

Managing National Assessment Report

Opunake High School

October 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Opunake 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
- *Opunake High School NCEA Assessment Procedures and Guidelines for Students 2018*
- *Opunake High School NCEA Level 1, 2 and 3 Standards and School Assessment and Evaluation Procedures 2018*
- Assessment and Reporting Policies
- survey summaries for:
 - teachers' internal moderation processes
 - students' use of their Learner Login
- Level 1 at risk student tracking sheet
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, three students, and Heads of Department for English, Music, Physical Education and Health, Science, Social Studies and Te Reo Māori.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy Principal and Principal's Nominee at the end of the review visit to highlight good practice and areas for improvement, with suggested strategies, next steps and to agree on any action required.

SUMMARY

Opunake High School

16 October 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

Opunake High School uses the flexibility of the NCEA model to offer personalised academic, vocational and ready for work assessment programmes to provide relevant and meaningful pathways to meet students' abilities and career aspirations. Assessing students when ready through flexible timeframes is a feature of assessment practice alongside subjects offering a menu of standards for students to negotiate their assessment programme.

The school's focus is on improving achievement for all students in a culturally inclusive environment. Close monitoring of student progress, including literacy and numeracy, effectively identifies those at risk of not achieving a qualification enabling the early provision of assistance. Individual Development Plan Conferences and effective mentoring further support students to achieve their qualification goal and transition to work or further education.

Teachers annually review the effectiveness of programmes offered using student voice and analysis of NCEA outcomes to inform course design and changes to further promote student achievement and meet their needs. The school's ongoing evaluation of assessment programmes assists to meet current and future student needs.

Internal moderation is embedded practice. School processes and expectations are understood and consistently followed by teachers interviewed. The Principal's Nominee monitors compliance with termly visits to check the process is completed and documented. This provides senior management with confidence that results reported to NZQA have been subject to a quality assurance process.

Areas for improvement

The external moderation process requires strengthening to confirm the actions to resolve identified issues are completed in a timely manner. The school is also encouraged to use the external moderation application in future years to select standards they would like feedback on to confirm the effectiveness of the actions taken to address an identified issue.

Clarification is required of the application of resubmission opportunities, ensuring derived grades have been subject to a justification process and that Not Achieved must be reported where students have had an adequate assessment. This clarification will ensure consistent teacher practice across the school.

The introduction of a process to confirm that internal moderation documentation aligns with actual practice is also required. By strategically selecting a sample of cover sheets to match against student work verified at the termly monitoring visits, the Principal's Nominee will be able to confirm the school's internal moderation expectations reflect what is actually being done within departments. The robustness of the monitoring visits can be further enhanced by incorporating a check that the verification discussion and the final grade reported is documented to serve as a reference for future grade decision-making.

The staff handbook requires updating to further clarify assessment procedures and support teachers understanding and application of resubmission opportunities, derived grades and reporting Not Achieved.

Agreed action

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

- ensure confirmation that actions in response to external moderation feedback are completed.
- ensure correct assessment practice for resubmission opportunities and reporting Not Achieved is followed
- monitor derived grades reported to check they have been subject to a process that verifies or justifies their validity
- monitor that the documented internal moderation process reflects actual practice
- update the staff handbook as indicated in this report.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

13 December 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 18 March 2015 Managing National Assessment Report The following agreed actions from the 2015 review have been completed by:

- including Vocational Pathways information in the course selection book and in mentors' Individual Development Plan discussion with students
- updating the staff handbook as detailed in the 2015 Report
- actively promoting and encouraging students to register and use their learner login to monitor NCEA and vocational pathways progress.

The following agreed actions have yet to be completed:

- review of the school's Quality Management System
- including endorsement information in course outlines.

Response to external moderation outcomes Strengthening the school's follow-up to external moderation is required. An evidence-based check will confirm that actions planned, in response to identified issues, are completed in a timely manner.

All moderation reports are reviewed by the Principal's Nominee who requires a response where "*Not Yet Consistent and Not Consistent*" outcomes are indicated. She meets with the teacher-in-charge to discuss the feedback, confirm planned actions and provide support to improve understanding of the standard and assessment practice.

The effectiveness of the school's actions in response to external moderation feedback, can be evaluated by selecting these standards for external moderation in future years. The school is encouraged to do this in subject areas of concern, where there are low agreement rates or to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies to support teacher assessment practice.

In 2018, to support teacher understanding in a subject area with an historical trend of low moderator/teacher agreement rates, the school hosted a regional NZQA Guest Speaker subject moderation workshop. This is good practice.

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)

Opunake High School teachers have a shared vision of supporting students' NCEA achievement by providing individualised assessment programmes using relevant and culturally inclusive contexts. The school's focus in the last two years has been to raise student achievement by ensuring students are offered relevant assessment programmes that meet their pathway and aspirations. Robust and proactive

monitoring and mentoring of students further supports students and the school to meet their achievement and strategic goals.

Heads of Department annually review student NCEA outcomes against department and school goals, and programmes offered to ensure they continue to meet the interests, needs and abilities of current and future students. The school's destination data indicates that a very high level of school leavers go on to further education or employment. The school's focus is to ensure that students leaving school are prepared for and able to continue on their chosen pathway whether it be tertiary study or employment.

The number of credits in assessment programmes has been reviewed and reduced to better manage student assessment workload and provide the opportunity for students to focus on the quality of credits achieved. The school reports that this change has contributed to the higher number of Excellence endorsements at NCEA Level 1 and 2. These are now similar to the national statistics

The school's tracking of student achievement, identification of those at risk of not achieving a qualification, and the mentoring programme have been reviewed and refined to further support students to achieve their academic goals.

The changes and refinements made as a result of the school's ongoing review have contributed to improved achievement at all NCEA levels particularly for boys, and including a significant improvement in Māori achievement, which is now above national and decile statistics. The school achieved its annual goal of 85 per cent of students gaining NCEA Level 2 in 2017 and met its strategic goal to improve Māori student achievement.

Other reviews conducted by the school include:

- reviewing the access and provision of digital tools for students to use resulting in Chrome books being provided in 2019 to ensure equity of access to these for all students for learning and assessment
- using teacher inquiries to support teachers to trial teaching and assessment contexts that are culturally relevant, authentic and reflect student interests, abilities and learning styles
- clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the Exam Centre Manager and Special Education Needs Coordinator for the provision of special assessment conditions for NCEA examinations to ensure students receive their entitlement.

Shared ownership of student achievement by teachers, the broadening of assessment programmes, and the effective monitoring of academic progress ensures student needs and qualification goals are effectively supported.

Agreed action

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

- ensure confirmation that actions in response to external moderation feedback are completed.

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)

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

- providing ongoing feedback and feedforward to support students to present their best evidence
- modifying planned assessment programmes annually to better match the cohort needs
- differentiating assessment programmes and enabling students to undertake an individualised assessment course by:
 - assessing students when ready though flexible timeframes
 - individualised Gateway programmes that reflect their career aspirations
 - offering a menu of standards for students to negotiate an assessment programme to reflect their needs, interests and future pathways
- contextualising assessment tasks so they are relevant and engage student interest
- extending assessment opportunities for students by engaging with external providers and extending the school's consent to assess to provide vocational and trade-based courses
- collecting school-based evidence to support applications for special assessment conditions, removing the potential financial barrier of a Level C Assessor Report
- using Work and Study Skills unit standards to assess students at risk of not meeting the literacy or numeracy requirements of NCEA
- using digital tools in teaching and learning to provide students with a broader choice of presentation methods and enable them to submit their best evidence.

Opunake High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessments
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity.
- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted
- ensuring derived grades are based on standard-specific authentic evidence from practice examinations
- managing NZQA external examinations
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Equitable access to appropriate assessment programmes supports individual student achievement The assessment focus of the school is on personalising learning and assessment programmes to support students to achieve their personal, academic and planned career goals. Teachers use student voice to co-construct assessment programmes and contexts that are relevant and engage students.

Effective tracking and career planning meetings further support students transition to work or further study beyond school.

One day every two weeks students take part in the school's 'Dream Academy Programme'. Gateway and Trade Academy students use this time to attend their programmes to minimise the impact of missing their assessment programme.

Further clarification of derived grade justification methods Teachers interviewed were unaware of the need to quality assure or justify grades that may be used for a derived grade. The school agreed to clarify this expectation to provide confidence assessment decisions are consistent with the standard. Teachers described using appropriate assessment material to gather student evidence that could be used for derived grades.

Clarification of resubmission required Resubmission should only be offered where students are on a grade boundary, can readily identify the error and fix it without further teaching. Two teachers described offering a resubmission opportunity to all students. The school plans to clarify with staff the correct application of resubmission opportunities.

Reporting of Not Achieved where a student has had an adequate assessment opportunity A number of subjects had no Not Achieved results reported in 2017. One teacher reported withdrawing students when they did not hand in work for an assessment. Customising and individualising assessment programmes using flexible timelines are features of the school's assessment practice to support student success. Senior Management described the school's philosophy, where manageable, of enabling students to choose the assessments they undertake and when they are ready to be assessed. Discussed with Senior Management was NZQA's expectation that Not Achieved is reported where a student has had an adequate assessment opportunity.

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 correct assessment practice for resubmission opportunities and reporting Not Achieved
- monitor derived grades reported have been subject to a justifiable process.

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)

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

- ensuring teachers are provided with clear expectations on internal moderation requirements
- ensuring new and amended assessments are critiqued before use and verifying a sample of assessor judgements for all standards assessed
- supporting sole subject teachers to network with other subject specialists from outside of the school to verify assessor judgements.
- requiring teachers to submit the completed internal moderation cover sheets to the Principal's Nominee prior to reporting results to NZQA
- termly visits by the Principal's Nominee to monitor internal moderation completion, that verifiers have recent standard-specific assessment experience, and storage of work.

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

- using a random selection method that meets NZQA requirements
- storing assessed work securely so that it is available, if requested, for external moderation
- ensuring all teachers have Education Sector Login access so they can upload material ready for external moderation submission
- using external moderation feedback to modify tasks before further use and clarify understanding of the standard.

Strengthening of internal moderation required The school's internal moderation processes should be further strengthened by reconciling the department's internal moderation documentation with actual practice and ensuring verification discussion and the final grade reported are documented. Documenting verification discussion on grade boundaries provides benchmarks to guide teachers' future assessment decisions.

Selecting a sample of moderation cover sheets to match against student work selected for verification at the Principal's Nominee's termly visits will strengthen the school's processes. This will confirm to senior management the alignment of documentation with practice.

Senior management is very aware of each department's level of compliance with the school's internal moderation processes through the termly monitoring visits by the Principal's Nominee who checks student work is adequately stored and internal moderation has been completed.

Development of digital storage protocols is encouraged With the increase in student submission of digital evidence across a wide range of subjects, the school should consider developing digital storage protocols. Ensuring digital material is centrally stored with accessible file names and appropriate permission settings will reduce the risk of it not being available for external moderation.

Clarification of work selected for internal moderation verification is recommended Heads of Department described an embedded internal moderation process. However, the review identified that the selection of work for verification is limited to eight samples, or all work where the class is small in some subject areas.

There is no fixed, or predetermined number of pieces that must be verified. NZQA recommends that a strategic and sufficient number be selected to ensure the assessor is confident that the grades awarded are consistent with the standard. This will depend on factors such as how many samples are at grade boundaries, the experience of the teacher, previous external moderation history and the range of student grades. The school plans to clarify this with staff as a way to support the management of teacher workload.

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:

- monitor that the documented internal moderation process reflects actual practice.

For consideration

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

- developing digital evidence storage protocols to ensure material is available for external moderation
- ensure verification discussion and the final grade awarded are documented during the moderation process.

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)

Opunake High School effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - actively supporting students and whānau to apply for financial assistance
 - identifying and tracking priority learners and those at risk of not achieving an NCEA qualification and providing appropriate support
 - gathering student voice to evaluate assessment programmes offered to inform changes to contexts and standards
 - enabling mentors to meet with students and their whānau to complete Individual Development Plans, including monitoring progress toward achieving NCEA and Vocational Pathways, setting and reviewing goals and to discuss course selection for the following year
 - annually reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA achievement data by gender, ethnicity and longitudinally against national and decile statistics
 - analysing student destination data to evaluate the effectiveness of school's vocational pathways programmes in supporting students' career aspirations and transition to work.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - using effective data checking processes for external assessment to ensure:
 - minimal late external examination entries
 - student entries reflect their external assessment programmes resulting in minimal external examination absence and standards not attempted
 - reconciling reported results from external providers with a current Memorandum of Understanding.

Class profiles support personalisation of assessment programmes Class profiles are developed by all classroom teachers to identify individual students needs and aspirations. These profiles are used to:

- change standards offered to meet the needs of the class and individual students where appropriate
- customise assessment programmes to meet individual student needs and aspirations
- implement strategies for students who need literacy support, such as scaffolding of tasks and developing subject specific language understanding
- predict student NCEA achievement which is then monitored against this prediction.
- identify relevant teaching and assessment contexts for the cohort of students.

Supporting Māori achievement is a focus for all teachers Māori achievement has improved significantly over the past three years and is now above national and decile statistics. The school attributes the improved results to culturally responsive and relevant teaching and assessment contexts, individualised vocational and work placement assessment programmes, effective monitoring and tracking, and engaging with whānau to report student qualification progress and plan goals or transition to work.

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))

Opunake High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and whānau using a range of media
- ensuring consistent information is provided to students using a common course outline template
- regularly reporting to whānau and students' progress towards qualifications, including providing online access to the information held on the school's student management system
- assisting students and parents to use the parent portal and NZQA Learner login to monitor NCEA and Vocational Pathways progress.

Opunake High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- offering regular meetings and information evenings to assist parents and whānau to understand NCEA and Vocational Pathways to support students career pathway aspirations
- using Heads of Department and staff meetings to clarify assessment procedures and facilitating timely discussion on assessment best practice.

Students interviewed demonstrated a sound knowledge of the school's assessment procedures, where to access information and have questions answered, and what is needed to gain an NCEA qualification and University Entrance.

Amendments to staff and student handbook are required When next updated the following information and clarifications should be included in the staff handbook:

- information on resubmission and further assessment opportunities including using the terms resubmission and further assessment opportunities rather than 'resit' and 'reassessment' to ensure consistency with NZQA and to support consistent understanding across the school
- verification and justification procedures where assessment may be used to report a derived grade
- the strategic selection of samples of student work for internal moderation verification
- that Not Achieved is reported where a student has had an adequate assessment opportunity and not submitted evidence of achievement.

Regular professional discussion at staff and Heads of Department is used to support and develop teacher understanding of the school's procedures and assessment best practice. Assessment information is readily accessible by being provided on the school website, school intranet and staff 'Team Drive'.

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:

- update the staff handbook as indicated in this report.