

Managing National Assessment Report

Taradale High School

July 2019

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.

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 2019* (Assessment Rules).

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

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

What this review includes

The review has three components:

- The annual external moderation of the school's internal assessment.
- A check on specific aspects of assessment systems on an annual basis.
- A check on 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
- *Taradale High School Assessment Policy 2016*
- *Taradale High School Charter and Annual 2019*
- *Taradale High School NCEA Assessment Procedures 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *Taradale High School: NCEA Internal Assessment Procedure* (flowchart)
- *Taradale High School NCEA Student Survival Guide 2019*
- *Taradale High School Subject Selection booklets* Years 11, 12 and 13 2019
- a sample of course assessment statements for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee/Deputy Principal
- the Assistant Principal
- Heads of Department for:
 - Food
 - Humanities
 - Mathematics
 - Music and Drama
 - Physical Education
 - Science
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal and Assistant Principal 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

Taradale High School

3 July 2019

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.

At the request of NZQA, and with the school's agreement, this review was rescheduled from 2018.

What the school is doing well

Taradale High School is committed to a continuous process of self-review in the pursuit of excellence. For the past five years, it has maintained rates of attainment above that of comparable schools. The school's mission is to nurture individual potential and it aims to be the school of choice for all young people in the local area.

In line with its strategic focus on raising Māori attainment, a support network of form teachers, deans, pastoral care specialists and mentors has improved outcomes for Māori through the implementation of culturally responsive training and practice. In 2017, the disparity between Māori and European attainment at Level 1 and 2 was effectively removed for the first time.

As the school's demographic changes, the Senior Leadership Team is leading change to assessment-related practice in response to demand for more relevant pathways. Reporting on student progress has improved through wider analysis of data, and tracking has improved through the use of a new digital data management tool. Staff use data to identify and intervene with students at risk of not achieving a qualification.

Taradale High School responds effectively to meet its twin demands for academic excellence, alongside growing demand for more relevant vocational courses and pathways in Years 12 and 13. Expectations for students to achieve are reflected in the school's high attainment rates in NCEA and Scholarship and the enrichment and extension opportunities offered. Assessment is differentiated in some subjects and includes personalisation in others to meet student need. External providers offer courses and standards the school does not have the capacity to deliver. Equitable access to qualifications is enhanced through using school evidence, as well as Level C assessor reports, in support of applications for Special Assessment Conditions for students with possible specific learning disorders.

Internal moderation completion is monitored using a digital data management tool which provides confirmation that all standards have been subject to a quality assurance process. This change has created greater consistency and confidence that credible assessment results are being reported to NZQA.

Data management and use effectively supports student achievement outcomes and ensures the timely reporting of results to NZQA. Achievement data is analysed to review department practice and courses, set strategic direction and evaluate the effectiveness of changes to assessment for qualifications.

The school has a range of communications that allow staff, students and their families to gain a common understanding of NCEA and school assessment procedures.

Areas for improvement

On the day of the review, there was a lack of consistency and clarity around how issues identified through external moderation are managed and monitored. Although some departments shared their responses to external moderation, it was unclear who managed the process and how management would know, how and when or how effectively, the intervention was completed. Following the review, clarifications were made regarding the follow up process, providing further detail around the monitoring process. To support greater transparency for staff, the new information should be included in the staff handbook.

Agreed action

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

- ensure there is a clear, consistent process for monitoring teachers' responses to external moderation showing when interventions have been completed
- update the staff handbook to reflect the school's required response to external moderation and to clarify how the process is monitored and by whom.

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16 August 2019

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FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

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

External review

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

Action Items from 5-6 May 2015 Managing National Assessment Report The school has addressed the four agreed actions from the 2016 review by:

- developing a consistent process for internal moderation and utilising a digital data management tool to monitor the completion of internal moderation coversheets
- reviewing purposeful selection for the verification process
- ensuring all entries have a reported result prior to the end-of-year data submission
- ensuring the staff and student guides are updated annually.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has effective procedures for internal moderation as evidenced by the school's consistently high agreement rate over the past five years. However, the process for following up and documenting a response to external moderation lacked clarity and consistency on the day of the review. It was unclear who managed this process or how it was managed. Following the review, clarification was provided citing who must complete a *Response to External Moderation Report*, who writes the action plans required and who monitors and/or documents the completion and effectiveness of any interventions.

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)

A key strategic goal for the school is to transform the learning culture at Taradale High School to one where Māori succeed as Māori. Historically, NCEA attainment rates for Māori have been below those of European students. The school has focused on embedding culturally responsive practice through targeted professional development. In 2017, the disparity between Maori and European attainment at Level 1 and 2 was effectively removed for the first time.

There has been a notable cultural shift and Māori students in the school increasingly feel proud to be Māori. Data is used to track progress for Māori. Extra support has been added through the work of the Māori Dean and mentors for "at risk" Māori students. Assessment is based on contexts which are more authentic for Māori students and small, co-operative groups improve engagement and assessment outcomes for the target group.

Strengthening Māori and Pacific People’s engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects In line with NZQA’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) targets for improving equity for Māori and Pacific students, STEM departments include specific targets for improving attainment and participation for Māori and Pacific students in their annual goals. The Digital Technology department is using positive Māori role models as “ambassadors” to boost numbers in this subject, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of more culturally appropriate assessment practices. STEM teacher inquiries are documenting changes to Teaching and Learning pedagogies to evaluate which strategies are having a positive impact. Teachers report positive outcomes and increased engagement for the target group as teaching and assessment become more culturally responsive.

Interventions raise literacy and numeracy skills In response to 35 percent of Year 9 students’ literacy and numeracy levels being below expectation when they enter the school, interventions have been put in place to close the gap before students reach Year 11. This is designed to improve success at Level 1 and to improve achievement rates at Levels 2 and 3. A literacy specialist has been employed to work with the most ‘at risk’ students and address the gaps in their knowledge and skills. The school is gathering data on the effectiveness of this intervention.

Response to changing Year 13 demographic In order to meet the needs of the growing number of students who are not university bound, the school is extending assessment opportunities for students in Year 13 by engaging with external providers and linking courses and standards to vocational pathways. Increasing numbers of Level 2 and 3 students are engaged in Trades Academy courses with the Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT) and the timetable is under review to accommodate changing student demand. Students following a vocational pathway are typically out of school at least one day a week and the school is developing more effective ways to helping these students catch up the work they have missed.

New technologies improve tracking and reporting of student progress In response to positive feedback from parents, the Assistant Principal sends student progress reports twice per term to keep parents and their students abreast of progress towards their qualifications. The new digital data management tool displays data collected on the student, including results and attendance, in a more user-friendly manner.

Each of these actions demonstrate that the school is using data effectively to identify areas for improvement and to measure the effectiveness of the interventions. Taradale High School demonstrates it has the capacity to identify assessment-related issues and where changes are needed, make an appropriate response.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following actions to improve the school’s response to external review. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure there is a clear, consistent process for monitoring teachers’ responses to external moderation showing when interventions have been 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 2019 5.5)

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

- having students 'at risk' of not gaining a qualification attend "summer school" to catch up credits they need to gain their qualification
- tracking the NCEA progress of every senior student and sharing progress with families and whānau twice each term
- using "preliminary deadlines" in some subject areas to give students feedback on how well they have met their assessment criteria prior to the final submission date and thereby removing the need for resubmission
- assessing when ready to minimise the need for further assessment opportunities
- guaranteeing feedback to students no later than 21 days following the submission of internal assessments to inform future work in that subject
- enabling equitable access to qualifications for students requiring special assessment conditions by subsidising costs for reports from approved assessors where necessary, and using school evidence to support applications where possible.

Taradale High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring the authenticity of student work during the assessment and marking process
- managing missed and late assessment, appeals and breaches of the assessment rules
- providing resubmission opportunities in line with NZQA's requirements
- ensuring evidence for derived grades is standard specific and quality assured
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Removing barriers for students who have missed assessments on medical grounds Where a student requests an extension for three or fewer days, a parent can provide a note validating the request, rather than incur the cost of obtaining a medical certificate. This has reduced costs and inconvenience to families and is a pragmatic solution that works well in the school. The Principal's Nominee is the only person able to grant extensions and monitors the process closely to ensure the school's ability to report credible results is not undermined. Extensions for longer than three days are only approved with the provision of a medical certificate obtained from an independent medical professional as per NZQA requirements.

Differentiated assessment opportunities meet demands for academic and vocational pathways Some core academic subjects offer either an internally assessed, or an examination-based course at Levels 1 and 2. Others offer dual pathways, so that students can choose either a practical, or an academic course; for example, Hospitality or Food, and Physical Education or Sport respectively. There are extension and enrichment opportunities which allow high performing students to enrol in multi-level study, including university papers, according to their abilities and interests. Acceleration can occur from any level for students interested in gaining Scholarship.

Credit reduction eases student workload and improves quality outcomes To reduce workload for students and improve achievement outcomes, departments have reduced the number of credits in a course. There is more flexibility for students to limit the number of externally assessed standards they attempt in their examinations. This action enables students more time to focus on gaining Merit and Excellence endorsements.

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 2019 6.4b)

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

- critiquing all assessment materials prior to use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- using subject-specialists from within or outside the school to verify assessor judgements for a sample of student work
- recording all steps of the verification process on the digital data management tool which monitors completion of each *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* for all standards entered in the student management system
- visiting all subject areas at least once a year to check internal moderation processes meet NZQA requirements.

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

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

Internal moderation processes clarified In response to a pattern of variable assessment practice in two subjects, a Head of Department, created the *Internal Assessment Procedure* flowchart to clarify the required steps from internal moderation through to external moderation. The flowchart has been adopted by the whole school to ensure all staff follow the same processes. Monitoring previously done on paper is now efficiently and effectively managed in Microsoft Teams using the new digital data management tool, which records and monitors the completion of Internal Moderation Cover Sheets. This gives the school's Assessment Council an overview of the quality assurance process for which it is responsible, to ensure that robust assessment practice is implemented and maintained.

Focus on reducing workload by considering sufficiency of grade verification requirements Some departments continue to verify grades for eight to ten samples of marked work, despite the fact the Principal's Nominee has reminded them that strategic selection of purposefully selected samples at grade boundaries is a useful strategy to avoid over-verifying and reduce workload pressure. The Heads of Department interviewed are all aware of NZQA's sufficiency requirements and where over-verification occurs, it is done knowingly and willingly. None-the-less, teachers should be reminded to review their practice regularly against NZQA's guidelines, to ensure they are not subjecting themselves to unnecessary workload.

Panel marking enhances consistent grades The usual practice in the school is for departments to panel mark grade boundary guinea pig scripts and use these benchmark exemplars to inform the grading process. This provides assurance to newer staff that their grading is on point. One Head of Department verifies evidence for internal moderation “blind” without the assessor’s grade visible to see how closely the assessor and verifier judgements are aligned. This provides her with the reassurance that assessors are marking with one pair of eyes.

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)*

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

- requiring Heads of Department to analyse NCEA achievement data against school goals and report their findings to the Principal and Board of Trustees
- using achievement data to inform future teaching and assessment programmes and processes
- identifying students in Year 9 at risk of not meeting NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements in Year 11 and providing appropriate support.

Taradale High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring all internal entries are reported with a result or are withdrawn, as appropriate
- using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
- submitting results to NZQA on a regular basis, to provide more timely progress reports for deans and students
- checking entries in externally assessed standards to limit late entries.

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))

Taradale High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- providing all students with a hard copy of the "NCEA Student Survival Guide," in an easy to follow question and answer format
- providing Course Assessment Statements in a consistent format for all courses a student undertakes
- informing all parents and caregivers about NCEA matters and assessment policy and procedures through a variety of channels: the school website, monthly newsletter, school Facebook page and parent portal to the student management system
- ensuring all communication channels are cross referenced and hyperlinked back to sites holding information on assessment for NCEA
- informing all staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year via emails and staff meetings, including the regular Curriculum Leaders' Meeting
- inducting teachers new to the school with a clear understanding of assessment practice in relation to NCEA through the staff handbook, departmental assessment policy documentation and panel marking meetings.

Taradale High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- providing opportunities for staff to discuss changes in assessment best practice, including findings from external review
- ensuring students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification through assemblies, the Form Teacher and deans
- emailing updates on senior student progress towards qualifications twice per term, providing online access to information held on the school's student management system and supporting students to register for their NZQA Learner Login.

Update staff handbook to include required response to external moderation

The staff handbook should include a section describing the steps in preparing for, sending and following up on external moderation. This should clarify for all staff the expected response to external moderation and who has responsibility for completing the Response to External Moderation form, any action plan arising from issues identified in the external moderation reports, as well as indicating who is responsible for monitoring the process and checking that interventions have been completed.

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 to reflect the school's required response to external moderation procedures and to clarify how the process is monitored and by whom.