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Managing National Assessment Report

Akaroa Area School
September 2021

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Akaroa 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 2021* (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
- *Akaroa Area School, NQF Student Handbook 2021*
- *Akaroa Area School, NQF Staff Handbook 2021*
- *Akaroa Area School, NQF Staff Handbook Appendices*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Senior Teachers for:
 - BCITO
 - English
 - Hospitality
 - Mathematics and Science
 - Physical Education
- 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

Akaroa Area School

15 September 2021

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 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

What the school is doing well

Akaroa Area School aims to offer assessment that meets the needs of each individual and supports their intended future pathways. This is clearly reflected in the way the school reviews and manages its assessment practice.

The school responds to issues identified by both internal and external review. Self-review is led by the Principal's Nominee considering student and teacher voice. This leads to changes in assessment-related practice and ongoing review to evaluate the impact on improving outcomes for students.

The Principal's Nominee and senior hub teachers effectively manage assessment processes to meet the qualifications requirements of each student. Teachers ensure that courses and their contexts are individualised to meet student need.

Opportunities are routinely extended by using a range of external providers to offer courses and standards that the school would otherwise be unable to provide.

Practices are sound and consistently applied. These actions contribute towards assisting students to improve their assessment outcomes.

Robust internal and external moderation processes, including monitoring and follow up of any necessary actions, are embedded across the school. Verification of internal assessment results is reliant on strong relationships with staff in other schools. These processes ensure that only credible results are reported to NZQA. This effective practice is reflected in the high level of consistency between teacher judgements and the standard as reported by NZQA external moderators.

The school's 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 course design, set strategic direction, and evaluate the effectiveness of changes. Students monitor their own progress towards completing qualifications through their portal into the student management system and their NZQA Learner Login. Staff effectively use data and their knowledge of individuals to identify and intervene with students at risk of not achieving a qualification.

The school has a range of clear and effective communications that ensure staff, students and their families gain a common understanding of the NCEA qualification and the school's assessment policy and procedures.

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

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

23 December 2021

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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 May 2016 Managing National Assessment Report An agreed action item to update documentation to clarify school processes for the investigation of breaches in internal assessments and the verification of derived grades has been fully actioned, with staff showing a common understanding.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has effective processes to respond to external moderation. These ensure senior management are fully informed of issues and involved in the review of outcomes where required. Feedback from external moderation shows there is a high overall level of consistency between assessor and moderator judgements. In 2019 the school had a slight increase in reports where follow up was required which led the Principal's Nominee to review and strengthen quality assurance processes.

The Principal's Nominee reads each report and shares them with the subject teacher. The teacher completes a Response to Moderation report and outlines any actions that are required. The Principal's Nominee discusses the response with the teacher and checks on the completion and effectiveness of any actions with ongoing monitoring where needed. As the verification step of internal moderation is completed by teachers outside the school, they are included in any feedback.

The school has the same process for responding to external moderation conducted by Industry Training Organisations/Work Development Councils.

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)

The Principal's Nominee has a strong focus on self-review. This is often data driven and is through both regular evaluation of current systems and in response to issues that arise. Ongoing review is creating coherent assessment processes that positively impact each other, reducing any unnecessary repetition of recording, checks and monitoring.

Due to the small and varied cohorts, both annual review within departments and the school as a whole, looks at each group's needs and tailors what courses are offered each year accordingly.

This has led to new courses such as Home Economics to complement the existing Hospitality courses and regular changes in the use of external providers. Due to staffing availability, Mathematics and Science has been taught as one subject in recent years. After reviewing this with students, the school intends to move away from this model next year to better meet student need.

This year the school has reintroduced an assessment timeline and shared it with students electronically and visually in each classroom. This was in response to several concerns. A focus on student well-being has been raised by both students and staff and this aims to ensure there is not an overload of assessments on a particular date. Feedback from ex-students based on their experiences as first year University students and what could have helped them also highlighted a need to not be too flexible with deadlines and to be clear about the consequences of missed or late assessments. This practice has also helped to ensure consistency of assessment practice across all subject areas.

The Principal's Nominee wishes to develop a collaborative staff approach towards assessment as all teachers are sole teachers of their subjects and have to go outside the school for subject specific discussions. This often occurs through previous colleagues or schools in their Community of Learning, Tipu Maia, which is made of several similar area schools. Whilst still needing the subject specific support from outside school, the intention is to have collegial discussion to share approaches to assessment. This would lead to creative assessment opportunities and reduced assessment time, possibly through cross-curricula assessment.

The school currently has a focus of raising the profile of external assessment to increase engagement. This is intended to increase completion of intended assessment programmes to better support student pathways and to improve levels of course and certificate endorsement. It also aims to ensure assessment programmes will align with the Review of Achievement Standards as each NCEA subject will only have two internals available at each level. An initial step introduced this year is ensuring that there is a clear expectation that, although assessment is still personalised to a learner, Year 11 students will complete at least one external examination in each applicable subject.

The school has a focus on 'Māori students gaining success as Māori'. This year all Māori students were surveyed on their experiences at school including any barriers to learning. This survey informed a whānau hui at Onuka Marae to connect with whanau, introduce the school and NCEA assessment processes, identify areas for improvements and explore how whānau could support the school.

Self-review includes forward planning. The Principal's Nominee undertakes an annual mid-year analysis of NZQA and school-based assessment data and this has highlighted a need for a school wide focus on Mathematics and Numeracy in 2022.

The school also intends to focus on engaging in digital assessments next year as students are used to working digitally and teachers are aware that examinations are moving to digital first with the Review of Achievement Standards. The school will investigate how they can overcome concerns with technical support to ensure students have a positive experience.

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 2021 5.1 – 5.7)

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

- offering a range of academic and vocational focused courses that are equally valued by the students
- running mixed level and mixed subject classes to ensure courses can be delivered
- providing differentiated assessment through individualising the standards assessed within a course and tailoring contexts to match students' interests
- extending assessment opportunities through using a range of external providers to deliver:
 - courses the school is unable to offer
 - assessment against standards related to career pathways.

Akaroa Area 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 valid resubmission and further assessment opportunities
- ensuring evidence for derived grades is standard specific and verified
- submitting grades to NZQA to be used as unexpected event grades
- safeguarding student privacy.

Supporting students undertaking distance learning The school provides a high level of support for students studying through distance learning. The school engages with different providers each year to provide the courses students wish to undertake. When making choices students are counselled to ensure that distance learning is appropriate to their learning style. Students study in supervised timetabled classes and the eDean closely monitors each individual's completion of work and progress, contacting the offsite teachers if they require additional support.

Consider submitting special assessment conditions applications for students who need support The school has not applied for special assessment conditions for any students in recent years. Potentially eligible candidates are supported by having courses and assessments in a style that cater to their needs, such as non-time bound internals. The school should consider submitting applications to ensure support is available if a student has a change in their individual circumstances, for example an alteration to their planned assessment programme or if they move school. This may also support the schools focus on students engaging in externals.

For consideration

To extend good practice in meeting student needs and supporting assessment practice, the school is encouraged to consider:

- submitting special assessment conditions applications for students who need support.

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 2021 6.4b)

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

- allocating time in Term 4 to critique tasks for standards planned to be used in the following year to ensure new ones are checked and previously used ones reviewed
- developing and maintaining strong links with subject specialists outside the school to verify grades awarded to student work, focused on grade boundaries, to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- documenting the quality assurance process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* and an overview document so the Principal's Nominee can monitor the effective completion of the process before results are submitted to NZQA
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions
- following appropriate processes for moderating Industry Training Organisation/Work Development Council administered standards.

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

- teachers suggesting standards for external moderation to gain feedback on standards they feel need targeting
- ensuring student work is stored securely so it is available for submission.

Effective monitoring of the quality assurance process The monitoring of internal and external moderation assures senior management that all reported results are credible.

Internal and external moderation processes are closely linked with each informing the other. The school has introduced shared *Moderation Overview* sheets which are created each year for each course. They are used to track that all the steps of the quality assurance process are completed, including using the external moderation outcomes to inform the internal moderation. The Principal's Nominee regularly checks the sheets and discusses the steps recorded with the subject teacher where needed and in formal meetings in Terms 1 and 4.

The document is also used to ensure course entries are accurate and results reported in a timely manner.

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)*

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

- analysing results, with a focus on cohort progression and next steps, which informs the modification of courses and teaching practice to support students intended pathways
- submitting all entries in the first data file to NZQA, ensuring a student's full assessment programme can be considered when tracking progress.

Akaroa Area School reports accurate achievement data by:

- reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- reporting Not Achieved results as appropriate
- effectively encouraging students to register their NZQA Learner Login and check the results reported through the NZQA website and Student Management System
- having multiple student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year
- closely managing withdrawals from standards and late entries
- only reporting results for standards for which the school holds consent, or against the correct code of outside providers with whom the school holds a current memorandum of understanding submitted to the Principal's Nominee.
- resolving any issues highlighted in the *Key Indicator Checklist*.

Student progress is tracked effectively, and interventions put in place to improve achievement outcomes The school effectively uses data to track student progress, with a focus on improving student achievement outcomes. The Principal's Nominee tracks each individual's progress and provides monthly updates, with a formal mid-year analysis, to senior hub meetings with subject and year teachers. Data is also used to inform the biannual student led conferences. These processes ensure concerns are clearly shared and discussed, and any support mechanisms required put in place.

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))

Akaroa Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- providing students with clear and consistent outlines for all courses they undertake, whilst emphasising that they are flexible and may change to meet student need
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to staff, students and their families using a range of methods
- reviewing communications to ensure they are accurate and current.

Akaroa Area School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- annually surveying students to clarify their understanding of NCEA assessment
- discussing assessment related matters in senior hub meetings to reinforce processes, highlight changes and develop a collaborative approach towards assessment
- ensuring staff can readily discuss any assessment related matter with the Principal's Nominee
- presenting NZQA and school assessment-related processes to parents and students at a meeting in Term 3, attended by all senior hub teachers, aimed at introducing NCEA to Year 10 students, and informing course selections for Year 11 and 12 students
- ensuring staff, student, and parent access to digital copies of assessment handbooks
- the Principal's Nominee annually discussing information in the student handbook with all senior students and subject teachers reinforcing the same messaging.

Students show a good understanding of how NCEA works and school assessment procedures The students interviewed could clearly articulate how NCEA works. They understood school processes such as extensions, moderation, dealing with authenticity and appeals, and felt their teachers applied them consistently. This shows that communication to students and staff about the qualification and assessment practices is effective.

Consider reviewing the student and staff handbooks to take advantage of their digital format The school has moved away from physical handbooks to online versions. Reviewing how the content is presented and considering the opportunities an online handbook offers could make them more user friendly.

For consideration

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- reviewing the student and staff handbooks to take advantage of their digital format.