

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Stratford High School

August 2019

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Stratford 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 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, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report and;
- to help schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment according to the requirements of the *Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019* (Assessment Rules).

## What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- requiring action from the school where an issue is identified that significantly impacts on the school meeting the requirements of their *Consent to Assess*
- agreeing action with the school where an issue has been identified that could become significant if not addressed
- making suggestions for the school to consider to enhance good assessment practice.

## What this review includes

The review has three components:

- The annual external moderation of the school's internal assessment.
- A check on specific aspects of assessment systems on an annual basis.
- A check on each 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 – A Handbook for Staff*
- *NCEA – A Handbook for Students*
- Stratford High School Quality Management Systems and Procedures for Managing NCEA Assessment
- 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:
  - Home Economics
  - Hospitality and Tourism
  - Mathematics
  - Social Sciences
- Teacher-in-charge of French
- Teacher of Visual Arts
- 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.

# SUMMARY

## Stratford High School

8 August 2019

### Significant issues found

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

The next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years. NZQA will return within 12 months to confirm that these issues are being addressed and that quality management of assessment for qualifications has improved.

The issues are:

- there is no effective monitoring process to confirm that all standards assessed have been subject to internal moderation prior to reporting grades to NZQA
- the assessment programmes offered at the attached Alternative Education and Teen Parent (Whaimana Ako) units are not included in the school's internal moderation monitoring or review to confirm credible assessment practice and that student needs are met.

### Actions required to address significant issues

In order to address these issues, the school must:

- monitor internal moderation systems to ensure that only results that have been subject to the internal moderation process are reported to NZQA (Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2019, 6.4(b))
- monitor and review the standard of delivery and support for any programmes delivered off-site (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v).

### Areas for improvement

Internal moderation requires monitoring by Senior Management to confirm that all standards grades are reported for have been quality assured and results are credible. Monitoring will also ensure that the school is meeting the requirements of its Consent to Assess.

A monitoring process will include an annual check to confirm that the moderation process documented on the cover sheets reflects actual practice. The school's quality assurance processes can be further strengthened by the Principal's Nominee, discussing at the evidence check, teacher's verification practice to confirm a robust process is used.

The assessment programmes and processes of the attached Alternative Education and Teen Parent (Whaimana Ako) units must be included in the school's review and monitoring processes to confirm credible assessment practice and that student assessment needs are being met.

The school's application process for Special Assessment Conditions needs to be strengthened to ensure applications are made for potentially entitled students to ensure equity of access for fair assessment. Special Assessment Conditions provide approved students with support so that barriers to achievement can be removed.

Clarification of when to offer resubmission opportunities and the use of feedback / feedforward is required to ensure these meet NZQA requirements. Resubmissions are for students who are on a grade boundary and can readily identify and correct an error with no further teaching or specific feedback provided.

A reconciliation process is required to confirm a memorandum of understanding is held for all outside provider codes used to report results so that the school can be assured that the grades reported will be recorded on a student's Record of Achievement. A system to store memoranda of understanding centrally is recommended good practice.

### **Agreed action**

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

- identify and monitor students with Special Assessment Conditions entitlement (Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2019, 5.5)
- clarify the requirements for offering a resubmission opportunity
- annually reconcile that a current memorandum of understanding is held for all external providers whose code is used to report grades.

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

Stratford High School has used the flexibility of the NCEA model to support the school's goal of improving student achievement outcomes. Additional vocational opportunities are now available to engage boys, support students' career aspirations and provide relevant authentic learning experiences. Choice of standards, evidence presentation methods and contexts support students to engage in their assessment programmes and present their best evidence of achievement.

A strengthened system for monitoring and tracking student achievement has resulted in a more effective use of achievement data to raise student outcomes. Improving Māori and boys' achievement is a focus for the school with close monitoring of these students' qualifications progress. Students at-risk of not meeting their qualification goal are provided with specific support, including changes to assessment programmes and attending a summer school programme in November where additional standards are offered.

Follow-up to external moderation is developing. Action plans are developed to address issues identified by moderators.

The school provides opportunities for parents to understand NCEA and supports each student to achieve their goals and planned pathway through conferences and targeted meetings.

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23 September 2019

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# FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

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

### External review

*Evidence for external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2vi, 3iv-3v)*

#### **Action Items from 2 June 2016 Managing National Assessment Report**

The four agreed actions in the 2016 review have been addressed. Teachers:

- are aware of the need to protect student privacy when signing off grades and students confirmed their good practice
- understand the requirements for ensuring derived grades are based on authentic standard-specific evidence that has been quality assured or justified
- ensure internal entries have a grade reported or are withdrawn if the student has not had an adequate assessment opportunity.

The student handbook has been updated with additional information on appeals, reporting Not Achieved and resubmission opportunities.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The Assistant Principal has taken responsibility for following up on external moderation in 2019. At the time of the review, teachers had completed a response form identifying actions to address issues signalled by the moderator and returned this to the Assistant Principal.

The school agrees that the next steps for an effective follow-up to external moderation will be for the Assistant Principal to:

- discuss the planned actions with teachers to confirm the action will address the issue
- monitor the timely completion of the planned actions
- provide additional assessor support where appropriate.

It is important that these next steps are carried out to ensure issues are addressed and teachers' understanding of the standard is further developed, where required.

The school is encouraged to use the NZQA Moderation Application to request standards for external moderation, including targeting standards for selection where actions have been required to address identified issues. This enables the school to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken.

### 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)*

Review and changes made since 2017 have been to improve the academic outcomes of students to be similar to national and decile levels. Raising achievement for Māori students and boys is a priority. In 2018, NCEA results have improved at Level 1 and 3 with outcomes similar to national and decile comparisons at Level 1.

Boys achievement has also improved, reducing the disparity between boys and girls at each level. Raising Māori achievement remains a continued area of focus for the school.

The school attributed the improved NCEA outcomes to the following strategies:

- improved tracking processes that include deans having responsibility for identifying at risk students and those needing targeted support to ensure Level 1 literacy and numeracy, and University Entrance literacy requirements are met
- strengthening monitoring of student achievement by mentor teachers to ensure more consistent school wide tracking
- focusing Kahui Ako teacher inquiries on the effect of changed assessment and learning practice on student outcomes
- teachers reviewing and modifying learning and assessment contexts, so they are more relevant for boys and Māori
- including a Vocational Pathways line in the timetable to provide supervised time for students to complete work missed when at these off-site courses.

**No action required**

No issues with the school's response to external review 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 2019 5.5)*

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

- differentiating assessment programmes to enable students to undertake an assessment course that meets their needs including:
  - offering a choice of standards in some subjects
  - providing assessment programmes over two years for identified students
  - assessing some students when ready if they require additional learning time
  - enabling students to choose the evidence presentation method in some subjects
  - offering multilevel classes
  - using Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu to provide courses that the school is unable to resource
- offering a range of vocational programmes through STAR, Gateway, 3 + 2 and Trade Academies to support a student's planned pathway beyond school.

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

- managing missed and late assessment
- 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
- submitting derived grades in line with NZQA expectations
- managing NZQA external examinations.

**Ensure applications for special assessment conditions are made** A process for making special assessment applications needs to be implemented. This will ensure those with potential entitlement are identified, evidence to support an application is collected and a timely application is made to provide equity of access for all students.

The school submitted two new applications for entitlement in 2018 and none in 2019. Senior Management acknowledged that the number of students with entitlement was lower than would be expected. A strengthened identification process with clear responsibilities of those involved in the application process is required to ensure all students who are entitled are supported.

**Oversight of assessment in the Teen Parent and Alternative Education units is required** Stratford High School oversees attached units for Alternative Education and Teen Parents (Whaimana Ako) who provide assessment programmes to students. Currently the practice at the two units are not part of the school's

monitoring of internal moderation or review to confirm credible assessment practice and that the programmes offered meet students' needs.

The attached units carry out their own assessment or use programmes offered through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu and New Zealand School of Tourism. Reviewing the practice and programmes at these units will identify areas of good practice and potential risks, and ensure the school is meeting its obligations under its Consent to Assess.

**Engaging students in Science, Technology, Engineer and Mathematics subjects (STEM)** The school acknowledged the engagement of Māori students in STEM subjects is lower than those of other ethnicities. To support Māori students to explore science and health related career pathways senior students are involved in the Taranaki Base Hospital Why Ora Programme. Year 10 students attend the Pūtaiao programme to provide authentic learning experiences with the aim of engaging their interest in Sciences so they will continue to study these in the senior school. Senior management has identified the pre-requisites for senior science subjects as a potential barrier to students studying sciences and is exploring this with the Faculty staff.

#### **Clarification of resubmission and feedback/feedforward opportunities**

Clarification of when a resubmission is appropriate and the use of feedback/feedforward is required to ensure NZQA's expectations are being met. Students interviewed described a resubmission opportunity being offered to all students in some subjects and one teacher described the feedback / feedforward process as how they offered a resubmission. Resubmissions are for individual students who are on a grade boundary where the teacher considers they can independently identify and correct the error or omission with no further teaching and learning. Feedback/feedforward is for all students and occurs before the final submission.

#### **Required action**

The following action is required to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. The school must:

- monitor and review the standard of delivery and support for any programmes delivered off site (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v).

#### **Agreed action**

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

- identify and monitor students with Special Assessment Conditions entitlement (Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2019, 5.5)
- clarify the requirements for offering a resubmission opportunity.

## How effectively does the school's internal and external moderation assure assessment quality?

*Evidence for internal and external moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019 6.4b)*

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

- ensuring teachers are provided with clear expectations on internal moderation requirements
- documenting the completion of all processes for each standard assessed
- using subject-specialists from within and outside of the school to verify assessor judgements for a purposefully selected sample of student work
- requiring teachers to submit the completed moderation cover sheets to the Principal's Nominee prior to reporting results to NZQA.

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

- using a selection method that meets NZQA requirements
- storing assessed work securely so that it is available, if requested, for external moderation.
- following-up on external moderation feedback, including documenting actions to address identified issues.

**Monitoring of internal moderation is required** It is a requirement of the school's Consent to Assess that internal moderation is monitored to provide assurance to Senior Management that all standards grades are reported for have been subject to a quality assurance process. The Principal's Nominee acknowledged that while he collects the coversheets, no check is carried out to confirm all standards assessed have been moderated or that the process is robust.

The issue of the school not monitoring internal moderation was identified in the 2013 Managing National Assessment review and again in the 2014 review. The 2016 review identified that a robust monitoring process had been introduced by the new Principal's Nominee, this confirmed to Senior Management that all grades reported had been quality assured. Since the 2016 review, the role of the Principal's Nominee has changed three times and as a consequence, monitoring not becoming an embedded practice.

An internal moderation monitoring process is required to confirm that all standards assessed have been internally moderated and that the information on the coversheets reflects actual practice. Visiting departments to check a sample of cover sheets against actual practice can provide the opportunity to confirm that:

- work at grade boundaries is selected for verification
- subject specialists with recent NCEA assessment experience carried out the verification process
- good practice of the verification discussion and the final grade reported is recorded.

### **Required action**

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

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

## 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)*

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

- monitoring student NCEA progress, identifying students at risk of not achieving a qualification and providing appropriate support, where required
- identifying Year 9 and 10 students who need additional literacy support to access Level 1 when in Year 11
- annually reporting to the Principal an analysis of NCEA achievement using pre-analysed data by standard, identifying areas of poor performance, possible reasons for this and identifying next steps.

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

- using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
- timely reporting to NZQA of internally assessed results and external entries that have been checked for accuracy
- supporting students to use their Learner login to track their NCEA progress.

**Ensure memoranda of understanding with external providers are held** The review identified that the school could not confirm a memorandum of understanding is held for each provider whose code is used to report results. The school plans to implement a system to store these centrally with an annual reconciliation process before results are reported. Memoranda of understanding detail the obligations of each party when carrying out assessment and reporting results for students.

**Ongoing monitoring is used to support student achievement** A multipronged approach is used to support student achievement. Teachers described taking collective responsibility for supporting students, particularly those at risk and priority learners. Strategies used to raise the NCEA achievement levels include:

- a Poutama programme whereby students meet with their mentor teacher regularly to track their progress and set and review goals
- Deans meeting with students who are at-risk across a number of subjects to discuss their qualification goal and putting in place support, as needed
- discussion of achievement data at staff meetings of identified at-risk students to plan how teachers can support students in their subject area including changes to assessment programme
- inviting students who are a few credits short of reaching their qualification goal to a programme in November to complete additional study and standards to “get them over the line”
- providing a catch-up programme for students who, miss University Entrance by one standard.

**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:

- annually reconcile that a current memorandum of understanding is held for all external providers whose code is used to report grades.

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

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

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

- ensuring students receive information for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure using a range of media
- informing students about suitable learning pathways.

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

- using Parent-Student-Teacher conferences to assist parents to discuss their students' NCEA progress, understand NCEA and set and review learning and qualification goals
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- mentoring and guiding students on the school's NCEA processes and helping students to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification and follow their career aspirations.

**Review course information provided to students** Assessment information is provided to students in three separate documents and duplicates information in the student handbook. The school should consider reviewing the information to ensure version control and make it easier for students to access information.

**Amendments to staff and student handbooks** The staff and student handbooks are comprehensive and relevant documents presented in plain English. The school agreed that when the handbooks are next updated the statement regarding poor handwriting not being grounds for special assessment conditions will be removed to reflect the change made by NZQA in 2019 to the entitlement criteria.

### **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:

- reviewing course outline information provided to students.