

Managing National Assessment Report

Te Kuiti High School

June 2021

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Te Kuiti 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 2021* (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:

- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- Links to the school website information for:
 - *NCEA for Students – Te Kuiti High School*
 - *NCEA for Teachers – Policies, procedures, rules and information – Te Kuiti High School*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
 - Technology
- Teacher in Charge of Chemistry who is also the Specialist Classroom Teacher
- 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.

Background

At the time of the Managing National Assessment review there was a relieving Principal. The Principal resigned at the beginning of 2021 and the appointment process for the new Principal is still to be started. The Principal's Nominee is experienced and has been in the role for a number of years.

This review confirmed credible assessment towards qualifications. However, assessment practice requires review and change to better engage and support the achievement of all students and in particular, that of Māori and boys.

SUMMARY

Te Kuiti High School

2 June 2021

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 respond to issues identified.

The next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years. NZQA will return within 12 months to confirm that the actions identified to improve the quality of assessment systems are being addressed and that quality management of assessment for qualifications has improved through the development of teacher assessment practice to better meet student needs.

The issues requiring further development are:

- teachers' assessment practice, to ensure it meets the needs of all students
- the use of student achievement information, to inform and evaluate the effectiveness of changes to assessment practice and programmes and to identify next steps.

What the school is doing well

Credible assessment practices were described by the six teachers interviewed. Some also described exploring how to include local context to better engage students and using feedback / feedforward information to support achievement.

Teachers have a sound understanding of the requirements for internal moderation, using subject specialists from within and outside the school to verify the grades awarded to a sample of marked student work. Heads of Department are responsible for monitoring its completion in their area of responsibility. The Principal's Nominee monitors internal moderation practice through visits to departments.

NCEA information is communicated to students and their families using a variety of communication modes. The publication of the staff and student assessment information on-line, with links to the NZQA website, aims to provide easier access for students, whanau and staff.

Tracking of student progress is developing and used to identify students at risk of not achieving a qualification and provide support in 2020.

Areas for improvement

Teachers' assessment practices are not meeting the needs of all students nor supporting individual achievement towards a qualification. The current absence of a permanent Senior Leadership Team has resulted in a loss of continuous change leadership in the development of school wide assessment practice and processes to ensure the assessment needs of all students are met.

A review of assessment practices, which includes teachers incorporating different evidence gathering methods, the use of local context and cultural perspectives, and links to potential pathways, is required. The incorporation of these assessment strategies has the potential to engage and support the achievement of all students, and particularly Māori and boys.

An inquiry approach is recommended to support teachers to evaluate the outcome of changes they make to their assessment practice and programmes to support the achievement of individual students. Understanding the effectiveness of initiatives, and changes teachers make will inform their next steps.

In their NCEA analysis, by evaluating the reasons for student achievement at a standard level, Heads of Department will see what is working for different groups of students and the next steps to be taken to meet the needs of all students. Guidance for Heads of Department on the structure and content of their NCEA analysis will provide increased consistency of effective analysis and support the development of programmes and courses that meet student needs.

Teachers' follow-up of external moderation requires strengthening by putting in place a system to check that planned actions have addressed issues identified by moderators. This will assist in the further development of teacher understanding of the standard and support accurate assessors' judgements. It is recommended that the monitoring visits by the Principal's Nominee include evaluating the effectiveness of the responses developed by teachers.

Some other steps for the school to consider to improve assessment for qualifications are detailed in the body of the report.

Agreed action

The school agreed that an action will improve the quality of their assessment systems. This is to:

- review assessment practices and process used to ensure they support engagement and achievement of all students.
- strengthen the follow up the external moderation by checking that planned actions have addressed identified issues and support assessors to make decisions consistent with the standard
- use assessment information and data analysis to inform assessment practice and review of programmes and/or courses.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

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NZQA
0800 697 296
www.nzqa.govt.nz

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 15 September 2017 Managing National Assessment Report

Progress on significant issues Te Kuiti High School has addressed the two significant issues from the 2017 review. A one year return visit in 2018 by NZQA confirmed progress has been made on both.

Internal moderation is monitored by Heads of Department with the Principal's Nominee completing annual checks to confirm it is occurring. The Principal's Nominee has developed assessment information for students. It is now available on the school website to facilitate easier access for students and whanau. These changes provide evidence of the school's ability to respond to external review.

Progress on agreed actions Two of the three agreed actions from the 2017 review have been implemented. Supported Learning Standards are being used appropriately and students described their privacy being protected when student work is returned, and results published.

Progress has been made on the third agreed action, to use purposeful selection at grade boundaries to select samples of student work for grade verification but is not yet consistent across the school.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school's response to external moderation requires strengthening to ensure teachers' planned actions address the issue identified by the moderator. This is discussed further in the moderation section of this report.

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 2019 Education Review Office report (released in 2020) identified that the school was not achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all students and in particular Māori and boys.

Māori student achievement and Level 1 literacy and numeracy decline between 2017 and 2019 with Māori achievement significantly less at NCEA Levels 1, 2 and 3 compared to other students, and boys' achievement at levels 2 and 3 is significantly less than girls.

In response to the ERO report, the school:

- developed an academic tracking system that involves comparing potential credits against those achieved to identify those students at risk of not achieving a qualification to enable support to be put in place
- designated a Dean to be responsible for supporting those at risk that includes an interview with the student and contact with Whanau, as appropriate
- engaged an outside provider to offer an end-of-year catch-up programme focused on supporting students to achieve the Level 1 literacy and numeracy requirements for the NCEA qualification
- engaged teachers in professional learning through Waikato University to support teachers to develop cultural pedagogies including the use of local contexts
- held in-school professional learning on success criteria and the use of feedback and feedforward to support student achievement.

These initiatives resulted in an improvement in over-all NCEA achievement at Level 1, 2 and 3 in 2020. Level 1 NCEA achievement is now comparable to national and decile levels. The data suggests that the catch-up literacy and numeracy focus, along with Learning Recognition Credits supported the significant improvement in Level 1 achievement.

No action required

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews 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 2021 5.1 – 5.7)

Te Kuiti High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- engaging with external providers to extend the school's capacity to provide vocational opportunities including a Trades Academy and Gateway opportunities
- teachers annually selecting standards offered in a course of study based on the student cohort in their class
- using Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu for academic courses for which the school does not have the resources to offer.

Te Kuiti High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- submitting derived grades in line with NZQA expectations
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted by using suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process
- managing NZQA external examinations
- offering resubmission in line with the 2021 rules
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020*.

Māori engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects In 2019 and 2020 there were no Māori students engaged in at least one Level 3 STEM subject. Approximately 60 percent of students at the school identify as Māori, an investigation and review should be carried out to identify potential steps the school could take to engage Māori students in STEM subjects.

Assessment practice changes required to better meet student needs

Assessment practices are not meeting all students' needs nor supporting individual achievement towards a qualification. Assessment practices should be reviewed to ensure they engage and support all students to present their best evidence.

Recommended assessment practice changes include:

- using a broader range of evidence collection methods, including portfolios and oral presentations, to provide students with the opportunity to present their best evidence particularly those with low literacy skills and for whom English is a Second Language
- individualising assessment programmes by differentiating the standards assessed, and choice of evidence presentation and context for individual students
- a commitment to ensuring assessment contexts reflect the diversity of students in the class and increasing the use of local and culturally appropriate contexts

- reviewing pre-requisites for entry to some courses and removing these where this is an unnecessary barrier to entry
- using milestones and feedback/feedforward to support students to complete ongoing assessments
- supporting literacy development as part of assessment programmes.

While some teachers described using individual aspects of these recommended assessment practices, they also described setting pre-requisites, insisting on written evidence submission only, and identified that poor literacy prevented student achievement in their subject. It is recommended that teachers review their assessment practice and programmes to identify what strategies are working to engage and support student achievement to determine areas for further improvement.

On-going literacy support recommended To reduce the potential barrier of a low literacy and English skill level, the school should consider providing professional learning to support teachers to use relevant activities, subject vocabulary lists and specific assessment practices to assist student achievement within their subject. Heads of Department identified the low literacy levels of students on school entry and the increasing numbers of Pacific and Filipino students for whom English is a second language as barriers to student success.

Digital examinations being trialled The school plans to participate in digital exams in one subject area in 2021. This reflects the increased use of digital tools in teaching and learning and provides the opportunity for students to present their best evidence. The school will also use the trial to test the school's infrastructure before scaling up.

Agreed action

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

- review assessment practices and processes used to ensure they support engagement and achievement of all students.

For consideration

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

- identify potential steps the school could take to engage Māori students in STEM subjects.

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 2021 6.4b)

Te Kuiti High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- providing teachers with clear expectations on internal moderation requirements
- documenting the internal moderation process for each standard assessed before results are reported to NZQA
- using subject-specialists from within and outside of the school to verify assessor judgements
- confirming internal moderation completion using a Head of Department assurance attestation and monitoring visits by the Principal's Nominee.

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

- using a random selection method that meets NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

Strengthen external moderation follow up processes Teachers currently put a plan in place to act on external moderation feedback, but there is no formal check to determine whether the actions have addressed the issue. An effective response will further develop teachers' understanding of the standard and grade boundaries to make accurate assessment decisions. This will support assessment decisions consistent with the standard in the five subjects where there is a trend in a low agreement rate between the moderator and assessor.

Strengthen internal moderation processes It is recommended that the Principal's Nominee's monitoring of internal moderation include sighting completed moderation cover sheets when he visits departments, to confirm that grade boundary samples are selected for grade verification and that the documentation reflects actual practice.

The selection of student work at grade boundaries for verification is not consistent across the school. The purposeful selection of student work will assist with developing teachers' understanding of grade boundaries, provide benchmarks to support future assessor judgements and assist with managing teachers' assessment workload.

Nearly all internal moderation cover sheets sighted demonstrated good practice of documenting evidence of grade boundary discussion and the final grade awarded. This is good practice.

To further support accurate assessor judgements, the school should review the internal moderation process for standards with a low agreement rate to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation and the extent to which it could be a contributing factor to low agreement rates.

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 follow up to external moderation by checking that planned actions have addressed identified issues and support assessors to make decisions consistent with the standard.

For consideration

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

- strengthening the monitoring of internal moderation by checking that grade boundary samples are selected for grade verification and evidence of discussion in determining a grade is documented.

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

- developing a tracking system to monitor student achievement.

Te Kuiti High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- using the Key indicators and data submission reports to identify and resolve data submission errors
- reporting results and entries to NZQA in a timely manner
- encouraging students to check their internal results on the student management system and NZQA Learner login
- providing students with check sheets to confirm the accuracy of external entries
- storing Memoranda of Understanding digitally to facilitate monitoring against Provider Codes used.

Ensure NCEA data analysis informs and supports qualification achievement

The effective use of NCEA statistical data will assist to identify areas for improvement. Heads of Department analysis of NCEA achievement needs to be further developed to be more effective by evaluating the reasons for student achievement at a standard level, by ethnicity and by cohort.

The appointment of a new senior leadership team offers the opportunity to review the format and expectations of the annual NCEA analysis report. Greater guidance for Heads of Department on the content of the report will provide increased consistency in effective analysis and support school wide assessment practice development to further improve student achievement.

An inquiry approach is suggested to support teachers to evaluate the outcome of changes they make to their assessment practice and programmes to better meet student's needs. It will support the ongoing development of teachers' understanding of assessment practice to improve student outcomes and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies used.

Timely reporting of internal credits required Students identified the length of time to receive grades from some internal assessment and its impact on their ability to accurately track qualification progress. The school should consider setting a timeframe to guide the return of grades to students. For subjects where the verifier is outside the school, providing students with provisional grades to enable them to better monitor their progress should be considered. Students would need to understand that the provisional grade could change during the verification process.

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:

- use assessment information and data analysis to inform assessment practice and review of programmes and/or courses.

For consideration

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

- setting a timeframe for the return of grades to students and providing provisional grades to students where work is verified outside the school.

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 Kuiti High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to staff and students
- providing online access to the information held on the school's student management system to support students to monitor the accuracy of results reported and progress towards qualifications
- annually reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

Te Kuiti High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Communication methods support student and whanau access Staff and student assessment information is available on-line to improve accessibility for students, teachers and whanau. Students and whanau are informed of assessment information through the school's website, Facebook page, regular newsletters and a Year 10 parents evening.

Students interviewed were very knowledgeable about qualification requirements and the school's assessment policies, stating that they gained this information mainly from their teachers or the Principal's Nominee. They identified the support their teachers provided in assisting them to achieve credits towards their qualification goal.

Amendment to staff assessment information The staff handbook and forms are online with links to the NZQA website for further detail where required. The information provided to staff is relevant and presented in plain English. When next updated, the derived grade process, including the justification and verification process should be added to provide clarity and reflect current good practice.

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:

- update staff assessment information to reflect current practice for reporting derived grades.