

Managing National Assessment Report

Tapawera Area School

July 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Tapawera Area 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
- *Staff Handbook for Assessment on the National Qualifications Framework, Tapawera Area School 2019*
- *Student Guidelines for Internal Assessment, Tapawera Area School 2019* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Senior School and Teacher in Charge Mathematics
- Teachers in Charge of:
 - Design and Visual Communication and Materials Technology
 - Visual Arts
- 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

Tapawera Area School

24 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.

What the school is doing well

Tapawera Area School is providing assessment opportunities and pathways to meet the aspirations of its students. Robust assessment practices are ensuring that their students' results reported to NZQA are credible.

The school's self-review is effective in identifying areas for improvement and actioning change. Professional learning and teaching-as-inquiry has supported subject teachers to improve student achievement in literacy. The school-wide focus on improving student literacy raised achievement in NCEA Level 1 Literacy in 2018. Processes and procedures have been improved to identify students requiring support in their assessment programmes. As a result, the school has made successful applications to NZQA for students requiring special assessment conditions and are providing students with the support for which they are entitled.

Teachers knowing their students well and offering assessment opportunities to match their interests and abilities is a strength of the school. External providers are used to extend assessment and vocational pathway opportunities. The school's assessment policy and procedures are well managed.

The school has a robust moderation system. Teachers clearly understand and follow the processes. Verifiers from outside the school are used when there are no suitable subject experts from within the school. A good historical agreement rate between NZQA moderator and teacher judgements attests to the robustness of the school's practice.

School data management is effective. Student entries and results are reported accurately and in a timely manner to NZQA. The Principal's Nominee tracks student progress towards NCEA qualifications and this information is shared with senior syndicate teaches to develop targeted support for identified students.

A range of methods are used by the school to communicate NCEA information to its community. These methods inform students and teachers about the school's assessment policy and procedures, which are well understood.

Areas for improvement

Action plans are developed in response to external moderation for standards identified as requiring attention. However, the discussions that the Principal's Nominee has with teachers when further follow up is necessary is not documented.

Recording these discussions and any agreed actions will help to evaluate if there have been improvements in teacher assessment practice.

To monitor that internal moderation is happening within the school, all completed internal moderation cover sheets are required to be handed to the Principal's Nominee before results are reported to NZQA. To strengthen the process, this documentation should be reconciled with the student material held in subject areas. Senior management would then be fully assured that all reported results are credible.

Course outlines assist students and whānau to understand how each standard contributes towards a NCEA qualification. The school provides a guideline in the staff handbook of the information that is required to be included in the course outlines. However, this is inconsistently followed across subject areas. Senior management should review course outlines to ensure they meet school requirements.

Agreed action

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

- document the follow up discussions when evaluating action plans in response to external moderation
- reconcile internal moderation documentation with actual practice
- ensure course outlines meet school requirements.

Kay Wilson
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School Quality Assurance and Liaison

18 September 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 28 June 2016 Managing National Assessment Report There were four action items from the 2016 report. The school agreed to:

- collect school-based evidence to support special assessment conditions applications
- ensure responses to external moderation are completed in a timely manner
- clarify the random selection requirements for external moderation
- annually reconcile memoranda of understanding is in place with all external providers.

The school has adequately addressed all actions from this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has a process to address external moderation outcomes and has maintained a good historical agreement rate between NZQA moderators and teacher judgements. Teachers are required to complete an action plan for standards identified as requiring attention. The Principal's Nominee uses a spreadsheet to document and monitor that the action plans are completed. These are discussed with teachers if follow up about further action is necessary. However, these discussions and any further agreed actions are not recorded. Documenting these would strengthen the response process as it would assist in the evaluation of ongoing improvement in teacher assessment practice and whether actions undertaken have been effective.

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)

Tapawera Area School's self-review identifies areas for improvement and is effective in raising achievement outcomes for their students. Senior management lead staff in making changes to assessment practice, which are embedded through staff professional learning and development and regular senior syndicate teacher meetings. Since the last Managing National Assessment review, there has been a major focus on improving student literacy levels and processes to provide extra support for students that may require it.

Improving student literacy has been a school-wide goal for the past three years and is ongoing. The Principal's review of student literacy identified that a school-wide approach was required to raise lower than expected levels. Teachers received professional learning and development for improving literacy through their practice and use the teaching-as-inquiry model to embed this in their subject areas and evaluate its effectiveness. The consequence of this school-wide strategy since 2016 is evident in the 100 percent achievement rate for NCEA Level 1 Literacy in 2018.

Following the 2016 Managing National Assessment review, the school's review identified that its processes and procedures to provide special assessment conditions were inadequate to meet student needs. The Principal's Nominee and Special Education Needs Coordinator have developed school processes and procedures to begin identifying students that may require extra support while they are still in the primary school. School-based evidence is collected to support applications to NZQA for special assessment conditions of which the first applications were approved in 2018. The school has employed reader-writers from within the community so that this entitlement is provided to eligible students.

The school identified a need to provide a qualification pathway to meet the needs of those students requiring a supported learning programme. An application for accreditation to assess for the New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills Level 1 was granted in 2018 to provide this pathway.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice. Senior management undertakes to:

- document the follow up discussions when evaluating action plans in response to external moderation.

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)

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

- teachers knowing their students and so able to provide them with differentiated assessment opportunities that match their interests and qualification aspirations
- discussing at senior syndicate meetings the progress of all students towards a NCEA qualification and identifying those that need targeted support, including additional assessment opportunities
- extending assessment opportunities by using external providers to deliver:
 - courses the school is unable to offer
 - assessment against individual standards related to career pathways
- assessing when ready.

Tapawera Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide practice for late and missed assessment, extensions, and further assessment opportunities
- investigating and resolving breaches of assessment rules
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of assessment rules and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have not submitted work
- using a range of strategies to ensure that student work is authentic
- ensuring evidence for derived grades and unexpected event grades are based on valid, authentic and standard specific evidence
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993* when handling students' assessment information.

Review understanding of the resubmission process Students must be capable of discovering and correcting minor errors or omissions on their own when provided with a resubmission opportunity. Students interviewed for this review confirmed that this process is mostly followed throughout the school but highlighted a subject area where too much teacher direction is given. Providing too much guidance to students may invalidate the resubmission. The school should review staff understanding and application of resubmissions so that it is fully understood and followed. NZQA *Mythbuster #4* can provide further guidance.

Equity in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for Māori and Pacific Students in Year 13 The school identified that a low number of Māori students participate in STEM subjects in Year 13. It has begun developing staff capability in cultural inclusiveness by involving them in school kapahaka, karakia, this year's matariki celebration and te reo classes. Teachers developing cultural inclusiveness in their assessment practice will help to support the achievement outcomes of their 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)

Tapawera Area School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists both within and outside the school to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work
- documenting the internal moderation process using an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions.

Tapawera Area 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
- ensuring teachers have an Education Sector Login, so that they can submit material through the external moderation application, access reports and make queries and appeals
- encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan.

Strengthen the monitoring of internal moderation Monitoring of the internal moderation process should include checking documentation against actual practice so that senior management is confident that all reported results are credible.

To monitor that internal moderation is happening, the school requires that all completed internal moderation cover sheets are handed to the Principal's Nominee before the results are reported to NZQA. Reconciling this documentation with the student work held in subject areas will improve the robustness of the school's internal moderation process.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality. Senior management undertakes to:

- reconcile internal moderation documentation with actual practice.

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

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

Tapawera Area School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- the Deputy Principal reporting an analysis of NCEA achievement outcomes to the Principal and an analysis of achievement in English, Mathematics and Science to the Board of Trustees to identify trends and inform future planning
- the Principal's Nominee tracking student progress towards qualifications and sharing this information with teachers at senior syndicate meetings to develop individual assessment programmes for identified students, as necessary.

Tapawera Area School reports accurate achievement data by:

- reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data errors
- reconciling results from external providers with which they hold a current Memorandum of Understanding, to ensure results are reported with the correct provider code
- actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using their NZQA Learner Login
- ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result, or withdrawn, as appropriate.

Subject teachers should use data analysis to inform course design The school should consider developing staff capability to analyse and evaluate assessment data and use this to improve student achievement outcomes. Most subject teachers do not do an analysis of their outcomes and instead use their knowledge of the students to match their needs to appropriate standards for assessment. Small class sizes mean they know their students well. As such, most teachers change their course design each year depending on the students participating in their course.

Analysing assessment data allows teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their course design and assessment delivery. Although they may change their courses each year based on the knowledge of their students, using an analysis of previous assessment outcome will help teachers to design courses and assessment delivery to collect evidence that best meet the needs of their students.

No action required

No issues with the school's management and use of assessment-related data were identified during this review.

For consideration

To extend good practice in managing and making use of assessment-related data, the school is encouraged to consider:

- developing staff capability to analyse and evaluate assessment data.

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))

Tapawera Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating NCEA information and school assessment policy and procedures through:
 - staff and student handbooks
 - emails to staff and parents
 - teacher and parent interview evenings
 - school newsletters
 - a parent information evening at the beginning of each year
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing online access to the information held on the school's student management system.

Tapawera Area School assists common understanding of assessment practice by informing:

- senior students about NCEA information and school assessment policy and procedures during assemblies and meetings
- teachers at syndicate meetings about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes.

Review course outlines to meet school requirement Students should be provided with course outlines that provide consistent information about NCEA assessment and qualifications. This information assists students and whānau to understand how each standard contributes towards a NCEA qualification. Students at Tapawera Area School receive an outline for all courses that they undertake. However, there are inconsistencies between subject areas with the information that is included. To ensure consistency, the school's staff handbook states the information that is required to be included and the school should check that all outlines meet its requirements.

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:

- ensure course outlines meet school requirements.