

Managing National Assessment Report

Feilding High School

June 2017

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Feilding 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 2017* (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
- *National Qualifications Framework Handbook for Students and their Parents/Caregivers, Feilding High School, 2017*
- *Year 11, Year 12, Year 13 Course Information, Year 12 and 13 Semester Course Information, 2017*
- *National Qualifications Framework Staff Procedures Handbook Feilding High School, 2017*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Assistant Principal – Assessment and Reporting Manager, Principal’s Nominee, three students and Heads of Faculty/ Department/ Teacher-in-Charge for Chemistry, Mathematics, Media Studies, Performance Technology, Physical Education and Health, and Social Science.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal – Assessment and Reporting Manager, 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

Feilding High School College

27 June 2017

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 issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within four years.

What the school is doing well

Feilding High School has an effective culture of self-review. There is shared understanding and responsibility for assessment practice. This robust approach ensures the credibility of assessment and utilises the flexibility of the NCEA assessment model to meet student needs.

The school has developed flexible assessment programmes that maximise opportunities for success and meet the needs of their students. Teachers described a range of approaches used to individualise and gather evidence of students' achievement for assessment. To allow students to present their best evidence, where applicable students are assessed when ready. The review indicated that assessment practices of teachers interviewed are robust and consistent.

Internal moderation practices ensure that results are credible before they are reported. Responses to external moderation outcomes are documented and action plans developed when issues are identified, with their completion monitored by senior management.

Self-review is informed by data analysis and interpretation. Teachers annually reflect on course design, to meet the needs of a diverse range of students. Student entries and the reporting of results are complete and accurate. Student progress is monitored and tracked effectively to identify students at risk of not achieving a qualification, and to ensure students are achieving and meeting personal assessment goals. Literacy and numeracy are actively targeted to ensure qualifications can be attained.

Effective communication has allowed teachers to take ownership of assessment processes and practices in the school. Discussion on assessment matters facilitates the self-review, resolution of issues and implementation of changes to improve assessment practices, and school-wide understanding and consistency of practice. Digital platforms are regularly used to make information current and accessible.

Areas for improvement

The monitoring of the internal moderation processes could be further strengthened by documenting the reconciliation of internal moderation with actual practice, to assure senior management that all results reported to NZQA are quality assured.

Agreed action

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

- reconcile internal moderation documentation with actual practice
- provide consistent information in course outlines by ensuring teachers follow the guidelines in the staff handbook.

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11 August 2017

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FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

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

External review

Evidence found that external review actions have been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3v)

No Action Items from 27 March 2013 Managing National Assessment Report

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has a high external moderation agreement rate. Responses to external moderation are documented for all faculties on a common template. Where issues are identified, teachers reflect on the moderator's feedback, and an action plan is devised in consultation with the Manager of Assessment and Reporting. The completion of the agreed action is actively monitored and signed off by the Manager.

The Manager sets high expectations for all faculties to respond to issues identified by moderators and to ensure all requested material is submitted. This thorough process has facilitated the provision of appropriate support to improve practice including the provision of professional development. Heads of Faculty are required to modify assessment materials as required by the moderator. Teachers are encouraged to appeal if this avenue is considered appropriate. Senior management are kept apprised of external moderation outcomes during the faculty review.

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)

Embedded in the school's philosophy of continuous improvement is the development of enhanced and effective assessment practice to enable students to demonstrate their academic potential. The school has an effective culture of internal self-review to ensure credible assessment practices and fully utilise the flexibility of the NCEA assessment model to meet the changing needs, abilities and expectations of students. Robust quality assurance has strengthened the effectiveness of school-wide assessment practice in response to identified issues, and is valued for its professional learning and improvement in capacity.

As a consequence of the self-review processes, a number of learning and assessment strategies have been introduced to improve current practice and enhance positive achievement outcomes for students. The school has established credit limits for courses and plans to continue this focus on the quality of achievement rather than the quantity of credits students can gain, thereby potentially managing student and teacher workloads.

The school is actively investigating the nature and structure of curriculum delivery to reflect on how the diverse needs of its students can best be met, including opportunities offered by changes to curriculum subjects, the number and range of options offered, semester and vocational courses, and timetable restructuring.

A model of support to optimise student achievement is evident across all levels of the school. Comprehensive evidence based tracking is used to monitor student achievement progress and implement effective interventions. Academic coaching and mentoring is provided by Group and ACT teachers. Student voice is used to inform course design, allowing teachers to develop programmes that motivate students. School-wide strategies for literacy and numeracy are developed, trialled and shared across the staff. There are also examples of this support beyond the classroom. The tuakana – teina relationship is developed with senior Outdoor Education students mentoring younger peers, and university students mentoring Māori students in the fields of science. Expertise from outside the school is sought to support initiatives, as appropriate, such as in boys' achievement.

School assessment practices are increasingly moving into the digital space, to support and enhance student learning, independence and engagement. There is increased use of digital tools for learning across the school, and for gathering evidence for assessment, to reflect the range of student strengths. Teachers are encouraged to undertake digital assessment, including online marking and digital submission of student work for external moderation, and involvement in digital trial examinations. Digitising documentation has improved accessibility for all stakeholders and enables material to be current. These developments further enhance consistent assessment practice school-wide.

The Assistant Principal, with responsibility for assessment, and the Principal's Nominee collaboratively and effectively lead assessment practice and support student success at Feilding High School. This collaborative leadership allows thorough knowledge of school practice, the capacity to respond effectively to resolving issues, and ensures quality practice is embedded and sustained. Collectively these two staff foster discussion on NCEA issues and lead a robust assessment review process. Fairness to all students, transparency of assessment practice, and student and staff assistance are promoted.

These initiatives indicate that the school has the capacity to respond effectively to reviewing, improving and embedding effective NCEA practices to address student well-being and ensure student achievement. Robust discussion on best assessment practice, strong leadership and close monitoring of individual student progress fosters school-wide ownership and consistency of effective NCEA assessment practice, and pro-actively contributes to meeting student needs.

No action required

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews 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 found that assessment practice is meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6 I & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 5.5)

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

- providing differentiated assessment programmes within courses and across classes
- scaffolding and contextualising learning and assessment tasks and using milestones checks and templates, to make tasks more manageable and better engage student interest
- identifying and supporting students at risk of not achieving or meeting the literacy or numeracy requirements of NCEA and University Entrance by providing targeted support, including offering additional assessment opportunities
- offering extension opportunities for Year 10 students through NCEA assessments, and supporting New Zealand Scholarship candidates, as appropriate
- supporting teachers to collect a range of evidence of achievement, particularly through the use of digital technology and naturally occurring evidence
- where appropriate, assessing students when they are ready
- extending assessment opportunities for students by engaging with external providers
- collecting school-based data to support applications for students identified as needing special assessment conditions, and providing appropriate support
- providing support through subject tutorials and an after-school homework club.

Feilding High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- using a range of strategies to ensure that student work is authentic
- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on late and missed work, extensions, resubmissions, and further assessment opportunities
- managing student appeals of assessment decisions and breaches of assessment rules
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have not submitted work
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence for derived and emergency grades
- efficiently managing NZQA external examinations
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Using digital tools to gather evidence for assessment opportunities Teachers are increasingly collecting a range of evidence of achievement through the use of digital tools. Using digital tools supports students to present their best evidence, including the opportunity to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information. Robust discussion on digital assessment has resulted in the school entering for digital trial examinations at Level 1 in a number of subjects. The school's approach illustrates its effectiveness to respond to changes in student learning needs and review practices accordingly, to enhance opportunities for success.

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 found that internal and external moderation are ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 6.4b)

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

- ensuring assessment activities are appropriate for the standard by having modified or new assessments critiqued by another teacher prior to use
- using subject specialists, within and outside the school, to verify the grades awarded on a purposefully selected sample of student work
- requiring Heads of Faculty to ensure internal moderation is completed and documented for all standards assessed in their faculty prior to reporting results to NZQA
- thoroughly reviewing departmental moderation processes during the faculty review cycle
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions.

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

- annually checking that assessment materials and student work are stored and readily available if selected for external moderation
- valuing external moderation feedback for the clarification of grade boundaries, assistance with understanding of the standard and to confirm the robustness of the school's internal moderation
- discussing external moderation feedback with teachers, documenting actions and monitoring this is completed
- actively encouraging future digital submission of student work.

Documenting the audit of internal moderation processes While the school has robust internal moderation processes, adding a final step of documenting the outcomes of the annual audit of internal moderation practices will provide senior management with full confidence that all reported results are quality assured. Currently, Heads of Faculty reconcile internal moderation cover sheets with student work for a random sample of standards for each department within their faculty. Faculty leaders are able to target areas of concern, thereby ensuring school-wide consistent practice. Each faculty's NCEA internal moderation assessment procedures are also reviewed on a five-year learning area review cycle.

Random selection requirements meet The school has recently adopted the student management system to randomly select student work for external moderation, to preserve the validity of the results and to meet NZQA requirements. Some teachers acknowledged that a cross section of student work had previously been intentionally selected to provide confirmation of moderator's grade decisions.

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:

- reconcile internal moderation documentation with actual practice.

How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

Evidence found that data management and use supports student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)

Feilding High School effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - identifying Year 9 and 10 students who need additional literacy and numeracy support to access Level 1 when in Year 11
 - identifying students at risk of not achieving an NCEA qualification and providing appropriate support
 - using NZQA statistical reports and analysing results comparatively and longitudinally to inform decisions about future course content and design
 - annually reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA achievement, to inform strategic goals and actions
 - celebrating student achievement through student awards and recognition.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - ensuring all students attest that their entries and results have been entered correctly
 - actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the student portal on the student management system, the NZQA learner login and NCEA app
 - using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data errors
 - ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn, as appropriate
 - checking external entries to ensure a low number of late entries for external examinations
 - annually reconciling reported results from external providers with memorandum of understanding.

Academic counselling and support to improve achievement outcomes The school supports all NCEA students through academic counselling and interventions, if required. Students are assigned to a vertical Group, with a Group and ACT programme teacher, who work collaboratively to effectively coach and mentor each student towards positive achievement outcomes. Current NCEA tracking information is used for targeted conversations about learning goals and progress towards completing qualifications. Students have an opportunity to share their feedback about learning and assessment programmes.

Identified “at risk students” are supported with targeted interventions, including personalised assessment programmes. Scholarship candidates are tutored during Group time. Study skills and strategies to manage well-being are discussed with all NCEA students. Caregivers are also involved in this process through the regular reporting of student progress to them.

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 found that school communication ensures understanding about assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7iib)

Feilding High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- annually reviewing staff and student handbooks to maintain current best practice and ensure consistency of practice school-wide
- ensuring students receive assessment information for all courses they undertake
- regularly communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and their families using a range of methods and media
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing online access to the information held on the school's student management system
- widely distributing information on financial assistance to cover all students who are eligible
- supporting new teachers to the school to understand school assessment policy and procedures through an induction programme
- ensuring student work and results are stored when staff leave the school.

Feilding High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- pro-actively informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- improving parental understanding of NCEA and assessment procedures through targeted evening meetings.

Clear communication of assessment practice Effective communication has enabled shared ownership of assessment systems at all levels of the school's operation. Robust discussion and sharing of ideas on NCEA assessment procedures and processes ensures school-wide understanding. Pro-active use of digital, face-to-face and written communication opportunities ensure assessment information is accessible and understood.

Communication is annually reviewed and is digitalised on the online learning management system and website, allowing easier access to regularly updated information. Presenting Year 10 NCEA information evenings has recently resulted in increased engagement and positive feedback from the parental community.

Discussion with students interviewed for the review identified a thorough knowledge of what is needed to gain a qualification and school assessment procedures.

Consistent assessment information in course outlines As discussed with senior management, all course outlines must contain the information stated as required in the *Staff Procedures Handbook*, to align documentation with practice. Some course outlines need to be updated to include literacy, numeracy, University Entrance, and assessment information outlined in the handbook checklist. Currently qualification information is clearly documented in course information booklets.

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:

- provide consistent information in course outlines by ensuring teachers follow the guidelines in the staff handbook.