

Managing National Assessment Report

Tamatea High School

September 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Tamatea 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
- information on *Assessment for Qualifications*
- *Tamatea High School NCEA Annual Statement of Authenticity*
- *Tamatea High School Board of Trustees NZQA Policies and Procedures*
- *Tamatea High School Senior Course Information 2019* (Level 1 to 3 booklets)
- *Tamatea High School NZQF Information for Students 2019* (Student handbook)
- *Tamatea High School NZQF Procedures 2019*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal
- Heads of Department for:
 - Digital Technology
 - English
 - Health
 - Physical Education
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the 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

Tamatea High School

04 September 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

Tamatea High School is a small school with strong links to the local community. The genuine spirit of *whānaungatanga* in the school is empowering and engaging for students, contributing to their desire to succeed. Attainment in NCEA at Levels 1 to 3 is above that of similar schools. However, the primary focus is to support individual pathways and respond to each student's needs. The implementation of Individual Development Plans for every student is pivotal to enabling students to achieve their qualifications goals.

The school's strategic goals are well-aligned to those of the Ahuriri Kāhui Ako. The school's internal review process identified the improvement of foundation literacy and numeracy skills as key to raising "*achievement for all ākonga*," especially at Level 2 and beyond. The newly appointed Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator uses data to identify and track target students whose literacy and numeracy skills are below expected levels to enable these students to participate successfully in NCEA.

The school provides effective wrap around support to keep students on the path to achieve their educational goals by tracking each student's progress at frequent intervals. It has expanded the role of the Whānau Group Teacher to manage and monitor student progress towards identified goals in each student's Individual Development Plan.

Data tracking is regularly shared with all staff in the weekly Professional Learning timeslot. Teachers share successful strategies and staff receive training on how to interpret the Literacy Learning Progressions accurately. The school's data from diagnostic testing shows that the interventions for these students have had a positive impact on accelerating the improvement of literacy and numeracy skills for the target group.

The school provides a broad range of programmes to cater for the varied pathways its students wish to follow. Student engagement in vocational pathways is strong resulting in the percentage gaining a Vocational Pathways Award overtaking that of all other schools in 2018. Teaching practice is culturally responsive and student-centred resulting in highly personalised programmes with flexible timelines to assess students when they are ready.

The Principal's Nominee manages school-wide internal moderation processes with a commitment to ensuring all results reported are credible. External moderation outcomes are addressed by Heads of Department preparing an action plan to resolve issues. Senior management monitors the completion of interventions.

Data analysis and use informs good practice and self-review for teachers, senior management and the Board of Trustees. Procedures to monitor and track NCEA achievement progress for all students are thorough and effective, with early interventions improving student outcomes.

The school has a strong culture of meeting student needs and supporting students to achieve. Individual Development Plan conference days provide a better understanding of NCEA and school assessment procedures for students and their whanau.

Areas for improvement

This review identified that some staff still lack an understanding of purposefully selecting student work around grade boundaries for internal moderation grade verification. Discussions around grade boundaries should be recorded on the internal moderation cover sheet to improve teachers' understanding of the standards they assess, to inform future assessor judgments and to provide evidence of the grade verification process.

Some of the departments interviewed send eight or more samples of student work for verification. They are advised to be more strategic regarding their selection process thereby reducing verifier workload. The staff handbook should be updated accordingly.

Agreed action

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

- ensure all staff select student work around grade boundaries for verification
- focus on reducing workload by considering NZQA's grade verification requirements for sufficiency
- record grade verification discussions to inform future assessor decisions
- update staff handbooks to reflect the practice of strategic selection and purposeful selection of work at grade boundaries for verification.

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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 the 28-29 October 2015 Managing National Assessment Report The school has addressed five of the six agreed actions from the 2015 review by:

- monitoring staff completion of actions planned to address issues identified by external moderation
- developing a plan for a systematic review of the school's assessment and moderation processes
- ensuring staff use subject experts to verify grades awarded
- introducing and documenting a process for the withdrawal of entries from internally assessed standards
- clarifying with staff what constitutes an adequate assessment opportunity
- updating staff and student handbooks as detailed in the report.

The school has addressed the above actions sufficiently. However, more action is needed to strengthen the following:

- verify samples of purposefully selected student work.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school responds to any issues identified through external moderation feedback with the Principal's Nominee requires an action plan within two weeks of receiving the report. Before year end, the Principal's Nominee checks the actions have been implemented and completed.

Since the last review, the school's assessment decisions have been slightly less consistent with NZQA moderators' judgements. However, the Principal's Nominee is working with staff to resolve the issues identified in their external moderation reports. In addition, the school is encouraged to use external verifiers where internal verification produces a pattern of inconsistency.

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)

In 2018, in response to a combination of internal and external influences, Tamatea High School undertook a comprehensive curriculum review to support its commitment to providing appropriate pathways for all students and to meet its mission to “*grow good people for a changing world.*” The school’s clear strategic direction is driven by senior management with a high level of staff ownership and is well-positioned to meet the needs of its local community well into the future.

The focus of the review was to ensure that subjects and courses remain relevant and engaging, and provide every student with a clear pathway to employment or further training. The resulting Tamatea High School Graduate Profile embodies a holistic mix of characteristics that underpin not only academic attainment, but also personal success. They are: Life Readiness, Citizenship, Wellbeing (Hauora), Knowledge and appreciation for Tangata Whenua. Over and above this, the school retains a strategic focus on improving all students’ literacy and numeracy, so they can participate fully in their future world.

The school sought input from students, former and current, and whānau in the school community. Staff and management reviewed project-based learning and cross-curricular approaches in other successful schools. Advisory assistance has been utilised to review the junior curriculum and strengthen programmes for students requiring learning support in Year 11. Staff Professional Learning and Development has a strong focus on building teacher capacity and continues to emphasise culturally responsive practice.

Tamatea High School’s strategic goals are aligned with the Ahuriri Kāhui Ako’s overarching goal of ensuring *aspirational and meaningful student progressions and raised achievement for all ākonga* in the community. Raising writing literacy standards for boys, Māori and Pacific students is in focus with a view to improving the quality of NCEA qualifications, by increasing endorsements and the numbers gaining University Entrance.

Raising student attainment by targeting literacy and numeracy skills Raising the foundation skills of students in Years 9 and 10 is seen as fundamental to enhancing levels of attainment in NCEA Levels 1 to 3. Consequently, the school is placing a strong emphasis on accelerating improvement in numeracy and literacy in Years 9 to 10 and is developing tools and methods to improve consistency in teacher judgments around literacy levels. The new Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is working with teachers to unpack the Literacy Learning Progressions, so they can determine literacy levels accurately, track progress effectively and implement appropriate interventions.

Data drives improved tracking of student progress Senior management uses data effectively to drive change and track progress. There is a clear strategic vision of the improvements required to effect raised achievement for all learners and improve the quality of NCEA qualifications. Data from assessment tools shows most target students in Years 9 and 10 progressed through two to three e-asTTle sub-levels in a year and student feedback shows strong engagement in programmes created to accelerate foundation skills. Teachers track the progress of all priority students and analyse the data to determine next steps. Data on target students’ literacy progressions is routinely shared at weekly PLD sessions providing feedback

and feedforward on the effectiveness of interventions employed. Successful strategies are shared with all staff in this weekly forum.

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 2019 5.5)

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

- establishing vertical whānau groups and appointing a Whānau Group Teacher who provides academic counselling and pastoral care for the 14 students in the group
- differentiating assessment and tailoring assessment opportunities to suit individuals within a course and assessing students when they are ready
- offering highly individualised personal programmes of study in a culturally responsive setting to strengthen opportunities for future vocational and/or academic success
- extending vocational and alternative pathways through Gateway, STAR and the Trades Academy resulting in the number of students gaining Vocational Pathways Awards in 2018 overtaking that of all other schools
- using Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu and the VLN Baylink cluster to deliver courses the school does not have the capacity to offer
- supporting applications for special assessment conditions by using school evidence.

Tamatea High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring the authenticity of student work during the assessment and marking process
- managing missed and late assessments, appeals and breaches of the assessment rules
- providing valid resubmission opportunities
- ensuring evidence for derived grades is standard specific and verified
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Individual Development Plans support student progress Every student at Tamatea High School has an Individual Learning Plan and the student's progress is constantly tracked and monitored to ensure no one "*slips through the cracks.*"

Three-way conferences are held three times a year for students and their whānau to meet with the Whānau Group Teacher to create or review the student's Individual Development Plan. Real time adjustments and interventions are made where necessary to support students' NCEA plans. The conferences and associated hui have strengthened school-whānau partnerships. The school's strong spirit of whanaungatanga contributes to greater success for all students by empowering the learner and enhancing engagement.

Strong wrap-around support enhances student success The academic counselling and tracking carried out by Whānau Group Teachers and other staff in the school, provides strong wrap-around support for all students to reach their qualifications goals. All staff are committed to, and use, achievement data to track the progress of learners in their classes and departments. The size of the school

allows interventions for those 'at risk,' or those with endorsement potential, to be intensively managed on a case-by-case basis. Students receive individual reports each fortnight using a traffic light system to track progress towards their qualifications goals.

Equity for Māori and Pacific students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects The school maintains Science as a compulsory subject at Year 11 and the Science department has a focus on creating contextualised learning opportunities, which are engaging and relevant for Māori and Pacific students.

Senior management has noted lower achievement in STEM subjects at Year 13 for Māori and Pasifika students than for students of other ethnicities. The school has consulted with its community and is confident it provides a full range of pathways that allow all students to engage with local employment opportunities or higher education, as per their Individual Development Plans.

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)

Tamatea 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
- recommending one teacher marks common assessment items for greater consistency
- having the Principal's Nominee collect all the Internal Moderation Cover Sheets and quality assuring the moderation process for each standard before grades are sent to NZQA
- using suitable subject specialists from within or outside the school to verify assessor judgements for a sample of student work
- allowing sole teacher departments using external verifiers a longer turnaround time to complete moderation.

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

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards for inclusion in the moderation plan
- storing and sending samples of student work provided for external moderation digitally
- using a Response to External Moderation form to document and monitor the completion of actions undertaken to address issues identified in external moderation reports
- requesting that standards with low agreement are added to the moderation plan in the following year to ensure that the necessary changes have improved assessor judgements.

Extend good practice across all departments It was evident in this review that some departments have effective systems for managing moderation and purposefully select student work at grade boundaries for grade verification as suggested by NZQA. All staff should follow this good practice, including documenting verification discussions on the Internal Moderation Cover Sheet to inform future judgements.

Focus on reducing workload by considering grade verification requirements for sufficiency Staff require further clarification on NZQA's guidelines for sufficiency as some departments interviewed send more samples of student work for grade verification than NZQA requires to assure assessment is credible. There is no predetermined number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size is best determined using a strategic selection process, where the number of pieces selected will vary according to the depth of assessor experience, feedback from previous external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and the number of students assessed.

If strategic selection is used, it can reduce the workload of verifiers. Where over-verification does occur, it should be done knowingly and willingly for professional learning.

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:

- ensure all staff select student work around grade boundaries for verification
- record verification discussions to inform future assessor decisions.

For consideration

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

- reducing workload by considering NZQA's grade verification requirements for sufficiency.

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)

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

- requiring Heads of Department to complete an annual analysis of NCEA achievement data for the Principal and Board of Trustees measuring performance against department and school strategic goals
- using achievement data to inform teaching and assessment programmes and future strategic goals and actions.
- analysing literacy and numeracy data at regular intervals to monitor progress and determine next steps
- supporting all senior students to register and use their Learner Login.

Tamatea High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting results to NZQA on a regular and timely basis
- using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
- ensuring all internal entries are reported with a result or are withdrawn, as appropriate
- giving teachers two weeks to update the student management system mark books once a student has left the school; after this, entries with no results are removed
- checking mark books once students go on exam leave to remove standards marked “absent” or “not submitted” where these are used solely for reporting to parents
- confirming external examination entries before 01 September to minimise late entries through a physical signoff process by Heads of Department or Teachers-in-Charge
- holding current memoranda of understanding with external providers and reconciling them with 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))

Tamatea High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive course outlines including University Entrance eligibility (where appropriate) and literacy/numeracy status and providing colour coded links to vocational pathways
- communicating assessment policy and procedure for teachers and students in both print and digital formats
- holding three parent-teacher conferences a year to share information on student progress with whānau and strengthen the relationship between home and school
- providing timely reminders of NCEA related information through the monthly school newsletter and the school Facebook page
- reviewing communications each year to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

Tamatea High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- holding information evenings/hui for parents to address matters specific to NCEA achievement and course selection
- holding an assembly for students in Year 11 in March to explain NCEA rules and procedure and give out student handbooks
- holding a combined assembly for Years 12 and 13 at the start of the year to remind students of NCEA rules and procedures
- supporting teachers new to the school by enrolling them in NZQA seminars and providing support through departments and an induction process
- checking staff understanding of NCEA procedures and practice through regular quizzes and reminders at staff meetings
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes.

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 staff handbooks to reflect the practice of strategic selection and purposeful selection of work at grade boundaries for grade verification.