

Managing National Assessment Report

New Plymouth Boys' High School

March 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively New Plymouth Boys' 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
- *New Plymouth Boys' High School – Moderation and Assurance 2018, Role of Head of Faculty*
- *New Plymouth Boys' High School – Assessment Procedures for NCEA 2018, Staff and Student Manual*
- Assessment Policies for:
 - *Student Achievement and Learning Data*
 - *Reporting on Student Progress*
 - *Curriculum Delivery*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, Assistant Principal – Director of Curriculum/Academic Performance, three students, and Heads of Faculty for Health and Physical Education, Social Science and Technology, and Heads of Department for Commerce, Wood and Design Visual Communication and Outdoor Education.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Assistant Principal – Director of Curriculum/Academic Performance 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

New Plymouth Boys' High School

21 March 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

New Plymouth Boys' High School demonstrates effective self-review to ensure the flexibility of the NCEA model is used to support student achievement. Broadening of assessment programmes and the introduction of semester courses in 2017 supports student engagement and better meets student assessment needs and career aspirations.

Assessment practice is effectively managed and is based on up-to-date information, effective communication and regular staff professional learning opportunities. This ensures consistent assessment practice, equitable access to assessment and reporting of credible results to NZQA.

Heads of Faculty meet with the Principal annually to discuss student achievement and planned changes to meet school goals. Robust discussion focuses on where improvements can be made to better engage students to enhance achievement.

Strong leadership alongside robust discussion at Heads of Faculty and staff meetings have fostered the willingness of staff to be innovative in their evidence collection, assessment practice and the programmes offered.

Internal moderation responsibilities and expectations have been clarified and streamlined to confirm all standards assessed are subject to a quality assurance process. To further strengthen the school's internal moderation processes the Principal's Nominees plans, as a next step, to visit faculties to monitor that moderation documentation aligns with actual practice.

A robust process to follow up on external moderation ensures feedback is used to improve assessment decisions. Senior Management monitors subjects to identify emerging trends in low teacher/moderator agreement, so that effective support can be put in place.

Effective identification and tracking of students at risk of not achieving an NCEA qualification enables appropriate support to be provided, including changes to assessment programmes and additional literacy and numeracy assistance.

The use of digital tools is common practice for assessment evidence collection and for communicating with students, staff and the school community. The school's

website provides readily accessible information to parents and students of the school's NCEA procedures and assessment programmes offered.

The Principal's Nominee is supported by the Assistant Principal – Director of Curriculum/Academic Performance. They work collaboratively to ensure credible assessment practices and the reporting of credible results to NZQA.

Areas for improvement

To further strengthen the school's internal moderation processes the school agreed to clarify that student work for verification should be purposefully selected and sufficient to provide assurance that all decisions at grade boundaries are consistent with the standard. This clarification will assist with teacher assessment workload without compromising the reporting of credible results.

When next reviewed the school should incorporate the refinements to the school's NCEA documentation that were identified at the review to clarify some assessment procedures.

Agreed action

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

- ensure that student work for verification is purposefully selected and sufficient
- ensure results submitted for derived grades are based on authentic standard-specific evidence
- include assessment information in the school documentation as described in this report.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

8 May 2018

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 13 August 2015 Managing National Assessment Report The five agreed actions in the 2015 review have been addressed.

Response to external moderation outcomes An effective process for following-up on external moderation is in place including longitudinal monitoring to identify subject areas where a low agreement rates over two or more years occurs. External moderation issues are investigated and, where required, the Heads of Faculty in consultation with the Deputy Principal Curriculum, develop an action plan to support the ongoing development of teachers' understanding of the standard. The completion of the agreed action is monitored.

Internal review

Evidence found that the school is effectively 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)

In 2015 the school's analysis of NCEA achievement data identified that student achievement was below national and decile averages at all levels. To accelerate achievement, of all student groups, the school has introduced a number of strategic changes as a result of review led by Senior Management. These include:

Changes to assessment programmes offered including:

- using external providers to further broaden the range of vocational assessment pathways available to provide a greater range of pathways to meets students' aspirations, interests and ability
- designing school assessment programmes with contexts relevant to students' interests and needs; for example business for sport, history of armies and police, and business for trades
- introducing semester courses to provide greater flexibility in assessment programmes available and greater choice for students
- reviewing the internal/external assessment balance with the view to managing student and teacher assessment workload by offering fewer credits and enabling students to focus on the quality of the credits achieved
- becoming involved in Kia Eke Panuku to support teachers to provide relevant learning and assessment contexts to assist with raising Māori student achievement.

The school attributes these changes to the improved NCEA qualifications achievement to above national and decile statistics at all levels. In addition, 66 Vocational Pathways were achieved across Construction, Manufacturing, Primary and Service Industries in 2017, reflecting the change in assessment programmes offered.

The flexibility of the NCEA qualification and the introduction of semester courses has enabled students to take a half year course they are interested in, but which is not their planned long-term career pathway.

Senior Management has identified the school's next step is to improve Merit and Excellence endorsements and they have begun discussion on how to achieve this.

Strengthening the school's tracking and monitoring of student achievement including:

- using a traffic light system to strengthen the school's tracking and monitoring programme to identify those at risk of not achieving a qualification early in the year so that assessment programmes can be modified and specific literacy and numeracy support provided, where appropriate
- introducing specific mentoring and pastoral time to support students understand how best they learn and achieve, how to monitor their progress, and to clarify NCEA qualification requirements
- providing teacher-led study classes at the end of the year to support external assessment preparation in order to remove the need for "catch-up credits" and to manage teacher and student assessment workload.

These changes demonstrate the school's capacity to use data analysis to review assessment practices and implement changes.

The strategic changes implemented by the school are aimed to improve student outcomes, assist with managing assessment workload and reflect the school's awareness of the need to ensure student and teacher wellbeing. Senior Management are currently discussing the role of Level 1 NCEA as part of the school's ongoing review of its assessment programmes.

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)

New Plymouth Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- providing a menu of standards for students to negotiate individual assessment programmes in some subjects, where appropriate,
- engaging with external providers to offer an increasing number of vocational assessment programmes
- encouraging and developing staff confidence to collect naturally occurring evidence of student achievement, or through portfolios and assignments
- reducing the need for resubmission or "catch-up" credits by supporting students to present their best evidence of achievement through the use of checkpoints, on-going feedback and feedforward information
- providing flexible assessment timelines for students whose attendance is affected by legitimate absences
- identifying students potentially entitled to special assessment conditions and supporting their application using school-based evidence.

New Plymouth Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted by using suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- managing the consistent granting of assessment extensions by the Head of Faculty being responsible for administration of the process
- ensuring further assessment opportunities and resubmissions are offered in line with NZQA expectations.

Further clarification of derived grade quality assurance is recommended

Teachers interviewed described using appropriate material for assessment that may be used for a derived grade. However, they were unaware that if the result was to be submitted for a derived grade, it needed to be based on authentic standard-specific evidence. The school is recommended, as a next step, to clarify with staff and document in the staff handbook the verification and justification process for derived grades. This clarification will provide confidence that assessment decisions for derived grades submitted are consistent with the standard, while ensuring teacher assessment workload is managed.

Digital evidence collection supports student achievement A Bring Your Own Device policy enables digital evidence collection in a wide range of subject areas using Google Classroom. Students interviewed described using devices in most of their subjects for learning and assessment. The school has identified issues of connectivity and speed as barriers to engaging with digital external examinations. As discussed at the review, the school is encouraged to consider taking part in a digital

trial to provide the opportunity to evaluate the ability of the school's network and infrastructure to manage examinations digitally.

Agreed action

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

- ensure results submitted for derived grades are based on authentic standard specific evidence.

For consideration

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

- taking part in a digital examination trial.

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)

New Plymouth Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring teachers are provided with clear expectations on internal moderation requirements including documenting the process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- using a panel marking process or subject specialists from outside of the school to verify assessor judgements
- requiring Heads of Faculty to ensure internal moderation is completed and documented for all standards assessed in their learning area prior to reporting results to NZQA
- monitoring that a moderation cover sheet is electronically stored for all standards assessed.

New Plymouth Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work for external moderation randomly to NZQA requirements
- following up on external moderation feedback, including documenting actions, monitoring that actions are completed, and arranging support, as required
- ensuring all Heads of Faculty and Department have Education Sector Login to give them access to the moderation online application so that they can prepare moderation material for submission and view moderators' reports
- establishing digital storage protocols at a faculty level to facilitate material being readily available for digital external moderation submission, if requested.

Further clarification of internal moderation verification process is planned

The Principal's Nominee has identified inconsistent teacher verification practice in some subject areas. This includes using randomly selected student work, limiting the number to eight or four and verification discussion not being documented. Using resources from the recent Principal's Nominee Seminars, she plans to clarify that the selection should be strategic and sufficient to provide teachers with assurance that the grades awarded are in line with the national standard. Interviews with teachers during the review confirmed the school's identification of inconsistent verification practice.

Documenting verification discussion will support the development of teacher understanding of grade boundaries and provide a source of benchmark samples to support future assessment decisions. The purposeful selection of a sufficient number of verification samples, particularly at grade boundaries, assists with managing teachers' assessment workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process.

Confirming internal moderation documentation reflects actual practice In 2017 the Principal's Nominee monitored internal moderation completion using the cover sheets against the grades reported. In 2018, she plans to introduce annual visits to all learning areas to reconcile internal moderation documentation with actual practice. Annual visits will also provide the opportunity to check the selection of student work for verification is purposeful and sufficient.

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:

- ensure that student work for verification is purposefully selected and sufficient.

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)

New Plymouth Boys' High School effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - reporting to the Board of Trustees each month student NCEA achievement against the school's set targets
 - annually reporting an analysis of NCEA achievement including by ethnicity and against school goals to the Board of Trustees
 - identifying and tracking priority learners and those at risk of not achieving an NCEA qualification, and implementing support, where required.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data errors
 - reporting results against the correct codes of providers with which the school holds current memoranda of understanding
 - requiring students to confirm the accuracy of internal grades reported
 - ensuring internal entries submitted to NZQA have a reported result.

Effective analysis of NCEA data Senior Management has strengthened the annual beginning of year student achievement meeting with Heads of Faculty. Robust discussion with the aim of identifying practices and programmes to “keep/stop/start” is used to identify strategies to further accelerate achievement and meet student needs. Discussion includes:

- reflection on existing goals, and setting new goals for the following year
- the achievement of target groups
- identification of issues that may need to be addressed
- a comparison of external and internal results.

Assessment programme changes to manage teacher and student workload

The school has identified student and teacher assessment workload as a focus area. Discussion with Heads of Faculty on the number of credits offered was started in 2016. This discussion has led to reduced credits and optional standards being offered in some subjects. The school is encouraged, as part of its ongoing review, to continue this discussion to support the management of student and teacher assessment workload.

No action required

No issues with the school's management and use of assessment-related data were identified during this review.

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

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

New Plymouth Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and parents using a variety of communication modes
- assisting students and parents to use the parent portal to monitor NCEA and Vocational Pathways progress
- ensuring easy access to consistent course outline information by using a template, providing it digitally on the school's website and requiring students to save it, as the first page, in each subject's Google Classroom
- supporting students to make appropriate assessment programme decisions for their future pathway using the school's "*back-mapping pathways*" process
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

New Plymouth Boys' High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- clarifying changes to assessment procedures and facilitating timely discussion on assessment best practice at staff and Heads of Faculty meetings
- checking whether teachers and students are following assessment processes
- clarifying assessment processes with students at Huia Ropu meetings and targeted assemblies
- supporting students to know and understand what they need to achieve to gain a qualification.

Staff and student assessment information reviewed and consolidated A new *Staff and Student Manual* and *Quality Assurance Handbook for Heads of Faculty* were developed in 2017 in consultation with Heads of Faculty by the Principal's Nominee who is new to the role. The simplified student and staff document, with relevant links, is also available digitally on the school website and school intranet to facilitate version control and easy access for students, staff and parents.

Clarification of assessment practice in documentation As discussed with Senior Management, when the documents are next updated it is recommended the school include:

- In the staff and student manual:
 - that students can appeal any assessment decision
- In the quality assurance handbook:
 - the verification and justification processes where grades could be used for a derived grade
 - clarify that work selected for verification should be purposefully selected at grade boundaries and/or where unsure and be sufficient to be confident decisions are consistent with the standard.

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:

- include assessment information in the school documentation as described in this report.