

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Nga Tawa Diocesan School

June 2021

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Nga Tawa Diocesan School:

- has addressed issues identified through NZQA's Managing National Assessment review and through the school's own internal review
- manages assessment practice for national qualifications
- manages internal and external moderation
- makes use of and manages assessment-related data
- maintains the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicates them to staff, students and families.

The summary section evaluates the school's overall effectiveness and provides a broad overview of the review's key findings for all readers. The remaining sections provide detail of these findings for school managers.

## Why we review how schools are managing national assessment

The purpose of a Managing National Assessment review is:

- to confirm, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report, that schools are meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011* (CAAS) and its *Guidelines* (CAAS Guidelines) in order to maintain their consent to assess; and
- to help schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment according to the requirements of the *Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2021* (Assessment Rules).

## What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

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

## What this review includes

The review has three components:

- The annual external moderation of the school's internal assessment.
- A check on specific aspects of assessment systems on an annual basis.
- A check on the school's assessment systems at least once every four years.

## How we conducted this review

The review includes examination of documentation from a range of sources and interviewing key stakeholders.

Prior to the visit the school provided the following documents:

- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *2021 Nga Tawa Senior Option Book*
- *Nga Tawa Student Presentation (2021)*
- *Nga Tawa Student Diary 2021 – NZQA Section*
- Nga Tawa Assessment Procedures for Staff (various documents)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum and Operations
- Heads of Department for:
  - Creative Industries
  - Mathematics
  - Performing Arts
  - Physical Education and Health
  - Science
  - Social Sciences
- three students.

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

## Nga Tawa Diocesan School

22 June 2021

### Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*. No significant issues with the school's management of national assessment were found. The school's own review mechanisms allow them to identify and respond to all issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within four years.

At the request of NZQA, and with the school's agreement, this review was rescheduled from 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### What the school is doing well

The vision of Nga Tawa Diocesan School is "To enable every girl to exceed her expectations." Staff at the school are led by an experienced and capable leadership team which focuses on ensuring that this vision is put into practice across the school. At the heart of this vision is a deep level of review of teaching and learning based on knowing students well, and effective planning for success using assessment data at all levels. Students have attained excellent outcomes in the years since the last review, with high rates of certificate endorsement and frequently all girls have achieved their intended qualification and university entrance award.

The school's assessment processes ensure that credible results are reported. The Principal's Nominee and Deputy Principal in charge of curriculum ensure that the expected processes are clearly communicated to staff. Departmental audits conducted every year in rotation by senior leaders and peers ensure that processes are reviewed and consistently applied across the school. The processes for resubmission, authenticity, managing deadlines, extensions, breaches, and appeals are effective practice and well understood by staff and students alike.

The school's system of 'flexi-time' supports mentoring and assessment by creating timetabled space for students to self-manage their assessment priorities. This time is highly valued by students and staff. Students are supported by classroom teachers and mentors to be involved in the development of their personalised learning and assessment plan.

The school has effective systems for identifying students who are eligible for special assessment conditions and ensuring their entitlements are provided. Applications are supported by the provision of school-based and externally sourced evidence. Teaching staff share information in regular meetings and through documentation about the entitlements, and other learning support strategies. They review and modify the learning and assessment support to ensure that it continues to meet students' needs.

The school has embraced digital external assessment, as it better aligns with digital learning and assessment throughout the year. School leaders responded to the outcomes of a network assurance check conducted by N4L in 2020 to ensure that its

systems were ready for significantly increasing the number of students undertaking digital end of year examinations.

The Principal's Nominee ensures that moderation is closely monitored for effectiveness. Staff all understand the process required, but more importantly the value of good internal moderation feedback from verifiers and of engaging with external moderator feedback. Senior leaders actively monitor responses to external moderation and collaborate with subject leaders regarding actions taken. The school uses requests for standards in a moderation plan to create an effective follow up to concerns and evaluation of action plans.

There are no agreed action items.

Kay Wilson  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

23 September 2021

**NZQA**

**0800 697 296**

**[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://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 02 August 2017 Managing National Assessment Report** The school has fully addressed the actions agreed in the previous review regarding resubmission and internal moderation. The school documentation supporting resubmission practice is comprehensive and teachers and students interviewed for the review are clear about the requirements. Internal moderation processes are monitored by the Principal's Nominee. Heads of Departments provide detailed statements of how the moderation processes were completed and the school has robust systems for ensuring that this assurance aligns with practice.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has very effective follow-up to feedback from external moderators. This ensures that any curriculum areas needing support are identified, and action plans determined, and later evaluated for effectiveness. Standards which cause concern in a moderation cycle are routinely requested for subsequent moderation plans to review the effectiveness of the response made. This is good practice.

The high overall consistency of assessor decisions with the national standard identified by external moderators provides evidence for effective internal moderation practice in the school.

### 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)*

Leaders and teachers at Nga Tawa Diocesan School embrace review across the school including of assessment processes and student outcomes. Analysis of assessment outcomes and feedback data by teachers following each unit of learning informs decision-making about courses, strategies, and assessment tasks. This evaluation is shared with senior leaders who mentor staff where required. The internal review processes are clearly communicated and thoroughly documented. The interactions between leaders and teachers ensure that review is robust and well connected to school strategic goals. Change that improves assessment processes and outcomes for students is identified and supported.

The school's strategic goals concerning professional learning and student wellbeing are working towards a shared profile of an effective teacher who ensures that assessment meets student needs. For example, in 2021, staff are improving their understanding of success factors for Māori students. The aim is to develop assessment, including in STEM subjects, which more effectively aligns with the needs of the increasing number of Māori girls at the school. A director of wellbeing has been appointed since the last review resulting in further strengthening of student mentoring. Each teacher mentors a small group of students in regular sessions where learning and pathways priorities, progress and achievement are all tracked

productively. Students are supported by mentors to identify where additional learning support and tuition is required.

The school has high expectations of academic success. Review practices support success and have led to all Year 11 to 13 students gaining their NCEA qualification in 2020. Classroom teachers contribute to this success by supporting individual student learning and assessment programmes. They have reduced the overall amount of assessment to focus on quality and assessing when ready, and provide extra tuition and support, particularly for numeracy and literacy when required.

**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 2021 5.1 – 5.7)*

### **Nga Tawa Diocesan School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- identifying students eligible for special assessment conditions and making applications using school-based and externally sourced evidence
- partnering with Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu to provide students with access to assessment programmes where low numbers would prevent a class being available
- considering individual student goals and priorities when determining the appropriate amount of assessment, making choices about the standards to be assessed against, and the mixture of internal and external assessment
- prioritising assessing when ready
- supporting pathway planning by partnering with an external provider to ensure students are course planning based on a personalised career plan.

### **Nga Tawa Diocesan School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- using checkpoints to monitor student progress with assessment and provide feedback
- providing consistent resubmission practice, in line with NZQA expectations, across faculties/departments/learning areas
- monitoring student work for authenticity using a variety of methods and tools
- managing student requests for extensions
- ensuring students have clear guidelines for appealing an assessment grade
- investigating appeals of grades and breaches of assessment rules
- ensuring evidence for emergency and derived grades is collected and verifying the grades using a verification or justification process
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020*.

**Student self-management of 'flexi-time' in weekly schedule promotes well-being, underpins effective assessment practice** Students at Nga Tawa Diocesan School are confident managers of their own learning and assessment programmes. Students have a fair degree of agency over their programme, including contexts and the mix of standards used for assessment in many of their courses. The school has developed a system to support this. 'Flexi-time' creates space three times each week for students to proactively engage one-to-one or in small groups with teachers about their learning, next steps, and their assessment activities. The students interviewed for the review placed high value on flexi-time, rating it as the most important process for the school to "keep doing!"

**Equity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects at Level 3** Although few in number, Māori students at Nga Tawa Diocesan School experience academic success at the same level as their peers. Over the last three

years the school has supported learning in STEM subjects by shifting to a more interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning in mathematics and science.

The school has identified that the number of Māori girls attending the school is increasing. In response they have added a focus on mātauranga Māori in school-wide professional development and increased the level of engagement with Ngāti Apa, the local iwi.

**Special assessment conditions entitlements managed effectively** Students with special assessment conditions are monitored proactively by all staff to ensure that their entitlements are provided for all assessments. The entitlement, and any other strategies being used to support their learning, is shared in staff meetings, and documented. Teachers review the provision and effectiveness of the entitlement in their subject. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator checks with students to confirm that access to entitlements is provided and continues to meet their needs.

**Digital assessment supported and prioritised** The school has prioritised digital assessment as best practice for its students. They have improved their systems based on the feedback provided by N4L to ensure that they can provide a high functioning and well-managed digital external assessment experience for their students. This complements the digital assessment which is expected practice for internal assessment.

#### **No action required**

No issues with the school's management of assessment for national qualifications were identified during this review.

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

*Evidence for internal and external moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2021 6.4b)*

### **Nga Tawa Diocesan School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- documenting the steps staff are required to take to strategically select a sample of student work at the grade boundaries for verification
- using subject specialists, sourced from within and outside the school, to verify grades awarded on a purposefully selected sample of student work
- recording verification discussion outcomes for the purpose of monitoring and improving assessment practice
- having teachers document the process using an *Internal Assessment Process Confirmation Sheet* to provide assurance that all steps are complete prior to results being reported to NZQA
- retaining benchmarked samples of student work which support future grading decisions.

### **Nga Tawa Diocesan School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored physically or digitally.

**Internal moderation processes ensure credible results are reported** The school has developed a robust system for monitoring and reviewing internal moderation processes. The Principal's Nominee monitors that all staff understand and complete the expected processes prior to the reporting of results. In addition to this, Heads of Departments provide senior leaders with a quality assurance review of task development, critiquing, marking, sample selection and verification for all standards to the Principal's Nominee and senior leaders. The assurance document forms part of annual review where processes are checked for consistency across departments and outcomes are assessed against external moderation feedback. Any required action plan is agreed, followed up and documented.

### **No action required**

No issues with the school's internal and external moderation were identified during this review.

## 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)*

### **Nga Tawa Diocesan School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- giving students online access to their entries and results so they can monitor their progress independently
- identifying appropriate pathways for students that include acceleration and extension options and New Zealand Scholarship
- identifying students who require additional tuition for numeracy and literacy
- analysing student results to ensure that courses are planned thoughtfully for the incoming cohort
- reporting annually to the Principal and Board of Trustees to inform and review strategic planning.

### **Nga Tawa Diocesan School reports accurate achievement data by:**

- submitting regular data files, and by checking for and correcting errors
- ensuring results are supplied for all entries or withdrawing student entries where no adequate assessment opportunity occurred
- ensuring that students use their NZQA login to check entries and results.

**Academic mentoring supports high quality outcomes for students** Teachers ensure that progress and attainment data are reviewed alongside student goals. Through regular academic mentoring sessions in small groups and with individual students, teachers at Nga Tawa Diocesan School support students to meet their assessment goals. The sessions help to provide students with confidence that they are on track, or for teachers to support them where needed. The success of this mentoring can be measured by the attainment of qualifications and awards achieved by the students.

### **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))*

### **Nga Tawa Diocesan School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- inducting teachers new to the school, so that they clearly understand the expected assessment procedures
- reviewing and updating communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current
- keeping parents up to date with assessment information through a variety of written media and digital channels including a school app for mobile devices.

### **Nga Tawa Diocesan School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes at regular professional development sessions lead by the Principal's Nominee
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to all staff through regular sessions run by the Principal's Nominee and providing access to supporting documentation
- providing students with easy access to key information in physical and digital form and supporting this in regular mentoring sessions.

**Comprehensive annual departmental audits support consistent teacher understanding of assessment and moderation practice** The school uses an effective internal review tool to both check on assessment procedures and share good practice between departments. Each department has an annual audit conducted on rotation by senior leadership and a fellow department leader. The audit is thoroughly documented and covers all aspects of assessment practice, including moderation outcomes, review of data and course planning. All staff spoke highly of this process, confirming that it led to consistent, high-quality practice across the school.

**Students confidently describe NCEA requirements** Students at the school know the requirements of the NCEA. Those interviewed for the review were articulate in describing how their courses contributed to their pathway planning, and how the assessment processes such as managing authenticity, deadlines, and resubmissions worked and affected them.

### **No action required**

No issues with the way in which the school maintained the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicated them to staff, students and families were identified during this review.