

Managing National Assessment Report

Amuri Area School

June 2023

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Amuri Area School

7 June 2023

Consent to assess confirmed

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

No significant issues with the school's management of national assessment were found. The school's own review mechanisms allow them to identify and respond to most issues.

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

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2022.

Actions

No action required

The school has no action items relating to the quality of their assessment systems.



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25 August 2023

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External and internal review

External review

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

Action Items from 4 April 2019 Managing National Assessment There were no agreed items to action from this review.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes The school's response to external moderation is effective, thorough, and timely, supporting the credibility of results reported to NZQA.

The Principal's Nominee and the Head of Learning Area discuss external moderation outcomes when assessment judgements are inconsistent with the standard. Learning Area leaders undertake the actions required to resolve an issue. The Principal's Nominee reviews internal moderation practice against external moderation feedback and the completion of actions taken to address issues, to evaluate the impact of changes for overall improvement in subjects.

The school regularly requests standards for moderation where teachers are seeking clarification or feedback on a newly assessed standard or a change to the task or context.

High consistency rates for external moderation, with negligible *Not Consistent* outcomes reflect the school's robust internal moderation processes and effective response to external moderation feedback.

Exam centre quality assurance check The 2022 Quality Assurance Check of the school's exam centre identified that it is compliant.

Internal review

Evidence of the school using its self-review and evaluation processes to identify areas for on-going improvement in assessment practice and procedures, which are then actioned. (CAAS Guidelines 3iv)

The school has a strong focus on self-reflection and continuous improvement, to meet the needs of students. Effective data tracking and positive relationships between students and staff are integral in raising student engagement in learning, and achievement in qualifications. Knowing each individual student's learning needs, interests, career aspirations and qualification goals enables the school to provide personalised programme pathways, central to successful student outcomes.

The Principal's Nominee effectively leads and shares with teachers and students the responsibility for NCEA assessment practice. She regularly conducts reviews to enhance school procedures and manages changes and issues to improve existing practices.

Responsive course design and programme pathways tailored to student needs Amuri Area School is committed to providing flexible and meaningful learning and assessment pathways for each student.

The school has reviewed the timing of course selection, to ensure students and their parents have the information needed to make decisions. Course selection now occurs at the beginning of Term IV, following feedback to students and their parents

on the outcomes of school practice examinations and offering a Pathways and a NCEA evening at the end of Term III. The Principal's Nominee who also co-ordinates the Gateway and Careers programmes, conducts interviews with all senior students, to confirm that their chosen pathway aligns with their aspirations and interests. This supports students access to future educational, vocational, or work opportunities that they intend to pursue.

Self-review also enables the school to identify the courses required to best cater for the varied and expanding attainment and qualification needs of students. The school provides a wide range of differentiated academic and vocational pathways, including using tertiary providers, distance learning and work experience opportunities. Evidence of the diversity of opportunities offered is the high proportion, around 20%, of results reported by external providers. Multi-level classes and integrated subject courses also ensure greater subject choice to meet student needs.

Currently the school is reviewing the delivery of the Year 9 and 10 curricula, to strengthen the transition to NCEA senior schooling. The intent of the proposed re-introduction of homeroom-based learning is to increase the focus on the acquisition of essential literacy skills, including financial and digital literacy, as well as numeracy skills. Additionally, it seeks to provide opportunities for pursuing passion projects and offering a graduate diploma at the culmination of these years of learning. The evaluation of outcomes, including interviews with students, and comparison with baseline data from the other non-homeroom class will determine whether the school proceeds with this change.

Students interviewed during the review appreciated the varied learning and assessment opportunities available to them and acknowledged the approachability and responsiveness of their teachers in assisting them to achieve their academic goals.

Preparation for delivery of the NCEA Change Programme The school has engaged in the changes required for the implementation of the NCEA Change Programme.

The school is piloting one New Zealand Curriculum subject and has assessed students in the Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau |Literacy and Numeracy corequisite assessments over the past two years. This involvement has allowed students to gain familiarity with digital external assessment and teachers to build confidence in running assessments on the NZQA digital platform. The school's IT infrastructure has been checked, providing the opportunity to resolve any issues that arise.

Senior leaders are investigating a school-wide approach to developing students' literacy and numeracy skills, to support the attainment of the corequisites standards of the changed qualification. Findings from these assessments are assisting teachers' understanding of what student readiness looks like, including for second language learners. This, in turn, informs teaching and learning practice to strengthen students' competencies and build their confidence in their knowledge and skills. This focus is Amuri Area School's improvement evaluation approach supported by the Education Review Office.

Managing deadlines and assessment programmes In response to the prolonged absence of students due to Covid and other illnesses, senior leaders have reviewed the missed and late assessment policy and practice. The review involved engaging with staff, students, and parents to address any potential confusion and ensure a clear understanding of the procedures. The outcome enabled consistent school-wide

practice based on the principles of natural justice and fairness to all students, while ensuring the authenticity of students' work is not compromised. Following explicit communication with the school community, the school is now regularly informed of a student's absence. This allows the Principal's Nominee and Heads of Learning Area to use the flexibility of the NCEA system, to collaboratively decide assessment deadlines, enabling students to be assessed when they are ready. This includes further teaching and assessment for individual students before and during the examination period, as appropriate.

The senior leadership team in consultation with staff, students and parents initiate school-wide improvements and shared ownership of student achievement outcomes. The school can be confident that issues relating to assessment practice and quality assurance will be identified and resolved.

Credible assessment practice to meet student needs

Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 20230.

Support for students to achieve Teachers regularly discuss with students their achievement progress. Students identified through effective data tracking as at risk of not achieving or completing qualifications, are supported by both pastoral care and academic learning staff. Student achievement is discussed at pastoral meetings and where barriers to learning are identified, strategies are developed across subject areas as needed, to engage students in learning and assessment. Teachers meet student needs by evaluating their specific learning and assessment needs, leading to the adjustment of courses, standards, assessment tasks, and contexts. Students are assessed when ready, as appropriate. Parents are regularly informed of student progress.

Robust derived grade quality assurance processes The school has robust processes to ensure reported external grades for all standards have been quality assured. The school follows the same practice to verify the task and the grade as occurs for internal moderation. The Principal's Nominee holds the assessment evidence from learning areas. The school intends to use NZQA derived grade profile report in their results review process to further check the validity and credibility of grades. This will inform any changes required to quality assurance processes and may lead to the school considering using the justification process for verifying derived grades to support the workload of single-subject teachers. These processes ensure that students will receive a fair result should a derived grade need to be applied.

Heads of Learning Area interviewed described using appropriate material and assessment conditions to generate evidence that may be used for a derived grade. Teachers either verify or justify grades for assessment evidence.

The school is confident that reported external grades are based on valid, standard-specific evidence and decisions are consistent with the standard. High levels of results which could be used for derived grades are consistently reported to NZQA prior to the external examination period.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023).

Robust processes and monitoring of internal moderation The Principal's Nominee has strengthened monitoring of internal moderation processes. This approach now provides a transparent account of moderation timelines and effectiveness for all school assessment leaders and identifies issues to address.

Learning Areas take responsibility for ensuring completed assessment materials are stored on a central dedicated, shared drive. The Principal's Nominee checks the completion of each moderation step. These checks involve reviewing the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* for sufficient and purposeful selection and the quality of verifier judgment statements, the use of buddy system for verification including external verifiers as appropriate, and stored student work. Senior leaders support teachers to access professional learning, including the NZQA Pūtake modules and a change in verifiers, to assist with the understanding of the standard, and to improve practice.

A robust monitoring system enhances school-wide consistent practice and provides senior leadership with the confidence that all standards are quality assured, helping to ensure the reporting of credible results.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

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

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

Amuri Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

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

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

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

- ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment judgements
- using subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a strategic selection of a sufficient sample of student work
- using grade verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes
- monitoring and documenting completed internal moderation processes to ensure only quality assured results are reported to NZQA.

Amuri Area School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

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

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

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

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

Amuri Area School reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date data

- checking Key Indicators and NZQA reports to identify and resolve any errors
- conducting student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year
- ensuring low levels of late external entries, and internal entries with no results
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current *Memoranda of Understanding*
- seeking NZQA approval through a subcontracting agreement to engage with a non-consented provider to deliver specific standards.

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

Amuri Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

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

Amuri Area School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

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

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Amuri 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 / whānau.

Why we review how schools are managing national assessment

The purpose of a Managing National Assessment review is:

- to confirm, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report, that schools are effectively meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022* (CAAS) and its *Guidelines* (CAAS Guidelines) in order to maintain their consent to assess; and
- to help schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment according to the requirements of the *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023*.

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- identifying the effectiveness of the school's review processes, assessment practice and quality assurance
- requiring action from the school where an issue is identified that significantly impacts on the school meeting the requirements of their *Consent to Assess*
- agreeing action with the school where an issue has been identified that could become significant if not addressed
- making suggestions for the school's consideration to enhance good assessment practice.

What this review includes

The review has three components:

- The annual external moderation of the school's internal assessment.
- A check on specific aspects of assessment systems on an annual basis.
- A check on the school's assessment systems at least once every five years.

How we conducted this review

The review includes examination of documentation from a range of sources and interviewing key stakeholders.

Prior to the visit the school provided the following documents:

- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *Policies, Amuri Area School Board of Trustees*
- *NZQF Information for Staff 2023, Amuri Area School*
- *NCEA - Senior Assessment, Policies and Procedures Student and Parent Handbook 2023, Amuri Area School*
- *departmental assessment handouts and schemes and related assessment material.*

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Learning Area for:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
 - Technology
 - Visual Arts.
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal / Tumuaki 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.