

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Ngaruawahia High School

May 2019

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Ngaruawahia High School:

- has addressed issues identified through NZQA's Managing National Assessment review and through the school's own internal review
- manages assessment practice for national qualifications
- manages internal and external moderation
- makes use of and manages assessment-related data
- maintains the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicates them to staff, students and families.

The summary section evaluates the school's overall effectiveness and provides a broad overview of the review's key findings for all readers. The remaining sections provide detail of these findings for school managers.

## Why we review how schools are managing national assessment

The purpose of a Managing National Assessment review is:

- to confirm, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report, that schools are meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011* (CAAS) and its *Guidelines* (CAAS Guidelines) in order to maintain their consent to assess; and
- to help schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment according to the requirements of the *Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 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.

The School Relationship Manager met with the:

- Principal's Nominee
- Leader of Pedagogy and Social Inquiry
- Teacher of
  - Hard Materials
  - Hospitality.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy 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.

This review was rescheduled from 2018 at the school's request because of changes in the college's senior leadership team.

# SUMMARY

## Ngaruawahia High School

10 May 2019

### Significant issues found

This review found significant issues that the school must address to meet the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*.

The next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within one year to check that these issues are being addressed and that quality management of assessment for qualifications has improved.

The issues are:

- a need to ensure that agreed items from the 2015 Managing National Assessment Report are addressed, and issues identified fully resolved. It is acknowledged that personnel changes since 2015 have impacted on the school having no evidence that the items were previously addressed.
- there is no process established to confirm that all standards assessed are subject to the school's quality assurance process prior to the reporting of grades. A robust process reconciles internal moderation documentation with actual practice.
- inadequate information for students and teachers about managing national assessment.

### Actions required to address significant issues

In order to address these issues, the school must:

- follow-up external review recommendations and findings (*CAAS Guidelines 3v*)
- monitor internal moderation systems to ensure that only results that have been subject to the internal moderation process are reported to NZQA (*Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2019, 6.4b*)
- have appropriate procedures for managing assessment processes (*CAAS Guidelines 2.6i*)
- provide accurate and sufficient information to students about assessment processes. (*CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f)*)

### **Areas for improvement**

An inconsistent understanding and application of the requirements for resubmission of an assessment exists. Further discussion and clarification of the process will assist staff to apply it consistently and meet NZQA requirements.

There is a need to document the follow up on issues identified in external moderation so that there is a record of action items and a way for senior management to monitor effective completion.

The strategic selection of student work through purposefully selecting samples at grade boundaries and ensuring a sufficient number is chosen, will improve the effectiveness of the internal moderation and assist teacher to understand the standard. Documenting the verification discussion will support teachers by having a record of reasons for final grades awarded that can be used for future reference.

Including results from the school's practice exams in the student management system and data file submission to NZQA will enable easy access if these are required for derived or emergency grade purposes.

### **Agreed action**

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

- clarify the resubmission process
- strengthen internal moderation processes with teachers
- implement a process to respond to external moderation feedback
- ensure results that may be used for derived and emergency grades are included in data submission to NZQA.

## **What the school is doing well**

Ngaruawahia High School uses personalised learning plans to support its students in achieving qualifications and transitioning from school into work, training or further education. The school offers a wide range of courses and assessment opportunities that engage students through culturally responsive, authentic and realistic contexts.

Links with local business and the use of outside providers further extend the opportunities available to students. Applications are now being made to NZQA for eligible students to use special assessment conditions.

Internal moderation is undertaken by teachers who use an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to document completion. The school has worked to support and encourage the use of subject specialists for verification in line with NZQA requirements. This expectation is understood and practised by staff. Many teachers have developed networks with external colleagues to achieve this.

Assessment data is used to track student progress and identify students who may be at risk of not realising their achievement goals. Results are reported to NZQA in a timely manner.

The school is committed to developing its assessment systems and procedures. The Principal's Nominee with support of the Principal and other senior managers plan to use this Managing National Assessment report to guide their next steps. The aim is to develop, consolidate and embed understanding and practice within the school to ensure the results reported are credible, and meet NZQA requirements.

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11 July 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 3 September 2015 Managing National Assessment Report

There have been a number of changes in the Senior Management Team in the school including two changes of Principal's Nominee. The current Principal's Nominee took on the role part way through 2018 and requested a delay of the Managing National Assessment due in that year.

The previous Managing National Assessment report listed seven agreed action items. Five of these items have yet to be addressed and are discussed further in the relevant sections of this report. As part of maintaining its *Consent to Assess Against Standards*, a school must show evidence of follow-up to external review recommendations and findings.

Senior management undertook to:

- communicate the expectation that the selection of student work for verification should be purposefully selected
- review the process undertaken to monitor the completion of internal moderation
- update the process used for the random selection of student work for external moderation
- revisit the implementation of a common course template for students
- review and update school documentation.

Progress has been made on two agreed items. Teachers use an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to document the internal moderation process. Internally assessed standards have a reported result or are withdrawn prior to the 1 December data file submission.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** A documented process needs to be developed to address issues raised in external moderation reports. Where external moderation reports identify issues with assessor judgements, the Principal's Nominee discusses these with relevant teachers. There is, however, no evidence of the detail of these discussions, or any agreed action plans that may be required.

An effective process records the follow-up and responses to external moderation outcomes, monitors the completion of action plans, evaluates the effectiveness of any changes, identifies areas of ongoing concern and reviews previous internal moderation undertaken. Documentation provides evidence and enables monitoring to ensure planned changes are completed before the standard is assessed again.

## **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)*

Since the last Managing National Assessment review the Principal's Nominee has changed twice. There have also been senior staff in acting roles and significant timetable structure changes. While the school has successfully focused on the improvement of student outcomes, the maintenance and development of processes for managing national assessment have not progressed.

The school acknowledges that with the ongoing support from outside agencies, recent senior management appointments, and the recommendations from this Managing National Assessment review there is now the direction and capacity to review the school's assessment processes and procedures.

It is important that senior management takes ownership of the overall understanding and implementation of all policy and procedures associated with national assessment so that processes, once developed, become consistently applied and embedded practice.

The aim is for the school to develop its own capacity to identify and respond to issues or risks through effective self-review processes.

## **Required action**

The following action is required to ensure effective response to external reviews and its self-review of assessment systems and practice. The school must:

- follow-up external review recommendations and findings. (CAAS Guidelines 3v)



## 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)*

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

- adapting assessments to make use of localised, culturally relevant and real-life learning contexts
- using integrated and thematic approaches in courses where assessment falls out of the study and evidence can be used for more than one standard
- providing multi-level options and differentiated learning within courses
- encouraging teachers to collect evidence of student achievement in a variety of ways including verbally, through naturally occurring evidence, and group activities
- engaging with outside providers to offer vocational and trade-based courses
- implementing Oho Māori, a programme for identified students to support them with skills and experience to leave school and move to meaningful employment
- ensuring every student has access to a Chromebook to utilise online learning and assessment options
- ensuring that student literacy and numeracy needs are identified and met.

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

- using a range of strategies to ensure that student work is authentic
- 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
- managing assessments for students who are in Year 10.

**Student focused timetable** A feature of student achievement at the school is the attainment of standards at multiple levels across a wide range of subject areas and vocational and trade-based courses. The school develops a personalised learning programme with senior students that helps them experience success and supports them from school into work, training or further education as appropriate.

Courses are structured and delivered in ways that are realistic and relevant to students' pathways, including the use of appropriate contexts. One subject area observed has its learning focused primarily on the *Employability Skills Framework* with assessment of standards, a subsequent outcome.

The school promotes Year 10 as the first year of NCEA with a goal for students to gain their Level 1 literacy and numeracy requirements. The 2018 NCEA results provide evidence that this approach is effective, with achievement improving at all levels compared with previous years.

**Special assessment conditions support student achievement** The school has recognised the importance of identifying and supporting students to access special assessment conditions so that barriers may be removed which could prevent them having a fair opportunity to achieve.

As a consequence of senior management's concern that there had only been one application for special assessment conditions over the past four years, the school has made use of professional development to understand develop its special assessment conditions systems since the beginning of 2019. A newly designated staff member oversees and actions testing for senior students and the submission of applications. This will help ensure teachers are aware of student entitlements and that appropriate assistance is available.

**Clarify processes for resubmission** A resubmission may be offered if a teacher, at their discretion, judges a student has made a minor error or omission that they can identify and correct on their own. It should not be student driven, offered to all, or a planned aspect of the assessment. This review identified variation in the use and understanding of this process. The school has agreed to clarify resubmission with staff. Material from the 2018 Principal's Nominee seminar and NZQA's resubmission Mythbuster publications are useful resources that could assist with this.

It should be noted that for many forms of assessment, especially if the evidence is gathered by portfolio or over an extended period of time, a resubmission may not be appropriate. The use of checkpoints, drafts, milestones and feedback/feedforward will usually remove the need for resubmission. In such cases, it is important to ensure the correct terminology is used to avoid confusion with the NZQA expectations of resubmission.

**Continue to review assessment opportunities for students** As part of its review of assessment opportunities, the school should consider the manageability and workload for both students and teachers while ensuring they continue to meet the individual needs and future pathways of students. Considerations discussed during this review include:

- investigating opportunities for course endorsement by considering the allocation and combination of standards into eligible courses. This could include Year 10 students, particularly in light of the removal of NCEA fees which will enable the reporting of results within the assessment year without incurring a fee.
- limiting the number of credits undertaken by students. A large number of credits impacts on the workload for both teachers and students. Not every standard or topic in a course needs to be assessed. Students can participate in learning without having to be assessed. This may be particularly relevant if younger students are involved in activities with older students, such as within vocational courses. In 2018, 47 percent of Year 11 students gained 100 or more credits, while 32 percent of Year 12 students gained 100 or more credits at Level 2 or above. This is much higher than in similar schools.
- reviewing the range and level of study offered. Students should have a breadth and depth of study in key subject areas that will ensure they have sufficient knowledge to meet prerequisites to advance at a higher level, and enable a range of future pathways.

**Māori and Pasifika engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects** At the time of this review no specific action has been taken in response to the 2018 STEM Level 3 subject

achievement data provided by NZQA. The school is committed to ensuring all students undertake study in Mathematics and Science at Level 1 and acknowledge there is only a small number of students who remain through to Year 13.

**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 the resubmission process with teachers.

## 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)*

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists to verify student work.

**Monitoring of internal moderation needs developing** In order for senior management to be confident that all results have been quality assured, there must be a documented and annually applied monitoring process. This will better ensure the school meets its obligation to report to NZQA only those internal assessment results that have been subject to the school's internal moderation process. (*Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2019, 6.4b*)

A robust internal moderation monitoring system is more than the compliance that comes with sighting a completed *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*. It must reconcile moderation documentation to actual practice by holding discussions with teachers around their understanding and application of internal moderation expectations. This will reinforce effective internal moderation practice and support the development of a consistent school-wide approach. This process must occur annually for a sample of standards across all subject areas.

**Encourage and develop effective internal moderation processes** Clarification and reinforcement of internal moderation processes with teachers will ensure internal moderation is undertaken effectively in all subjects and the relevant agreed items from the 2015 Managing National Assessment report are addressed.

Effective internal moderation ensures the assessor is confident that the grades awarded are consistent with the standard. NZQA recommends the strategic selection of student work for verification. This requires choosing a sufficient number of purposefully selected pieces of student work. Strategic selection does not predetermine the number of pieces of student. Rather, the quantity chosen will depend on factors such as the experience of the teacher, previous external moderation history, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and the student cohort. At Ngaruawahia High School, the teachers interviewed selected a fixed number of standards. Purposeful selection means choosing examples at grade boundaries as well as any grades that need review.

Teachers use an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*, either hardcopy or online, to record the completion of the internal moderation process. However, the examples sighted showed limited documentation of any verification discussion undertaken. Documenting the discussion will serve as a valuable reference for teachers in subsequent years, provide reference to reflect on external moderation feedback and enables senior management to monitor the process.

**Response to external moderation needs strengthening** As noted elsewhere in this report, the school must document its process to review and respond to feedback from external moderation, and record the evidence of feedback discussions.

**Encourage teachers to request standards for moderation** External moderation is a source of professional feedback and supports teacher practice. The online external moderation application enables schools to request standards for external moderation each year. Supporting teachers to engage in this process will promote greater ownership by encouraging them to intentionally think about the selection. Considerations to influence selection may include:

- ensuring timely feedback for any standards with previously identified issues to evaluate the effectiveness of the response
- selecting currently assessed standards rather than those assessed in a previous year or those which may no longer be in use
- requesting feedback for standards to support internal moderation verification decisions
- ensuring that all standards assessed are externally moderated over time.

### **Required action**

The following action is required to improve the school's internal moderation to assure assessment quality. The school must:

- monitor internal moderation systems to ensure that only results that have been subject to the internal moderation process are reported to NZQA. (*Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2019, 6.4b*)

### **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 internal moderation processes with teachers
- implement a process to respond to external moderation feedback.

### **For consideration**

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

- encouraging teachers 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)*

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

- tracking and monitoring student progress towards achieving literacy and numeracy requirements and overall NCEA qualification
- identifying students at risk of not achieving their chosen assessment pathway and communicating this to subject and 'HUB' teachers
- informing changes to assessment programmes for the year ahead.

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

- using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
- using the correct provider code for assessment undertaken by external providers
- ensuring all internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate. This addresses one of the agreed action items from the 2015 Managing National Assessment report.

**Include derived and emergency grades in data submission to NZQA** The school holds practice external exams in Term 3 which generate results that may be used for derived or emergency grades. These results are held by individual teachers. The school has agreed to discuss with its student management system provider, the mechanism to include these results in its data file submission to NZQA so that they are easily accessible if required.

### **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 results that may be used for derived and emergency grades are included in data submission to NZQA.

## 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))*

**Staff assessment procedures must be developed** At the time of the review there was no current, centralised information for staff for managing national assessment. In order to ensure a consistent school-wide understanding and application, processes such as internal and external moderation, student appeals, derived grades and breaches of the rules should be standardised and documented. This should be readily accessible and communicated to all teachers. To meet the requirements under its *Consent to Assess Against Standards* a school must have procedures for managing assessment processes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6i)

The previous Managing National Assessment reviewed the *Ngaruawahia High School CMAR Folder 2015* (Curriculum, Moderation, Assessment and Reporting Staff Handbook) and listed a number of items to consider. The school is currently developing a new document and should refer to the items listed in the 2015 Managing National Assessment report as part of this process.

**Students require consistent information** There is no standardised process to communicate assessment information to students. School-wide procedures that relate to students such as appeals, authenticity, further assessment opportunities and missed and late assessments should be available. This will ensure the school meets the requirement to provide accurate and sufficient information to students about assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f)) It is good practice for generic assessment and qualification information to be managed centrally to ensure version control, relevance and accuracy.

Currently subject teachers provide course information which tends to focus on the standards and course-specific information relating to an individual programme. The previous two Managing National Assessment reports discussed the benefits of using a common template for student course information. The school is urged to consider this again.

### Required action

The following action is required to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, students and families. The school must:

- have appropriate procedures for managing assessment processes (CAAS Guidelines 2.6i)
- provide accurate and sufficient information to students about assessment processes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f))