaki have been briefed and resourced to upskill students/ākongā in use of their Learner Login. Almost two thirds of students/ākongā engaged in NCEA at Thames High School are now using this system. This enables students to check results held by NZQA, order certificates, and apply for reviews and reconsiderations. The Principal's Nominee uses NZQA reports to identify the need for support so that students/ākongā can continue to take ownership of their results in this way. This is good practice.

Engagement with digital platforms In 2023, the school will engage year 10 and 11 students/ākongā with Literacy and Numeracy co-requisite assessments online to ensure students/ākongā are better prepared for using digital platforms in future. Student readiness to be assessed is being considered by subject teachers in English and Mathematics, and through the Deputy Principal's progress tracker. By considering readiness the school aims to support student success. The school will also need to consider its ability to engage students/ākongā in digital teaching and learning so that they are prepared to take part in the Review of Achievement Standards at Level 1 through digital external examinations in 2024.

Improved identification of students/ākongā requiring special assessment conditions

The school has continued to develop its systems for identifying students/ākongā who may benefit from entitlement to special assessment conditions to remove barriers to fair assessment. This year they have hosted a regional Special Assessment Conditions seminar to better understand how computer use and assistive technology can meet student needs. Engagement in these processes is effectively benefiting students/ākongā who may be entitled to special assessment conditions.

Respond to student voice over course endorsement Student voice from this review suggests that, while some value is attached to course endorsement, its value could be better understood by students/ākongā. Course design that assigns both internally and externally assessed standards to enable the possibility of endorsement will assist in better meeting student needs.

Build consistent practice around one further assessment opportunity The school needs to ensure that all teachers are applying the same practice around the availability of one further assessment opportunity. Teachers have received professional development over the appropriate provision of resubmission and a further assessment opportunity. The Principal's Nominee has explained that if a further assessment opportunity is offered, it must be advised in advance and offered to all, although all students/ākongā do not need to take up this opportunity. It must be offered after further teaching and learning has occurred. In one teacher interview there was inconsistent understanding of this requirement. By reiterating these requirements and offering further professional development using NZQA Mythbusters the school can ensure consistent teacher understanding and practice. This will meet NZQA's requirements and ensure credible assessment practice for all students.

Standards withdrawal process inconsistent in several departments Although the school has a documented process, this review identified that there is variability in teachers' understanding about when it is appropriate to withdraw students/ākonga from standards. The school will need to review its processes for identifying and removing these entries before 1 December each year. This practice will ensure removal of any entry for which there is no reported result because no assessment took place. It will also support accurate student assessment records for tracking purposes.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2021 6.4b)

Verification processes are being strengthened The school's internal moderation process focuses on discussions between teachers and grade verifiers over purposefully selected samples of student work at grade boundaries. Staff professional development shows a clearer understanding of the need to hold effective internal moderation conversations in departments. Single teacher departments use grade verifiers from other schools and increasingly engage in discussion online. Samples of student work are discussed and annotated in benchmarking meetings during which teachers can reflect on the standards clarification and the accuracy of their grade boundary judgements. This shows that teachers are developing a clearer understanding of the purpose of internal moderation. Ongoing attention to this effective practice will better assure senior management of the consistency of student grades awarded.

As a Google school, Thames High School is also developing its digital storage processes for teachers to retain student evidence in a consistent manner. This is good practice to ensure that internal moderation materials are stored for quality assurance purposes.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students/ākonga

Thames High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students/ākonga by:

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

Thames High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed or late assessment
- investigating student / ākonga appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules
- monitoring the authenticity of student / ākonga work, using a range of strategies
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived and unexpected event grades
- safeguarding student / ākonga privacy in the issuing of student / ākonga results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Thames 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 / ākonga work
- using grade verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes

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

- ensuring samples of student / ākonga work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- selecting sufficient samples of student / ākonga 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

Thames High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students/ākonga by:

- monitoring and tracking student / ākonga progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure these allow students/ākonga to meet their assessment goals, and inform changes to courses and standards offered
- gathering student / ākonga 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.

Thames 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 / ākonga and teacher / kaiako 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.

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

Thames 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/ākonga receive outlines for courses they undertake
- supporting students/ākonga to monitor their achievement
- discussing assessment policy and procedure with staff, and providing updates of NCEA information throughout the year
- reporting on students/ākonga progress towards qualifications, including providing opportunities for parents to discuss their children's NCEA goals, progress, and achievement
- supporting teachers / kaiako new to the school through an induction programme to understand school and NZQA assessment processes
- celebrating students/ākonga success.

Thames 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/ākonga
- informing students/ākonga about suitable learning pathways
- supporting students/ākonga 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 Thames 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/ākonga 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 2021* (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 Candidates 2023*.

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
- *NZQA Procedures Staff Handbook Thames High School 2023*, (Staff Handbook)
- *NZQA Procedures Student Handbook Thames High School 2023*, (Student / Ākonga Handbook).

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal
- Heads of Department for:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Music
 - Physical Education
 - Science
 - Visual Arts
- Teacher in Charge of:
 - English
- Teacher of:
 - Mathematics
- three students/ākonga.

There was a report-back session with the Principal / Tumuaki, two Deputy Principals 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.