

Managing National Assessment Report

Taradale High School

May 2024

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Taradale High School

8-9 May 2024

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is effectively meeting the requirements of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022.

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.

As a school with highly effective assessment systems and practices for national qualifications, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three to five years.

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2023.

Actions and considerations

Agreed actions

The school agreed that the following action will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications:

Action	Timeframe
Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results	
Strengthen monitoring of internal moderation with more robust checks on the critiquing and verification steps, as outlined in this report.	Ongoing

For consideration

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

- reviewing reporting protocols in Memoranda of Understanding with all external providers to ensure results can be reported to NZQA in a timely manner.

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29 May 2024

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External and internal review

External review

Evidence of external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Items from 16 August 2019 Managing National Assessment Report

There were two agreed actions in the last Managing National Assessment review. These have been effectively resolved by:

- ensuring that all required follow-up actions from External Moderation are documented and completed, and
- ensuring the staff handbook is regularly updated to clarify the follow up process and ensure that schoolwide practice is consistent, complete and compliant.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes Since the last Managing National Assessment (M.N.A.) review, the school has greatly strengthened external moderation follow up by requiring outcomes to be reported by Heads of Department (H.O.D.s) to their respective line managers at fortnightly meetings. Outcomes and Action Plans are shared, discussed and evaluated, then reported to the Principal and Board of Trustees each academic year. The school's external moderation follow up is robust and valued for its professional learning component.

Since 2018, the school's quality assurance processes and procedures have delivered generally good, albeit moderately declining assessment quality with a pattern of longitudinal inconsistency in a few subject areas. Notwithstanding the influence of external factors on staffing in the affected subject areas, their external moderation reports commonly point to the need for assessors, and verifiers, to access more of the assessor supports available to them through:

- NZQA's learning management platform, Pūtake, and
- the clarifications and National Moderators' reports, and
- the exemplars published on the relevant subject resources page of the NZQA website.

More robust pre-moderation critiquing steps will improve the likelihood that results reported are accurate and consistent with the listed standard.

The next step for the Principal's Nominee is to strengthen her monitoring of internal moderation, in particular, the critiquing and verification steps as outlined in the Internal Moderation section of this report. She plans to have the line manager responsible for each subject area conduct an annual department audit, so that documentation can be reconciled with actual practice. This closer monitoring will help ensure that critiquing and verification errors are minimised and thereby strengthen assessor grade judgements.

One Head of Department shared the robust measures they take with their staff to ensure that each standard is adequately critiqued prior to teaching it to ensure all their staff have a consistent understanding of the standard and its grade boundaries. The school has taken steps to ensure that this good practice has been shared with other HODs to improve consistency across all subject areas. Teachers who are the sole subject expert in the school must ensure that their external verifiers have access

to the same pre-moderation materials as themselves to inform their understanding of the standard.

Quality assurance check of the examination centre As a result of the 2022 Examination Centre quality assurance check, the school was found to be fully compliant.

Internal review

Evidence of 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)

Taradale High School's self-review processes are interactive and cyclic with a clear focus on continuous improvement that ensures assessment best practice is both sustainable and responsive. The school is using its own processes of self-review based on data analysis and staff/student voice to build teacher capability and implement changes that will continue to improve assessment outcomes for all students. There is a strategic alignment between purpose and action that continues to anticipate, plan and review assessment systems and practice resulting in sustained high achievement in the delivery of the NCEA qualification.

Since the last MNA review, a change in school leadership has been the catalyst for a whole school review bringing significant changes to the leadership structure and a reimagining of the school's vision, values and strategic direction.

The starting point for the review was to update the school's former values so that they more accurately represented how the current staff, students and community view themselves. A series of workshops presented visions of the future world that the students are stepping into and invited families to consider what knowledge, skills, qualifications and opportunities their young people would need moving into a world of work so dissimilar from their own experience. In addition, the survey tool *Ask Your Team* was utilised to elicit the voice of staff, students and the community and to pinpoint how well the school was doing in key strategic areas and to target areas where it could improve. The school had access to high quality data through the process enabling it to build a clear roadmap for the future captured in a concise, cohesive strategic plan with specific, measurable and actionable targets for improving achievement outcomes for all students.

Distributed leadership in a partnership approach The school's review brought about a revised structure within the Senior Leadership Team (S.L.T.) ensuring that assessment practice is credible and more consistent across the whole school. Each of the four Deputy Principals has oversight of a group of departments. This new model of distributed leadership and shared ownership of NZQA's monitoring requirements, ensures improved understanding of schoolwide assessment practice and a more sustainable model for maintaining effective quality assurance during periods of staff turnover.

The HODs meet with their respective line managers every fortnight. As experienced former Heads of Department, line managers play a vital coaching and mentoring role. Feedback from these meetings is shared twice weekly with the rest of the senior leadership team ensuring any issues are quickly resolved. HODs work in partnership with their line managers to review outcomes and actions arising from external moderation and co-construct annual department reviews. At the end of the academic year, each HOD meets with the Principal to discuss departmental progress, targets and next steps. Consequently, the Principal is fully abreast of each department's

strengths, weaknesses and challenges before they present their annual reports to the Board of Trustees.

Strong support for vocational pathways The school effectively supports the diverse needs of all students. Approximately 30 percent of leavers are identified as university bound. Consequently, the majority of students at Taradale High School transition from school to employment, or further vocational training. The school has the highest number of students from Hawkes Bay enrolled in trades courses through the Eastern Institute of Technology (E.I.T) and enables students from Year 11 to attend E.I.T where vocational/trades training is the pathway that best meets their abilities and aspirations. Students who lose teaching and learning time to attend E.I.T. or other vocational training opportunities are supported on their return to school by having access to all their classwork stored in Teams and having study periods where they can catch up their work. The school assists students yet to complete their qualifications at year end during the examination period.

Creating a more connected school community The appointment of a new Tumuaki Tuarua (Deputy Principal) has built the confidence of senior leaders to ensure that mātauranga Māori principles and tikanga are incorporated appropriately and effectively into teaching, learning and assessment practice, as well as fostering a stronger sense of belonging for Māori students and connectedness with whānau, hapū and iwi. The school aims to have its four new values: Manaakitanga (Respect), Takakawe (Strive), Waihangā (Create) and Huritao (Reflect) firmly embedded in all key transactions between teachers, students and the community. The school views greater connectedness as a necessary prerequisite to meeting its achievement, engagement and attendance targets.

Over the past five years, the school has experienced serious disruption to teaching, learning and assessment as a result of the both the COVID-19 pandemic and more recently, the impact of Cyclone Gabrielle on teachers, students and their families. However, the school's achievement outcomes have remained steady across all levels and have been consistently higher than those of comparable schools and schools nationally for most of the past five years.

Credible assessment practice to meet student needs

Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024)

Authenticity effectively monitored The school is vigilant in its efforts to preserve the credibility of the NCEA qualification and the academic integrity of its students' work. In the first term of the current year, teachers detected fifteen cases of alleged inauthentic work, mostly due to the use or misuse of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.). Following investigation, six breaches were upheld and a Not Achieved grade was awarded.

The school has been an early adopter of digital technologies and systems. As soon as ChatGPT emerged in 2023, the school anticipated and implemented changes to its authenticity policy and procedures to manage the ongoing challenge the advent of AI presents. Appendix 1 to the staff handbook includes a carefully crafted authenticity declaration laying out expectations and clarifying steps teachers may use to confirm the authenticity of student work. Consequences for submitting inauthentic work are a Not Achieved grade and a letter is sent home explaining the steps taken in the investigation, the reasons for the breach being upheld and an explanation of the appeal process available to the student.

Aiding in the detection of inauthentic work, the school uses the plagiarism checker Turnitin, which acts as an effective deterrent. In addition, milestone checks are routinely used for most assessment events and mandatory signed milestone checks are required for portfolio work gathered over-time. The students interviewed reported that many of their teachers collect benchmark samples of authentic student work to use for verification, if and when a breach is alleged.

Review Memoranda of Understanding (M.O.U.) The school engages with a high number of external providers to extend the number and type of learning opportunities and assessment it is able to offer. At the end of the year, some providers send their results to the school and stipulate they cannot be reported until the school receives them on letterhead. In 2023, this requirement led to a delay reporting results for some leavers. The Principal's Nominee has undertaken to review reporting protocols in M.O.U.s where this type of practice could impact the award of a qualification. If the emails conveying results from these providers were copied to the Principal's Nominee at year end, this could help avoid an unnecessary delay in reporting.

Strong support for students with priority needs Over 150 students have access to Special Assessment Conditions at Taradale High School. In the past there has been strong reliance on the evidence of independent reviewers, but the school is increasingly utilising school-based evidence and ensuring that this evidence is documented and verifiable in the event a student transfers.

In 2023, the whole Year 10 cohort sat the Literacy/Numeracy C.A.A.s to test how well their readiness matched the school's assessment and to give students practice using the digital platform. In 2024, a different approach is being used to avoid failure fatigue for those students in the bottom quartile who have not yet demonstrated they are ready to be assessed.

In 2024, the e-asTTle diagnostic tests will be used to identify students' readiness and Year 10 students will sit the C.A.A.s in the second assessment opportunity later in the year. The school is hoping to improve the percentage of Year 10 students gaining the writing literacy standard by being more selective with entries and by employing explicit literacy strategies across all subjects in the run up to the assessment event.

The acting Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (S.E.N.C.O) is working with senior leaders and HODs to design literacy interventions for students for whom the literacy Common Assessment Activities (C.A.A.s) present a real and insurmountable barrier to gaining a NCEA.

The school is well-regarded locally for how effectively it meets the needs of students requiring learning support. At Year 11 and 12, a unit standard pathway course for priority learners supports students to gain their NCEA Co-requisite and/or transition successfully into employment.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024)

Strengthen internal moderation critiquing and verification checks Since the last M.N.A review, the school has clarified and streamlined the internal moderation

process. The end-to-end process has been managed and monitored online creating greater visibility and control of the process for the senior leadership team. Results are not sent to NZQA until the internal moderation process has been completed and checked to ensure it is compliant and complete.

Evidence of robust critiquing by one department was shared during the review. This department uses an inhouse checklist and requires any standard being assessed to create modified tasks where required and to gather the latest exemplars, clarifications and other relevant documentation and share these with assessors and verifiers before the standard is assessed. This pre-moderation documentation is then stored securely until the standard is assessed again.

Weak verification is another reason the school's external moderation outcomes may not be consistent with those of NZQA moderators. If a particular verifier has been associated with a pattern of inconsistency, the department should consider a change of verifier and ensure the new verifier is a subject expert with recent, successful experience with the standard. Where the verification has been carried out internally and patterns of inconsistency have not been resolved, the department should consider using an external verifier to avoid insularity.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

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

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are culturally appropriate focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations
- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers to offer courses the school is unable to offer
- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so students can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement
- assessing students when they are ready
- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet student needs
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support
- providing expanding opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- identifying and providing targeted support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals
- implementing strategies to provide opportunities to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Taradale High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed or late assessment
- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules
- monitoring the authenticity of student work using a range of strategies
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have submitted no work
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

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

- using subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a strategic selection of a sufficient sample of student work
- using grade verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes
- monitoring and documenting completed internal moderation processes to ensure only quality assured results are reported to NZQA.

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

- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- selecting sufficient samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes and providing support for assessors where appropriate
- monitoring and documenting actions taken to address external moderation feedback
- using external moderation outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation processes.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

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

- monitoring and tracking student progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure these allow students to meet their assessment goals, and inform changes to courses and standards offered
- gathering student voice to evaluate courses and assessment workloads to inform changes to programmes, contexts, and standards
- reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Taradale High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date data
- checking Key Indicators and NZQA reports to identify and resolve any errors
- conducting student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year
- ensuring low levels of late external entries, and internal entries with no results

- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding
- seeking NZQA approval through a subcontracting agreement to engage with a non-consented provider to deliver specific standards.

Effective communication to inform staff, and students and their families about assessment

Taradale High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- keeping assessment-related communications current and accurate, and reviewing communications to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- ensuring students receive outlines for courses they undertake
- supporting students to monitor their achievement
- discussing assessment policy and procedure with staff, and providing updates of NCEA information throughout the year
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing opportunities for parents to discuss their children's NCEA goals, progress, and achievement
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction programme to understand school and NZQA assessment processes
- celebrating students' success.

Taradale High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- communicating assessment information, such as holding NCEA information evenings for parents and NCEA assemblies for students
- informing students about suitable learning pathways
- supporting students to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Taradale 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.

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 effectively meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022* (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 *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024*.

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- identifying the effectiveness of the school's review processes, assessment practice and quality assurance
- 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's consideration 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 five 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:

- a range of course outline and assessment related policies
- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *Taradale High School Strategic Plan and 2024 Annual Plan*
- *THS Senior School Assessment Procedures 2024 (Staff Handbook)*
- *THS Student Survival Guide 2024 (Student Handbook)*.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Teaching and Learning
- Heads of Department for:
 - Digital Technology
 - English
 - Humanities
 - Nutrition and Hospitality
 - Performing Arts
 - Science
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Principal's Nominee and two Deputy Principals 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.