

Managing National Assessment Report

Hutt Valley High School

August 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Hutt Valley 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
- *HVHS: NCEA/NZQA Assessment Policy & Procedures – Staff Information*
- *HVHS: NCEA – Student Information*
- *HVHS Māori Student Achievement Plan*
- *HVHS's Connected Curriculum 2017-2019*
- *2019 Guidelines for Extended Senior Mentor Times*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- the Deputy Principal
- Head of Learning Areas for:
 - English
 - Languages
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Technology
- Head of Department:
 - Geography
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Principal's Nominee, Acting Assistant Principal, and Deputy 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

Hutt Valley High School College

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

What the school is doing well

The Hutt Valley High School motto, Whāia te iti kahurangi (Strive for something of great value), overarches its values and strategic goals. Their pathways goal, "Each person's learning and pathway is successful and purposeful," sets a deliberately student-centred context for review and change.

There is a strong culture of review at the school. Senior Leaders model, encourage and enable substantive review. They use assessment data and student voice to inquire into school processes and courses. Review has led to strengthening of learning support mechanisms at all levels, including for students eligible to use special assessment conditions and academic support and mentoring. Curriculum and Learning Area review leads to the development of new and modified courses. School leaders at all levels are given time and space to review their practice, focus on professional development and provide feedback to senior management about strategic planning.

Flexible assessment programmes are embedded in learning areas throughout the school. Students determine the courses they take and have significant input into their assessment pathway. While there are some differentiated courses in core subjects, individualisation happens in other courses by negotiation between teachers and students.

Internal moderation processes ensure that credible results are reported. Teaching teams led by Heads of Learning Areas ensure that appropriate assessment tasks are used and that verification of student work at grade boundaries occurs with meaningful and useful records of the process kept for future reference.

Data is used throughout the school for reviewing the effectiveness of practice, inquiring into change, for tracking student achievement and planning supportive interventions.

Mentoring of students by deans and mentor teachers, combined with strong support systems, ensures that student assessment needs are met. Meaningful communication between staff, students and whānau ensure that individual student pathways are acknowledged and at the forefront of course and classroom planning. Students are well equipped with knowledge of NCEA and how the school processes work to support them. The school makes extensive use of online resources, including its website, portals to course selection information and access to the student

management system to ensure comprehensive and consistent communication about assessment, achievement and course planning.

Areas for improvement

There are no agreed action items. Some next steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

Kay Wilson
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16 October 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 06 August 2015 Managing National Assessment Report All action items from the 2015 Managing National Assessment review have been addressed. Someone other than the assessor selects student material for external moderation. The school manages internal results to ensure that entries without a result are minimised. The staff handbook has been updated as required.

Response to external moderation outcomes There is a high level of agreement between assessors and NZQA Moderators' judgements. Where there is disagreement, staff respond proactively by developing an action plan with the Head of the Learning Area. The effectiveness of the action plan is evaluated in the Learning Area's annual report. The Senior Leadership team are involved in this process by having regular scheduled meetings between subject and senior leaders where the response is reviewed.

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)

Internal review is embedded practice at all levels at Hutt Valley High School. Senior leaders deliberately prioritise review by modelling it themselves, creating space for teams of teachers to conduct purposeful and strategic reflection and planning. There is a focus on building the capacity of all staff for inquiring into their practice.

The development of a student-centred learning environment is central to review at all levels. This informs evaluation of courses by Heads of Learning Areas and Departments. They have focused on strengthening the capacity of staff to give high priority to student agency about overall pathways and specific learning objectives within courses and classes. This is leading to negotiation about contexts for learning, standards to be assessed against leading to flexibility within courses.

The school has also strengthened learning support by:

- employing an additional SENCO to meet increasing demand, for including school-based applications for special assessment conditions
- developing a Priority Learner Team including the SENCOs, the Head of Supported Learning, the Special Assessment Coordinator and a Literacy Specialist
- providing responsive assistance through a Boost Coordinator who assists students with meeting achievement goals
- scheduling mentoring meetings for all students with their year level deans.

Review of the school's curriculum and timetable has led to the development of new courses and to planned timetable changes for 2020 onwards. These include:

- level 1 and 2 Mathematics being taught in unstreamed multi-level classes
- a new course in the English Learning Area, Te Awakairangi, which focuses on contextualising learning in English to local issues and sustainability concerns
- the Learning Pathways Learning Area, with its own Head of Learning Area, whose focus is on meeting students' needs through a coordinated approach to managing vocational pathways
- plans to ensure that each of the eight learning areas will have equal time coverage in its timetable in order to meet learning needs of the New Zealand Curriculum more equally.

Senior Leaders at Hutt Valley High School value the leadership provided by staff groups. An example of this is the Head of Learning Area working group which has two off-site days annually for professional development, review and planning.

Each learning area completes an NCEA Audit annually - reporting to their Senior Leader and the Principal's Nominee a review of their assessment and internal moderation processes, external moderation outcomes and planned response to issues raised, and an evaluation of their communications and data management processes. This audit provides quality assurance to senior management and contributes to school-wide systems review.

Departments within learning areas conduct their own annual review by reflecting on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. They consider how the department has contributed to the school's strategic objectives, and analyse student feedback and achievement outcomes.

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)

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

- providing appropriate pathways for students that include a wide range of school courses, courses delivered and/or assessed by external providers, and New Zealand Scholarship
- allowing students to negotiate individual assessment plans with their teachers as appropriate
- identifying students eligible for special assessment conditions, making applications which include school-based evidence, and ensuring students are provided with their entitlements
- making appropriate use of Supported Learning programmes
- using milestones and feedback to help students present their best work, manage their deadlines and be assessed when ready
- providing a variety of differentiated courses.

Hutt Valley High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment, including applications for extensions
- ensuring that appropriate evidence required for unexpected event and derived grades is collected and submitted to NZQA
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Flexible study programmes Hutt Valley High School prioritises student agency and parental involvement in course planning. They intentionally develop courses which allow for flexibility in learning and assessment. Students are actively involved in decision making about assessment plans, including contexts for assessment.

The two-year Mathematics programme gives students in Year 11 and 12 the flexibility to manage their own pathway in Mathematics through to Level 2. They begin planning this pathway by considering their own mathematics learning needs including career, cross-curricula and Level 3 Mathematics requirements. This pathway planning leads to decisions about learning and assessment. Classes are multi-level and differentiated in order to accommodate the individual and group learning plans of students. The course is into its second year and the Head of the Learning Area and the school's senior leadership are committed to reviewing the effectiveness of the course and adapting the way it is managed and communicated to ensure its success.

Equity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects at Level 3 The school's Māori Student Achievement Plan (2017-2019) focuses on preparing students for success in Te Ao Māori, for strengthening the cultural competence of its staff, strengthening communication and collaboration between the Board of Trustees and whānau, and on increasing the percentage of Māori students leaving school with NCEA Level 2 and/or a positive pathway. Within this framework Senior Management have noted the lower participation and achievement in STEM

subjects for Māori and Pacific students. From 2020 all Year 9 students will be timetabled for one hour of mandatory Te Reo Māori / Tikanga per week, which the school sees as fundamental to building a stronger achievement base for Māori students.

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)

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- retaining benchmark exemplars of student work for reference when making future assessment judgements.

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

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

Robust internal moderation procedures give confidence in assessor judgements Hutt Valley High School has clearly documented processes for internal moderation that are well followed by staff. Critiquing tasks and verifying student work at grade boundaries are embedded practice. Grade verification discussions are recorded and form the basis for confidence in assessor judgements and benchmarking. Heads of Learning Areas interviewed for this review all actively manage moderation practices within their teams and share best practice with one another in their leadership group.

Some learning areas have begun to reduce workload by the strategic selection of student work for grade verification. The school could encourage the Heads of Learning Areas team to use strategic selection, as it would not compromise the quality of their assurance processes. There is no fixed number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

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)

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

- reviewing courses regularly in order to make changes which improve attainment and teaching and assessment practice
- reporting results to students and families using the online portal to the student management system, so that they can have up-to-date information about attainment and progress
- Learning Areas reporting to the Principal and the Board of Trustees in annual reports which contribute to the development of strategic goals and action plans.

Hutt Valley High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- timely and regular reporting of results to NZQA
- using Key Indicators to identify and correct errors in their data.

Data tracking ensures support targets student need Effective data tracking by the Priority Learner Team enables the identification of students who require additional support. Hutt Valley High School places significant emphasis on meeting students needs through individualised support. The Priority Learner Team leads the provision of the required assistance, including managing the provision of special assessment conditions, classroom learning support, and literacy and numeracy help.

Encourage students to register and use their NZQA login Students interviewed for the review relied on the school's student management system to track their progress. The school is planning to use mentor time to encourage more students to register and use their NZQA Learner Login. This is good practice as students logging on to the NZQA website have access to their record of achievement, can check entries, results and qualifications, apply for reviews and reconsiderations, request certificates, amend their details and analyse their vocational pathways information.

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))

Hutt Valley High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive course outlines and information that explains the pathways available and the choices students have for learning and assessment
- supporting teachers new to the school
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

Hutt Valley High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- ensuring that teachers, students and parents have access to information through a variety of means including face-to-face meetings, mentoring, coaching, and online via the website and portals to pathways and course selection and attainment information
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes including in regular learning area and departmental meetings
- providing extensive online information for students and families so that they understand what they need to achieve in order to gain qualifications.

Mentoring supports effective communication At Hutt Valley High School all students are mentored through their decisions about courses and assessment. There are several systems designed to promote strong relationships and student agency. Deans (who progress through the school with a cohort) meet with every student annually to check they are on track to meeting their learning goals and to coordinate any support they need. The mentor teacher (who progresses through school with their mentor class) provides information on NCEA, credit tracking, goal setting and checking entries. Mentor teachers also ensure that communication with home is effective and timely. The school's "no surprises" policy ensures that interventions are promptly begun with whānau support.

No action required

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