

Managing National Assessment Report

Te Aroha College

August 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Te Aroha 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 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
- *Te Aroha College Policy Assessment and Moderation*
- *Te Aroha College NZQA Procedures for Assessment (Staff Booklet)*
- *Te Aroha College National Qualification Framework NCEA Level 1,2 &3 NZQA Procedures for Assessment (Student Booklet)*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Learning for Arts, Science, and Technology
- Teacher in Charge of Health
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Assistant 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 Aroha College

24 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

Te Aroha College offers a range of academic and vocational courses to support students' abilities, needs and career aspirations. Recent timetable changes have focused on broadening learning opportunities for students.

Items identified in the previous Managing National Assessment report have been actioned. The Principal's Nominee has led internal review around assessment procedures which has focused on ensuring teachers understand requirements and expectations. The school continues to refine and embed practice.

Moderation is an embedded process. Teachers select samples of student work at grade boundaries and share these with subject specialists to confirm assessment judgements. The Principal's Nominee monitors the completion and effectiveness of this process.

The school uses five-weekly checks to track student progress, identify those at risk of not achieving their assessment goals and report to parents. Communication of assessment practice and expectations is fit for purpose. Staff and student handbooks have been reviewed to ensure they reflect current expectations and practice. They are readily available and written in appropriate language.

The Principal's Nominee, supported by the Senior Leadership Team, provides effective leadership that ensures credible results are reported.

Areas for improvement

The review identified that resubmission requirements had not been applied appropriately in one area. Some minor updates to school documentation are recommended to align these with NZQA current terminology and best practice.

Agreed action

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

- clarify with teachers the correct application of the requirements for resubmission
- update school documentation for next publication as indicated in this report.

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School Quality Assurance and Liaison

1 November 2018

NZQA

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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 7 May 2015 Managing National Assessment Report The school has addressed the seven agreed action items identified in the previous report. The school agreed to:

- encourage staff to share the outcomes of external moderation with their verifier
- investigate areas identified through external moderation with ongoing low agreement rates and implement further support
- share current examples and promote further investigation of alternative ways of gathering evidence
- encourage further discussion on adopting an inter-departmental/cross curricular approach to learning and assessment
- encourage more detailed documentation of internal moderation benchmark discussion and outcomes
- encourage teachers to digitally submit materials for external moderation
- ensure the Principal's Nominee holds a copy of memoranda of understanding for all external organisations.

Response to external moderation outcomes The Principal's Nominee coordinates an effective process to respond to feedback from external moderation. All staff are required to complete a *Response to External Moderation* form and, where necessary, note actions to address identified issues. Where a judgement inconsistency or low agreement rate is noted, the Principal's Nominee holds discussions with the teacher and Head of Learning as appropriate. The school is aware of subject areas with historical low agreement rates and has implemented strategies to support teachers and address issues. These have included reviewing teaching plans and marking schedules, storage of material, the appropriateness of verifiers, and professional development such as attendance at Best Practice Workshops.

External moderation is an indication of the robustness of internal moderation processes previously undertaken. The school is encouraged to make this relationship more explicit by adding a reference for staff to review the internal moderation as part of the *Response to External Moderation* form. This will help to improve staff ownership and understanding of the link between internal and external moderation.

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 demonstrates improving capacity to review its practice, identify assessment-related issues and respond appropriately.

Major timetable changes introduced Since the previous Managing National Assessment report, Te Aroha College has introduced a new timetable structure including moving to 100-minute periods. A Smart Day offers half and full day courses directed towards interest and/or vocational programmes, including work experience, some of which offer credits towards NCEA.

The school acknowledges these changes have necessitated ongoing review to ensure they are meeting student need while maintaining consistent and credible assessment practice. One such example noted by the school for 2019 is course design and the suggestion to limit the maximum number of credits offered. The assessment practice section of this report makes further suggestions for the school to consider.

Review of assessment practices The Principal's Nominee, appointed in 2017, has led the school in its self-review of assessment processes to identify misconceptions, strengthen practice and ensure consistent application. She has conducted discussion explaining the rationale for assessment processes. This has promoted greater ownership rather than focusing solely on compliance with the school's and NZQA systems. Areas of recent focus have included:

- improved monitoring and support of curriculum areas with historical low agreement rate
- greater attention to the appropriate selection of student work for internal moderation, documenting of discussion and timeliness of its completion
- ensuring all staff have access to the NZQA Provider login
- supporting staff to prepare material for external moderation including digital submission of material
- consolidation and reinforcement of authenticity processes for staff and students.

The Principal's Nominee is supported in her role by the Senior Leadership Team.

For consideration

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

- including a reference to internal moderation 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 2018 5.5)

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

- offering a range of vocational, academic and interest programmes
- extending assessment opportunities by using external providers to deliver:
 - programmes the school is unable to offer
 - assessment against individual standards related to career pathways
- 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
- encouraging teachers to collect a range of evidence of achievement through regular sharing of best practice
- ensuring derived grades are based on authentic standard-specific evidence from practice examinations or other appropriate assessment and available on the school's student management system prior to start of external examinations
- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on extensions, deadlines, and further assessment opportunities
- providing differentiated assessment within courses.

Te Aroha College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment
- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted for assessment by using suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process including the use of digital tools
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Review appropriateness of student programmes and course design This review identified a number of students who gained NCEA Level 1 in 2017 through achieving a high number of unit standards from specialised courses at a higher level. This has several potential implications for students including:

- specialising too early having the potential to limit future pathway opportunities
- limiting the breadth and depth of study at Level 1 having a subsequent impact on the subjects a student can advance to at a higher level
- constraining the type of standard assessed reducing the possibility of certificate endorsements
- achieving a disproportionate number of credits in one course impacting on the engagement of students in other courses
- assessing a high number of credits in a single course directly contributing to student and teacher workload.

The school should consider the structure of individual student programmes and courses to ensure quality and meaningful assessment is offered that meets their needs and future aspirations.

Reinforce resubmission requirements If a resubmission is offered by a teacher, it must take place as soon as possible after an assessment has been completed. If it is not able to be completed in a timely manner, the original result must be reported. Further teaching and specific feedback cannot occur between the final submission date and the resubmission.

All staff interviewed during the review were able to describe correctly the process of resubmission. However, the review identified one subject area where the application did not reflect the description of the process given by the teacher. For one standard a resubmission has been indicated for several students despite the assessment having been undertaken several months previously and grades for the rest of the class having been reported to NZQA. This is contrary to the requirement that a resubmission takes place as soon as possible after the assessment. Furthermore, as other students had already received their results, there are potential authenticity issues to consider. As a resubmission is no longer appropriate in this situation, the only available option for these students would be to offer them a further assessment opportunity if time allowed.

Investigate the use of school-based evidence for special assessment conditions applications The school is encouraged to review its processes relating to special assessment conditions, including the use of school-based evidence to support future applications. To date the school has relied solely on Level C assessor reports to substantiate need. The school acknowledges the cost and availability of suitable professional resources may be prohibitive to some potentially eligible students. Teachers and deans have been informed of special assessment conditions guidelines to improve their understanding and identification of eligible students, especially during enrolment time.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- clarify with teachers the correct application of the requirements for resubmission.

For consideration

To extend good practice in meeting student needs and supporting assessment practice, the school is encouraged to consider:

- reviewing course design and student programmes
- investigate school-based evidence for future special assessment condition applications.

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)

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

- ensuring new and amended assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- teachers understanding the reason for and demonstrating the purposeful selection of a sufficient sample of student work
- verifying grade judgements of student work using subject specialists from within and outside the school
- documenting the internal moderation process, including noting verification discussion and decisions on an Internal Moderation Cover Sheet before results are reported
- monitoring of internal moderation through:
 - Heads of Learning Area checking completion of internal moderation before publishing results to NZQA
 - the Principal's Nominee requiring all completed internal moderation cover sheets to confirm valid internal moderation practices
 - the Principal's Nominee ensuring documented moderation process reflects actual practice.

Te Aroha 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
- encouraging staff to appeal findings or ask for clarification of external moderation feedback.

Robust internal moderation evident Since taking on the role, the Principal's Nominee has spent considerable time reviewing internal moderation practices within the school. She has subsequently explained, encouraged and reinforced best practice and is now confident teachers understand the rationale of internal moderation and demonstrate effective practice that ensure credible results are reported to NZQA.

Request standards for external moderation To promote ownership of the external moderation process the school should consider encouraging more teachers to request standards for inclusion for external moderation each year. There is a misconception by some staff that choosing standards will add to the total number required. This review confirmed that this is not the case. Strategic teacher selection can include:

- ensuring timely feedback of any standards with previously identified issues to confirm the effectiveness of responses

- requesting additional feedback for standards to confirm internal moderation verification decisions
- selecting current standards rather than those which may no longer be used
- planning to include all standards assessed over time.

For consideration

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

- encouraging staff to select 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 Aroha College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - undertaking 5-weekly checks that track the progress of all students towards their assessment goals
 - using grade predictions to inform interventions to support students identified at risk
 - using NZQA statistical reports and analysing results to inform decisions about future course content and design
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - submitting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
 - communicating and reminding teachers and students of key dates and deadlines
 - ensuring low levels of late external entries by requiring students and Heads of Learning to confirm entries prior to the 1 September data file submission
 - submitting fees paid and financial assistance applications on time.

Effective process for tracking students A five-weekly check to support the tracking of students towards qualifications goals was introduced in 2017. This is overseen by the Senior Leadership Team and involves all teachers reviewing each student's progress in their subject. Collation and analysis of this data helps identify students working at their expected level, those working behind schedule in each subject, and overall tracking towards achievement goals. Parents are reported to, and where concerns are identified, a formal meeting with the relevant Dean is arranged to discuss how to implement a support programme. The school commented this process has enabled more timely identification of students at risk of not achieving assessment goals, and allows adaptations to assessment programmes as necessary throughout the year. In addition, the regular communication reinforces existing messages about assessment processes within the school and supports understanding of NCEA.

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))

Te Aroha College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake in a standardised format to ensure consistent assessment information
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and whānau using a range of methods and media
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose by being current and written in appropriate language
- reconciling memoranda of understanding with results reported using outside provider codes through an online document that includes:
 - the teacher responsible
 - expiry date of the Memorandum of Understanding
 - the location of original document.

Te Aroha College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- supporting teachers new to the school
- ensuring alignment between the student and staff handbooks
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- discussing with students what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification
- assisting students and whānau to monitor NCEA progress through the parent portal and NZQA Learner login.

Minor updates suggested for school documentation Some minor updates were suggested for inclusion in the next publication of the staff and student booklets to align with NZQA and school practice. These include:

- replacing National Qualifications Framework (NQF) with New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF)
- using the term further assessment opportunity rather than resit or reassessment, to avoid confusion
- include the option of using school-based evidence when applying for special assessment conditions for students
- adding the terms sufficient and purposeful selection of student work for internal moderation
- referring to consent to assess rather than accreditation.

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:

- update school documentation for next publication as indicated in this report.