

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Tokoroa High School**

**September 2018**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Tokoroa 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 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
- *Level 2 and 3 Senior Course Handbook, Tokoroa High School, 2018*
- *Quality Managing Systems and Procedures for Managing Assessments, 2018* (staff handbook)
- *Procedures for Assessment for National Qualifications, Student Guidelines, 2018* (student handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the:

- Principal
- Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal
- Head of Department for:
  - Art
  - English
  - Mathematics
- Teacher in Charge of:
  - Business Studies
  - Music
- two students.

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.

# SUMMARY

## Tokoroa High School

19 September 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

Tokoroa High School creates a culturally responsive and relational learning and assessment environment that supports students to achieve their academic potential through the use of Kia eke Panuku pedagogy.

The school actively encourages students to fulfil their aspirations by offering a range of pathways that allow students to be active participants in NCEA assessment decision-making with their Whānau. The timetable structure, the establishment of Academies, and differentiated assessment practices between and within subjects provide students with meaningful training and employment opportunities alongside academic courses.

Initiatives to support student achievement have contributed to a steady overall improvement in all NCEA levels since the last review. School management recognises that it still has to raise achievement of boys at Level 1 and 3 NCEA and the number of Maori and Pacific students gaining University Entrance.

Internal moderation practice is consistent school-wide. All teachers interviewed critiqued tasks, verified samples of student work and documented the process. External moderation outcomes are addressed by Heads of Departments who complete an action plan to resolve issues identified by moderators. Senior Management were aware of historical and current concerns raised in external moderation reports.

Data analysis is used to identify students at risk of not completing qualifications. Comprehensive student achievement reports to the Board of Trustees annually, are reflective, informing programme changes and contributing to self-review as indicated in this report.

The responsibilities for managing NCEA assessment are shared school-wide through distributed leadership. The Principal's Nominee who is new to the role, actively encourages understanding and consistency of NCEA assessment practice, supported by the Principal and Senior Leadership Team

### Areas for improvement

As discussed with senior management, internal moderation should be strengthened by documentation being reconciled with actual practice, to provide assurance that all reported results are credible.

To improve the consistency of assessment practice, clarification is required in the management and documentation of late and missed assessment procedures, further assessment opportunities, resubmission, purposeful selection for verification of student work and evidence required for derived grades.

The school also needs to address the low number of students registered to use their Learner Login to access their Record of Achievement on the NZQA website which prevents them from adequately managing their NZQA records.

### **Agreed action**

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

- clarify the procedures for the submission of missed and late student work and the requirements for resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- ensure all teachers understand that evidence to report derived and emergency grades must be valid, verifiable and standard-specific
- strengthen the process of monitoring internal moderation by senior management, by reconciling documentation with actual practice.
- encourage students to use their NZQA Learner Login to effectively manage their NZQA records.
- clarify documentation as indicated in the report.

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10 December 2018

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# FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

## How effectively has the school responded to external and internal review?

### External review

*Evidence for external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)*

**Action Items from 22 May 2015 National Assessment Report** Two of the action items from the 2015 report have been actioned and two items are partially addressed.

The following agreed items have been fully resolved:

- ensuring all tasks are updated and critiqued annually
- using the student management system to generate random selection for external moderation.

As outlined in the report, the process for monitoring internal moderation by senior management has only been partially actioned and the information on purposeful selection for verification in the staff handbook needs to be clarified to ensure school-wide practice.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has a good moderation history with very sound levels of agreement between teachers and NZQA moderators. All Heads of Department meet with the Principal's Nominee to document action plans outlining interventions they have instigated, to address issues identified by moderators. The completion of these plans are monitored by the Principal's Nominee with outcomes discussed with the Senior Leadership Team.

### 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)*

Tokoroa High School is developing a culture of self-review of NCEA assessment reflecting its strategic aims of being a culturally responsive school and with a focus on relational practices. Senior management has initiated a number of management strategies which reflect this culture:

Distributed leadership encourages collaborative innovation and improvement, with a focus on creating a relational assessment environment that focuses on all participants achieving to their ability and having a voice in determining assessment opportunities. Teachers support students to develop programmes of study which are likely to lead to meaningful training and employment.

Heads of department and senior management foster the shared ownership of assessment practice through regular discussion of good practice and finding solutions to issues. Student achievement in all courses is discussed with the Board of Trustees annually..

As a consequence, self-review has resulted in the development of a number of initiatives to improve assessment practice and meet the needs of students, including:

- engaging at risk students in assessment opportunities through the development of the:
  - Lighthouse Programme at Level 1 with a focus on literacy and numeracy achievement within the context of a homeroom
  - Level 3 Sports Programme offering a combination of Business Studies, Science and Physical Education standards to encourage students to complete NCEA Level 3
- introducing school-wide tracking of students at risk of not completing qualifications
- developing a “personalised” timetable that allows block teaching and learning and the release of students for one or two-day trade courses
- establishing study opportunities through weekly “Power Up” programmes to reduce barriers to students completing assessment tasks
- focusing Māori achievement through regular NCEA and the Whānau hui and celebrating success
- promoting Excellence and Merit certificate endorsements through “excellence” breakfasts and Board of Trustee “prizes” to turn around endorsements levels trending below national decile averages.

#### **No action required**

No issues with the school’s response to NZQA external reviews and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice were identified during this review.

## 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)*

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

- offering a range of vocational pathways through the effective management of Gateway programmes, Academies and purposely designed courses
- developing differentiation within courses and across classes to meet the wide range of student abilities, aspirations and interests
- assessing students when ready, where appropriate
- scaffolding and contextualising assessment tasks so they are more relevant and engaging for students
- extending assessment opportunities for students by using external providers
- supporting applications for special assessment conditions and providing appropriate support.

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

- developing school-wide strategies to ensure the authenticity of student work
- investigating appeals and breaches of the rules following the principles of natural justice
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

### **Clarify assessment practice understanding for the submission of student work**

Teachers and students interviewed for the review described robust processes for the submission of student work but these practices were not school-wide. Inconsistent application of these assessment practices can be rectified by greater clarity in documentation in some instances and further staff professional development in general.

Students described flexible dates for submitting student work for the same task, deadlines being moved without adequate warning and work being resubmitted by the whole class. To ensure fairness and the authenticity of student work, these procedures need to be applied school-wide. If students in a course are working on different deadlines marked work should not be returned until all student work has been submitted, or students should each have a different task or context.

The requirements for resubmission and further assessment opportunities must be documented in the staff and student handbooks and teachers provided with professional development on these practices. Using the NZQA myth busters will help to ensure consistent practice.

Resubmission only relates to students able to make minor changes if their result is on a grade boundary, at the discretion of the teacher. It must occur before marked work is returned and students must have no further teaching or guidance. The length of time a student has to make the change depends on the context of the assessment.



A further assessment opportunity must be available for all students and must follow further teaching and learning.

**Clarify derived grade and emergency grade requirements** The school needs to ensure that all teachers understand the process for collecting evidence to report derived and emergency grades. Teachers use evidence from practice examinations to report derived or emergency grades but were unsure of NZQA requirements.

Documentation needs to clearly state that these grades must be based on valid, verifiable, standard-specific evidence. This means public tasks must be modified, commercial tasks kept secure and the marking of student work verified or justified as being at the standard. Evidence can be collected from appropriate assessment opportunities other than practice examinations.

### **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 procedures for the submission of missed and late student work and the requirements for resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- ensure all teachers understand that evidence to report derived and emergency grades must be valid, verifiable and standard-specific.

## 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)*

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

- critiquing all assessment materials prior to use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- using subject specialists to verify a selected sample of student work
- documenting the internal moderation process by using the standard *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions
- internally moderating samples of student work assessed by staff in the Teen Parent Unit for standards reported under the school's provider code.

### **Tokoroa High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples of student work for randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored
- encouraging teachers to submit digital samples of student work for external moderation using the External Moderation Application Tool.

**Clarification on purposeful selection procedures for verification** To align with actual practice, the school's quality management documentation needs to clarify the requirements of purposeful selection for the verification of samples of student work for internal moderation

In appendix D of the staff handbook it states that "*internal moderation does not require a random selection of samples but rather could focus on a particular priority of the department e.g. excellent/merit boundaries*" Teachers interviewed for the review understand the practice of purposeful selection of student work for verification at grade boundaries, but to maintain consistency and ensure the credibility of results reported, documentation should clearly state the requirement.

**Strengthening the monitoring of internal moderation** The monitoring of internal moderation by senior management should be strengthened by reconciling documentation with actual practice.

Senior management has developed a sound moderation process which requires completed internal moderation cover sheets to be submitted to the data manager before results are reported. Some teachers interviewed for the review stated that previously a member of the Senior Leadership Team randomly checked that these documents were reconciled with samples of student work stored by departments, but this has not been recent practice.

To strengthen the process and provide senior management with confidence that all reported results have been verified, an annual audit process that reconciles completed documentation with stored student work for each subject should be instigated.

**Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency** Most teachers interviewed for the review verify more samples of student work than is required by NZQA.

School documentation states teachers should select eight samples at grade boundaries for achievement standards and four samples for unit standards. The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on what is required for sufficient verification, by the strategic selection of student work.

Strategic selection has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

#### **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 the monitoring process by senior management of internal moderation by reconciling documentation with actual practice.

## 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)*

### **Tokoroa High School effectively:**

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - reviewing course structures and modifying assessment programmes to meet student needs
  - reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees annually an analysis of NCEA achievement to review strategic goals and actions
  - interrogating and reflecting on NZQA statistical data to inform annual department review reports to senior management
  - celebrating student achievement through student awards and recognition
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - timely reporting of results to NZQA and addressing error reports as necessary
  - ensuring that internal results are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
  - actively managing entries for external examinations
  - ensuring all teachers and students attest that their entries and results have been entered correctly.

### **Students need their NZQA Learner login to manage their qualification record**

The school should actively encourage students to use their NZQA Learner Login to check their progress, identify potential data errors, ensure fees are paid, understand how to order qualification certificates and apply for reconsideration and review of examination papers.

At present only half the NCEA students in 2017 were registered to use their NZQA Learner Login. The school does encourage students to monitor their progress using the student portal on the student management system but to adequately manage their NZQA records students need to be registered to use their NZQA Learner Login.

### **Effectively tracking students at risk of not completing their qualifications**

Senior management initiate discussions on interventions to support students at risk of not completing qualifications at management and full staff meetings.

Current data is provided for discussion on at risk students at Senior Leadership Team, Staff, Heads of Department, Whānau and Department meetings to establish the need and ascertain the number of credits individual students require to complete a qualification or meet their aspirations. “*Name, need and number*” is a mantra that all staff take ownership of in terms of tracking the progress of at risk students.

Interventions include close monitoring of at risk students by deans and whānau teachers, assigning a mentor teacher to manage the students’ progress and modifying the student’s learning and assessment programme.

**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:

- encourage students to use their NZQA Learner Login to effectively manage their NZQA records.

## 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))*

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

- communicating NCEA information, assessment policy and procedures through:
  - publication of the staff handbook and appropriate student information booklet
  - student assemblies
  - whānau meetings
  - course booklet and course selection evening
  - NZQA facilitated NCEA and the Whānau Hui
  - career information
- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year via emails and staff meetings
- reporting on student progress towards qualifications, including providing online access to information held on the school's student management system
- widely distributing information on financial assistance to cover all students who are eligible.

### **Tokoroa High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- discussing best assessment practice at Heads of Department meetings
- having a common template for course outlines for all subjects in the course selection booklet which are reviewed and updated annually, ensuring consistent assessment information
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with the school's assessment and moderation processes and expectations
- requiring deans and whānau teachers to ensure that students understand what they need to achieve to gain a qualification.

**Clarifying NCEA Information** As discussed in the report and with senior management the following assessment practices need further clarification, including procedures for:

- resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- collecting standard-specific evidence to report derived and emergency grades
- monitoring of internal moderation by senior management
- supporting students to use their NZQA Learner Login
- selection of samples of student work for grade verification to be strategic and purposeful at grade boundaries.

**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:

- clarify documentation as indicated in the report.