

Managing National Assessment Report

Taumarunui High School

August 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Taumarunui 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
- *NCEA Teacher Handbook 2018*
- *NCEA Student Handbook 2018*
- a sample of Individual Learning Plans for students in Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, three students, Experts-in-Residence for English, Mathematics, Outdoor Education and Technology, and the Director of the Trades Academy.

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.

Background

At the start of 2018 Taumarunui High School introduced *Big Picture Learning* for students in Years 11 – 13 with the aim of giving students opportunities to learn in a supportive, student-centred environment with learning programmes tailored to individual needs. The school states that it values education that is collaborative, where creativity is nurtured, learning has a context and the school is integrated with society.

The school's vision is to have students engaged, challenged and at the centre of their own learning. Instead of traditional timetabled courses, each student is assigned an Advisor who they work with to identify interests and personalise learning.

To assist students to learn, teachers are designated as *Experts in Residence*. The Experts supervise projects and offer tutorials. Students also have the opportunity to learn through internships in the community or through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu.

SUMMARY

Taumarunui High School

22 August 2018

Significant issues found

This review found a 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 three years with a return visit within one year to check that these issues are being addressed and that quality management of assessment for qualifications has improved.

The issue is:

- the lack of a systemic and transparent process of self-review to ensure that students assessment needs are being met.

Actions required to address significant issues

- use its self-review and evaluation processes to confirm that policies and procedures (as set out in the Quality Management System documentation) are current, consistently applied and are effective in achieving desired outcomes (*CAAS Guidelines 3iv*)

Areas for improvement

The school needs to plan to ensure that all teachers consistently meet NZQA's requirements that marking and verification of grades is carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced subject expert. The new model of teaching and learning has changed the relationship between students and teachers. An Advisor assists students to follow their interests and the Expert in Residence puts an assessment framework around some of the learning to enable evidence of achievement to be measured against standards. The school is open to collecting evidence of achievement in different ways so must plan to ensure that it must be available for external moderation if requested.

The extensive changes the school has made will have considerable effect on attainment data. Removing NCEA Level 1 as an achievement goal and just aiming to complete the literacy and numeracy requirements will affect the outcomes for Year 11 students. Other consequences will be less predictable, such as the percentage of students completing NCEA Level 2 or Level 3. Close examination of the data against targets will be needed to determine there are modifications needed to ensure that outcomes match student aspirations and the school's and community's vision for students.

To ensure that students are on track to achieve their academic goals, it is recommended that there is closer tracking of their progress. Advisors know what each student is aiming for, but there is no overview of progress for each cohort to determine if any general interventions are required to complete literacy, numeracy qualifications and university entrance requirements.

The school agrees any issues raised in external moderation must be effectively addressed by planning actions that are measurable and monitored for completion. To help with this, they have been invited to request additional standards for external moderation this year to help evaluate the effectiveness of any different ways of gathering evidence of achievement.

What the school is doing well

Taumarunui High School has made wide-reaching changes to the way it approaches teaching and learning. The *Big Picture Learning* model aims to put students and their learning at the centre and remove the focus on assessment. A Learning Advisor works with each student to discover what interests and motivates them, and an individual learning plan is developed. This may involve the student completing work that is assessed for qualifications or entering for external examinations.

The school's Trade Academy assists students to pathway into careers in Agriculture, Building, Hairdressing and Hospitality. Other students study through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu to widen the options available.

The Principal's Nominee has communicated expectations around quality assurance to Experts, and most understand the current expectations. There is a process in place for monitoring that steps of internal moderation are being completed appropriately.

Agreed action

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

- determine how the success of *Big Picture Learning* will be measured and if any adjustments are required to ensure that student aspirations are being met
- consider how student progress towards qualifications, is tracked where relevant
- ensure suitably qualified and experienced subject experts take responsibility for quality assurance
- ensure evidence of achievement gathered in less traditional ways is valid, authentic and recorded in a way that allows it to be verified and available for moderation
- develop a robust and effective system to follow up issues raised in external moderation
- define when a student has been provided with an adequate assessment opportunity that will result in an entry and a grade submitted to NZQA
- determine how valid evidence for derived or emergency grades will be collected
- review the handbooks to ensure that they reflect the current practice in the school.

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25 October 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 18 May 2016 Managing National Assessment Report The school was required to address three significant issues after the 2016 Managing National Assessment review. One item, to ensure that all work requested for external moderation was available, was effectively addressed in the 2017 moderation round.

Two other items have been partially addressed and require further action:

- the school now has a process to respond to the outcomes of external moderation, however, to be effective, further refinement is required as outlined below.
- at the time of the 2016 review, the handbook for students did not accurately reflect the assessment practice in the school. There has been some updating, but the communication section of this report recommends further improvements to ensure that students and teachers have an understanding of the assessment requirements in the current learning model.

The school agreed on a number of other actions, some of which are no longer pertinent to the current *Big Picture Learning* model. Where relevant, the school's response and outcomes are discussed in the appropriate sections of this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes The 2017 external moderation round identified that assessor judgements were inconsistent with the standard for a number of standards submitted. This indicates that the school's quality assurance processes are not fully effective for the sample submitted.

The school's current process to respond to issues raised in external moderation lacks sufficient rigour. To be effective, identified issues should be addressed by developing a plan with measurable actions that are to be completed and monitored within a specified time. Some or all the following can be useful strategies to improve external moderation outcomes:

- ensuring the verifier has recent experience with the standard
- sharing the outcomes of external moderation with the verifier
- changing verifiers where there is poor external moderation agreement
- encouraging teachers to engage with a subject cluster group or on-line forum
- participating in professional learning including NZQA's Best Practice Workshops, if available
- strategically requesting standards to be included in the moderation plan so that useful feedback is received
- querying external moderator reports if the feedback is not sufficient for teachers' understanding

- requesting a clarification if the standard and NZQA's published material does not provide sufficient information for the teacher to make improvements
- building up a set of annotated exemplars of student work in the school's own contexts to be used as benchmarks for assessment judgements.

Robust response to external moderation leads to improved quality assurance practices. When the school has determined how it will make the required improvements, the Principal and Principal's Nominee should decide how the school will measure effectiveness and monitor that all learning areas are completing the agreed steps.

Response to data issues The school has had a number of issues with data, some of which are the result of the school's unique approach to assessment. In 2017, entries in external examinations were not well managed, with a number of late entries, a significant number of students absent for examinations or entered for standards they did not attempt. The Principal's Nominee is confident that the new learning model will have students making an entry only when they have made an informed decision to sit the examination. This should be closely reviewed as part of the evaluation of the learning model to ensure that entries accurately reflect the student's programme.

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's self-review process resulted in the adoption of *Big Picture Learning*, led by the principal, with staff consultation. Teachers commented that they felt somewhat unprepared at the start of the year but are becoming more confident as they get used to the new paradigm.

The school has set achievement targets as a part of the change. Year 11 students are expected to complete NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements but may not complete Level 1 NCEA. The school aims to have 85 percent of students achieving a Level 2 NCEA by the end of Year 12 or 13. Year 13 students are expected to be ready for tertiary study or employment. While teachers understand the targets, they are not explicitly stated in either the student or teacher assessment handbooks. It is recommended that details are added to the documents.

At the time of the review, the school was tracking the progress of Year 11 students towards meeting the literacy and numeracy requirements. Learning Advisors mentor individual students. It is recommended that tracking overall progress of Year 12 and 13 students towards qualifications is strengthened to identify if ongoing systemic changes or finetuning of the learning model are needed.

The school agrees that the effectiveness of *Big Picture Learning* will be evaluated but has not yet determined how this will happen. A comprehensive review would consider achievement in relation to the targets and ensure that readiness for tertiary study or employment is well defined. Teachers, students and whānau should be invited to share views.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review and its self-review of assessment systems and practice. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure assessment practices are credible in the *Big Picture Learning* model
- develop a robust and effective system to follow up issues raised in external moderation
- determine how the success of *Big Picture Learning* will be measured and if any adjustments are required to ensure that student assessment and qualifications aspirations are being met.

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)

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

- individualising assessment programmes for all students
- assessing students only when they are ready and have a reasonable chance of success
- making applications to use special assessment conditions using school-based evidence for students
- facilitating enrolment with Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu for students who wish to study in an area where the school has no teachers with expertise
- offering pathway to employment through the school's Trade Academy.

Taumarunui High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- investigating appeals
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Students have full agency over their assessment programme One challenge arising from students being on individualised assessment plans is supporting them to stay on track towards their qualification goals. Students determine their own learning programme and, with the help of their advisor, decide at the start of each term if they want to do any assessment. Advisors negotiate with an expert who assists students to master the required content and skills. Some experts use an online learning management system to make lessons available to students.

At the time of the 2016 review, the school agreed to reflect on how it managed deadlines. With the new learning model, this should be revisited. It is suggested that if a student commits to being assessed against a standard, they be expected to complete the negotiated tasks. This would better prepare students for employment or tertiary study as well as meeting NZQA's requirement that Not Achieved must be recorded for a student who has had an adequate opportunity to be assessed but has failed complete the work.

Where possible, evidence of achievement is gathered from naturally occurring evidence or by completing a task in a context relevant to each student's interests. This is good practice.

Managing authenticity Assessors need to be very vigilant to ensure that the work submitted is that of the student as they may not have close knowledge of a student's style or capabilities. An Expert sets the task for a student to complete in their advisory or unsupervised. The students commented that they understand that all work must be their own and they must cite any sources. The Principal's Nominee confirmed that there have been some authenticity concerns and understands that if there is an issue that affects the credibility of the result, a Not Achieved grade must be reported to NZQA.

Use of Numeracy Work and Study Skills Unit Standards has been reviewed

The school agreed to review which students were assessed against the Numeracy Work and Study Skills Unit Standards which do not prepare students for further study

in Mathematics. The school now aims to have all Year 11 students completing the numeracy requirements for an NCEA using Achievement Standards and only using the Work and Study Skill standards for students who fail to achieve these.

Māori and Pasifika engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects The school has much lower participation and achievement in STEM subjects for Māori students than for students of other ethnicities. The Principal commented that whānau do not aspire to university study for school leavers, however, they are encouraging younger students to participate in STEM projects. Careers New Zealand recommends students should study English, Mathematics and at least one Science subject, particularly if they don't have a specific career in mind.

Managing derived and emergency grades With the *Big Picture Learning* model, the Principal's Nominee is expecting that there will be fewer entries in external examinations, but all entries will reflect a student's informed decision to attempt the paper. At the time of the review visit the school had not considered how it would provide a practice assessment event to prepare the students for examinations or collect pre-existing, standard-specific valid evidence for reporting a derived or emergency grade if needed. This could affect a student's achievement of a qualification or eligibility to enrol in further study.

Agreed action

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

- consider how student progress towards qualifications, where relevant, is tracked
- define what is an adequate assessment opportunity in the *Big Picture Learning* model that will result in an entry and a grade submitted to NZQA
- determine how valid evidence for derived or emergency grades will be collected.

For consideration

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

- review how the authenticity of evidence of achievement is assured.

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)

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists, both within the school and colleagues in other schools to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work
- encouraging teachers to record the reason for an assessment judgement, as many teachers are doing
- monitoring that all the steps of the quality assurance process have been completed before results are reported to NZQA.

Taumarunui High School 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.

Managing quality assurance in the new paradigm One teacher was not clear that the school has a requirement that the Expert who provides an assessment task takes responsibility for the quality assurance of the results for that task. There was a misunderstanding that an Advisor could assess work out of their specialist areas. This lack of clarity was not shared by other teachers, but it does need to be clearly communicated. The Principal's Nominee must continue to closely monitor that practice is consistent across the school

One feature of the school's learning programme is an expectation that students will prepare and present an exhibition. The school intends that some exhibitions may provide naturally occurring evidence of achievement against standards. This will need to be managed so that any grades awarded can be verified and evidence is recorded to be available for external moderation if required.

The school's external moderation is due to be submitted in November. The school can still request additional standards to be included so that it can get useful feedback on current practice.

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:

- remind all teachers that only subject experts can take responsibility for quality assurance
- ensure evidence of achievement gathered in less traditional ways is recorded in a way that allows it to be verified and available for 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)

Taumarunui High School effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - tracking progress towards completing NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements
 - Experts and Advisors supporting students to use the school's student management system to track student achievement
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - having the person who captures data enter grades and the Principal's Nominee check for accuracy before they are submitted to NZQA
 - reporting results against the correct provider codes of outside providers with which the school holds current memoranda of understanding.

Encourage students to use their Learner login Only about half of the students being assessed for National Qualifications registered and used their NZQA Learner login in 2017. Without registering, students cannot check the accuracy of the results being reported for them, request reviews or reconsiderations for external examination papers or order copies of their Record of Achievement and/or qualification certificates.

Students use their portal into the school's student management system to check their progress. However, as only results reported to NZQA are counted toward the award of an NCEA, students will be unable to identify any reporting errors or omissions. It is suggested that Advisers assist individual students to realise the importance of registering for, and using, their Learner login. This in turn will assist the Advisers to track individual progress.

Data analysis will help to measure the effectiveness of the new learning model The school has the mantra "Striving for Excellence". To meet this aim it should make it clear what its vision of excellence looks like for students. For the last two years, attainment has been lower than in similar schools. The percentage of Year 11 students meeting the literacy and numeracy requirements for an NCEA was significantly lower, although this was improved for students in Year 12. To ensure that student assessment needs are being met, ongoing achievement data should be closely evaluated against the school's targets and student goals.

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:

- determine how data will be used to measure the effectiveness of the new learning model.

For consideration

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

- encouraging students to register and use their NZQA Learner login.

How effectively does the school's communication inform staff, and students and their families about assessment?

Evidence for school communication promoting understanding of assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7ii(b))

Taumarunui High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive a copy of their *Individual Learning Plan* for each term
- supporting teachers new to the school to become familiar with *Big Picture Learning* in the school's context.

Taumarunui High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- providing opportunities to discuss changes needed to implement the *Big Picture Learning* model
- providing students with opportunities to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

The *Big Picture Learning* model requires effective communication Taumarunui High School is still embedding the *Big Picture Learning* model. To maintain effective assessment practices and systems, the school needs to:

- ensure that the student handbook reflects the *Big Picture Learning* model
- inform staff about assessment best practice, provide opportunities to discuss changes and clarify expectations.

The Principal's Nominee explained that the staff and student handbooks were reviewed before the start of the year. However, they provide little relevant guidance for the current model of assessment for the intended audiences. This should be addressed before the start of 2019. The 2016 review identified that the handbooks did not reflect practice at that time and it is suggested that annual review is scheduled.

Agreed action

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

- review the handbooks to ensure that they reflect the current practice in the school.