

Managing National Assessment Report

Te Kauwhata College

June 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Te Kauwhata College:

- 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 2019* (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
- *Te Kauwhata College NCEA Staff Handbook 2019*
- *Te Kauwhata College NCEA Student Handbook 2019*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Learning Area Leaders for:
 - Arts
 - Mathematics
 - Technology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal 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

Te Kauwhata College

21 June 2019

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

Te Kauwhata College is committed to reporting credible results, developing its assessment practices and preparing their students for the world ahead of them.

Assessment practices and the provision of courses are effectively managed to provide programmes that meet students' individual needs. Localised contexts and the involvement of outside providers help engage students and provide relevant assessment opportunities to support them into meaningful future pathways. Students eligible for special assessment conditions are identified and supported and the increasing use of school-based evidence for applications helps remove financial barriers.

Moderation processes are understood, embedded and well managed. Teachers critique tasks, verify student work using subject specialists and document the process. The Principal's Nominee monitors completion. Teachers complete a *Response to External Moderation* form and note any action items to address moderator feedback.

Data is regularly analysed and reported on, including to the Principal and Senior Academic Mentor. It is used to track students' progress and identify those who may be at risk of not achieving their qualification goals. Data submission to NZQA is complete, timely and accurate.

Information for staff and students has focused on key areas such as moderation, consistent assessment practice and requirements for gaining a qualification. Teachers' planners are effectively used to communicate key NCEA assessment information.

Areas for improvement

The monitoring of internal moderation can be strengthened by the Principal's Nominee discussing moderation practice with teachers and reconciling this with documentation. This will ensure senior management that strategic selection of student work for internal moderation is understood, appropriate grade verifiers are maintained, and provide confidence that the results reported are credible.

Information for staff should be consolidated so that there is one point of reference that ensures consistent and accurate information is available. Some minor

modifications have been suggested in this report to align documentation with NZQA and school practices.

Agreed action

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

- strengthen monitoring of the internal moderation process by reconciling documentation with actual practice to provide senior management with confidence that all reported results are credible
- review the staff handbook as discussed in this report.

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23 August 2019

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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 9 September 2016 Managing National Assessment Report

The previous report listed three agreed action items. The use of Supported Learning standards has been clarified with teachers and there have been no identified students assessed using standards in this domain since the previous review. The school's management of internal entries has improved so that all internal entries have a reported result or are withdrawn as appropriate by 1 December. Staff and student information has been reviewed and condensed. Further recommendations are noted in the communication section of this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes Feedback from external moderation can confirm the effectiveness of internal moderation. The school is encouraged to consider strengthening the current external moderation response process by adding a reflection on internal moderation, particularly in areas where issues have been identified.

This reflection could include reviewing the extent to which the strategic selection of samples is understood and implemented. It could also include a review of the verifier used, such as ensuring they are a subject expert with recent standard-specific experience and considering if a change of verifier is warranted. It is good practice in areas where the same verifier has been used successfully for several years, to consider varying the professional assistance occasionally to ensure there is an objective view and that assessors remain aware, and maintain understanding, of the standard. Extending the external moderation response process will support robust internal moderation practice and maintain the assessor's understanding of the standard.

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)

NCEA best practice is discussed at regular Learning Area Leaders' meetings. These discussions, led by the Principal's Nominee, ensure middle managers are up to date with current practice and that assessment practice is consistent school-wide. Recent assessment practices discussed include:

- clarifying resubmission and further assessment opportunities
- reviewing moderation processes
- establishing a student achievement team to highlight and support identified students
- managing mark books with a new student management system such as
 - the Principal's Nominee setting up all courses to ensure their accuracy

- handing the responsibility for the day by day management of mark books to subject areas, including the processes for publishing results and withdrawal of student entries.

The Principal's Nominee was appointed in 2018 and with the support of the Principal continues to review procedures for managing national assessment within the school. She is working to refine systems and strengthen understanding. Capacity by teachers to identify assessment-related issues and instigate appropriate changes is developing. This gives confidence that credible results are reported.

For consideration

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

- encouraging staff to review internal moderation processes when responding to external moderation feedback.

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 2019 5.5)

Te Kauwhata College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- adapting assessment to make use of localised and relevant learning contexts
- allowing senior students to review their courses half way through the year through the introduction of a semester programme
- extending assessment opportunities by using external providers such as Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu and the Virtual Learning Network to deliver courses the school is unable to offer
- offering Gateway programmes to support students in a variety of employment - related courses
- supporting academic focus through the introduction of 'no interruption Green Weeks' and the publication of assessment calendars
- providing students with the opportunity to design an individual assessment programme by selecting from a menu of standards to reflect their interests and abilities.

Te Kauwhata College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing authenticity through a shared understanding of process and strategies for staff and students
- reporting Not Achieved where a student has presented evidence that is not at the standard, or has had an adequate assessment opportunity and submitted no work
- where appropriate, assessing students when they are ready
- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment.

Special assessment conditions support student achievement Since the previous Managing National Assessment review, a new Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) has been appointed. This has resulted in the identification and successful application for special assessment conditions for a high number of eligible students. Supporting students to access special assessment conditions assists in removing barriers which could prevent students having a fair opportunity to achieve. Over half the applications made to NZQA use school-based evidence. This is good practice as school-based evidence can remove the financial barrier of using independent assessor reports.

Māori and Pasifika engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects to address equity The 2018 STEM Level 3 subject achievement data provided by NZQA has been noted by senior management. The school has reviewed the programmes of year 13 students and looked to support them to transition into appropriate pathways. The Science department is reviewing the STEM programme particularly in the junior school. Adaptations such as home room and integrated programmes within a common relevant context is aimed to engage students and improve achievement in STEM.

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 2019 6.4b)

Te Kauwhata College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- reinforcing clear expectation of the school's internal moderation procedures with teachers
- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- verifying a purposefully selected sample of student work
- documenting reasons for assessor and verifier judgements on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- staff reporting results of internal standards on confirmation from the Principal's Nominee, who checks the satisfactory completion of moderation documentation

Te Kauwhata College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored
- submitting material to NZQA throughout the year as appropriate, to support teachers in the timely review of standards within their assessment programmes.

Strengthen internal moderation monitoring The monitoring of internal moderation by senior management can be strengthened by holding discussions with teachers to reconcile their documentation with actual practice. This will give senior management confidence that all results reported are credible.

Currently a thorough checking process by the Principal's Nominee confirms that all internal moderation documentation has been completed. From this the Principal's Nominee checks mark books to ensure moderation documentation has been received for standards where results have been published.

A robust internal moderation monitoring system should be more than a compliance, 'tick box' model. Holding discussions with teachers around their understanding and application of internal moderation expectations will support school-wide consistent practice and reinforce strategic selection. This will assure Senior Management that an effective moderation process has been completed for every internal standard where results are reported to NZQA.

Request standards for moderation The online external moderation application enables schools to request standards for external moderation each year. To date, the school has only requested a small number. Encouraging teachers to do this supports ownership of the process by allowing them to think strategically about the selection. Aspects that can be considered include:

- requesting feedback for any standards with previously identified issues, to confirm the effectiveness of responses

- requesting additional feedback for standards to confirm internal moderation verification decisions, particularly for borderline decisions
- ensuring timely feedback for standards planned for the current year's programme.

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:

- strengthen monitoring of the internal moderation process by reconciling documentation with actual practice to provide senior management with confidence that all reported results are credible.

For consideration

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

- encouraging teachers to request standards for external moderation.

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)

Te Kauwhata College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- Learning Area Leaders analysing and reporting achievement data to the Principal and Board of Trustees three times a year to help inform progress towards goals and future actions
- tracking student achievement including students at risk of not achieving their chosen assessment pathway.

Te Kauwhata College reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
- ensuring all internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
- using a *Grade Acknowledgement Sheet* for students to sign acceptance of the grade awarded
- using the correct provider code for assessment undertaken by external providers
- submitting emergency grades to NZQA through monthly data files submissions.

Data used to track student progress The school has appointed a Senior Academic Mentor and a student achievement team to review data and support student achievement towards qualifications. Teachers identify students' progress towards gaining credits in individual subjects using a 'traffic light' system. This is collated and shared with teachers. The breakdown of achievement data assists in the identification of students at risk of not achieving a qualification.

The school is encouraged to review the extent to which the decline in Literacy and Numeracy contributes to NCEA achievement patterns and consider a more explicit focus to track this, particularly with Year 11 students. Obtaining 80 credits is only one part of the requirement for NCEA. This review noted the achievement rates for NCEA have dropped over the last two years. This parallels a corresponding drop in Level 1 Literacy and Numeracy attainment.

Encourage use of NZQA Learner Login for students The definitive way for students to check the accuracy of reported entries and results, make requests for review and reconsideration of external examinations, and order certificates and a Record of Achievement is through their NZQA Learner Login. The percentage of students who registered to use this has dropped notably over the previous two years. This drop mirrors the introduction of a new student management system in the school. The school is encouraged to support students to use their Learner Login in addition to school-based systems, particularly later in the year to ensure they can access NZQA services.

For consideration

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

- investigating ways to track student progress towards achieving Level 1 Literacy and Numeracy
- supporting and encouraging students to use their NZQA Learner Login.

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))

Te Kauwhata College has effective processes and procedures for:

- supporting teachers new to the school
- ensuring a memorandum of understanding is held centrally for all outside providers against whose codes results are reported.
- supporting teachers with professional development opportunities such as attendance at *Teachers New to NCEA* seminars and release for moderation meetings.

Te Kauwhata College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- including NZQA published myth busters in teacher planners to reinforce key expectations with staff using a quiz format
- the Principal's Nominee reinforcing key messages, procedures and good practice with Learning Area Leaders
- mentor teachers ensuring that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Review staff handbook The Principal's Nominee has moved to include information relating to managing national assessment in the teacher handbook. This handbook, issued to all teachers, tends to be the go-to reference for staff. It is regularly used and therefore the information contained is readily accessible. However, as the *Te Kauwhata College NCEA Staff Handbook* still exists, the school needs to review what and how information for teachers is communicated. It is suggested that there be one, centralised reference, as this will ensure consistency and version control.

The Managing National Assessment review appraised the comprehensive staff handbook. Some minor updates and amendments were suggested to align with NZQA and school practice. These include:

- removing the Board of Trustees policy document *Policy and Procedures for Assessment for National Qualifications* from within the handbook as policy documents tend to relate to overarching principles rather than specific school-wide assessment procedures
- confirming that when applying for special assessment conditions for relevant students, evidence is not restricted to professional reports and can be obtained through school-based evidence
- updating information relating to external moderation to align with the online process including removing reference to optional, teacher-selected material
- removing outdated NZQA links and references

Some of these suggestions had been noted in the previous Managing National Assessment report.

Consider the language level of student handbook The student handbook provides information on key aspects of managing national assessment. It has been

condensed since the last Managing National Assessment report as agreed. However much of the document is still written in a style more suited to teachers. Adjusting the language of the handbook may assist in making the document more user-friendly for the intended audience.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, students and families. Senior management undertakes to:

- review the staff handbook as discussed in this report.

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:

- reviewing the level of language in the handbook provided for students.