

Managing National Assessment Report

Ambury Park Centre Incorporated

October 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Ambury Park Centre Incorporated:

- 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
- *Assessment Procedures for Staff at Ambury Park Centre 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *Curriculum and Learning Policy*
- *Assessment Procedures Handbook for Students and Families Ambury Park Centre 2019* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Mathematics, English and Visual Arts.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal/Principal's Nominee
- Teacher of Mathematics.

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

Background

Ambury Park Centre Incorporated has students who have been referred to the school because they have been unable to succeed in the mainstream system. They may be operating at a curriculum level lower than their chronological age and are therefore not ready to complete NCEA Level 1 at Year 11. Programmes are focused on meeting the individual needs of students and assessments are only undertaken when the students are ready. Students' emotional and psychological wellbeing are a priority for the school.

The school's programmes are centred around horse therapy and therefore students spend a percentage of their day tending to the horses. In 2019, all assessments excluding Mathematics were assessed through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu.

SUMMARY

Ambury Park Centre Incorporated

18 October 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

Ambury Park Centre Incorporated responds to the needs of its students by individualising their learning and assessment programmes. The school is proactive in its communication with family and students, meeting regularly to inform them of any assessment decisions as well as updates to their Individual Education Plans.

The school is using its unique equine programme to provide evidence for its Mathematics programme. It uses a variety of methods to gather evidence including verbal, digital and through portfolio submissions.

Self-review of the curriculum and assessments has focused on students working in the first instance towards achieving the requirements of Level 1 numeracy and literacy. To extend this, with the goal of students being able to achieve a qualification, the school plans to continue to review what they are able to offer within the school and through external providers.

The school offers a safe environment with an individual learning plan for each student. The small size ensures that student/staff relationships are strong and that learning conversations can happen with each student on a regular basis.

The school is able to ensure that only credible results are reported to NZQA through a robust internal moderation process. This includes using subject specialists to critique assessment tasks and verify grades.

Ambury Park Centre has encouraged and shown its students how to register for the NZQA Learner Login so they are now able to check and track their achievement.

Areas for improvement

The school needs to develop a system to document action plans that follow up poor external moderation so that the Principal (in the absence of a Principal's Nominee) can monitor completion and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions to address issues identified in External Moderation.

It is important that results are submitted and reported to NZQA in a timely and regular basis. This can be made easier with the new school management system. The first data file submission should be submitted by April 1 each year.

Updating staff documentation will ensure that it reflects school practice and NZQA requirements. This is further discussed in the communications section of this report.

Agreed action

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

- ensure response to external moderation leads to improvement
- ensure results are submitted to NZQA in a timely way and on a regular basis
- make changes to documentation in the school's staff handbook as noted in this report.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

26 November 2019

NZQA

0800 697 296

www.nzqa.govt.nz

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 2 July 2015 Managing National Assessment Report There were two agreed action items from the previous report, both of which have been addressed. The school has updated their student handbook and it is now appropriate for its intended audience. It is also now reporting Not Achieved grades when a student has had an adequate assessment opportunity as required by NZQA.

Response to external moderation outcomes Ambury Park Centre has put plans in place to address the low agreement between assessors and NZQA's external moderators. This includes using subject specialists outside the school to verify assessor judgements. Where the external moderator finds that the school's grade is not consistent with the standard a plan should be put in place to address this, proposed actions documented and implemented, and evaluated for their effectiveness. At present the school is only reporting Mathematics results under its own provider code.

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 then actioned. (CAAS Guidelines 3iv)

The school had a new Principal at the time of this review. In the absence of a Head of School or Principal's Nominee, the school has not yet fully determined review priorities. However, the new Principal has identified some areas for immediate attention.

Ambury Park Centre is currently reviewing its curriculum and the importance of assessment within the context of the school. It is placing a greater emphasis on academic studies. Individual Education Plans now include achievement towards NCEA Level 1 Literacy and Numeracy. It has already made changes to its timetable to extend academic learning time. Conversations with family and students now include academic achievement and career goals. Staff have reported that students are more engaged with their studies as they gain credits towards a qualification.

The schools' review includes discussing and exploring options to ensure that the school delivers a sustainable and effective education service to their unique student population. One outcome will be to ensure the range of assessment opportunities it offers includes academic and vocational standards appropriate to students' strengths and interests, including using a variety of external providers.

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:

- ensure staff response to external moderation leads to improvement.

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)

Ambury Park Centre Incorporated has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- developing Individual Education Plans for each student
- offering assessment opportunities to students who are able and prepared
- extending the range of standards available to be assessed, using Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu to meet the needs of individual students.

Ambury Park Centre Incorporated has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing the authenticity of assessment opportunities by students completing all text-based assessments in class
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Collection of evidence The school is developing ways to gather evidence through its equine programme. Authentic evidence of achievement is gathered naturally for Mathematics assessments using the student's equine experiences. The school also collects evidence for assessments verbally, digitally and through portfolios.

Special Assessment Conditions All students at Ambury Park Centre requiring Special Assessment Conditions are identified, although no formal application is made to NZQA. The school informally provide students with special assessment conditions to help them access assessments. Applications for provisions for special assessment conditions will provide students with consistency of practice as well as support for their future if circumstances were to change for example they transfer to another school.

For consideration

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

- making special assessment conditions applications to support students identified with specific assessment needs.

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)

Ambury Park Centre Incorporated has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- critiquing new and amended assessment activities before use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- using subject specialists to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work around grade boundaries
- documenting the internal moderation process using the internal moderation cover sheet
- monitoring the completion of the internal moderation process by the Principal/ Principal's Nominee.

Ambury Park Centre Incorporated has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

Robust internal moderation processes The school has introduced a robust internal moderation system ensuring consistent, credible practice. Teachers seek support from colleagues in other schools to verify grades awarded student work and to critique new assessment tasks. The school now ensures that the verifier is a subject specialist, and this provides the added benefit of providing further networking opportunities for staff.

Further response to external moderation required The school's follow up to external moderation needs to include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the response. This will give the Principal assurance that external moderation is being monitored and actions undertaken to address issued identified are completed.

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:

- implement a process which leads to improvement

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)

Ambury Park Centre Incorporated effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- using the school's new student management system to track student achievement and provide regular updates to families including students' credit summaries
- using data to inform programme changes and to better understand the learning needs of the individual student
- reporting an analysis of achievement to the Board of Trustees twice a year.

Ambury Park Centre Incorporated reports accurate achievement data by:

- using the NZQA's Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors.

Timely and regular results submission to NZQA required Ambury Park Centre Incorporated has recently changed its system of reporting results to NZQA from web-based entries to using a student management system. Due to this change, data submission files have only recently been submitted to NZQA. It is important that results are reported on a regular basis to support the tracking of student achievement.

Tracking of achievement positively affects student engagement By using the school's new student management system to track student achievement and provide regular updates to families including students' credit summaries. Teachers interviewed reported that the tracking of achievement has had a positive effect on student engagement.

Learner Login access used by students Recently the school has encouraged its students to access the NZQA Learner Login. Students are shown how to do this during tutor group time. The Learner Login is the definitive way for students to check that entries and results have been reported accurately to NZQA and are available for the award of a qualification when appropriate. The school is being proactive in supporting students to register and use their NZQA Learner Login.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management and use of assessment-related data. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure results are submitted to NZQA in a timely way and on a regular basis

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))

Ambury Park Centre Incorporated has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating consistent, up-to-date and easily accessed assessment information to students and families using a variety of communication methods including individual meetings, emails and texts.
- ensuring that students are provided with sufficient assessment information about their individualised learning programmes
- supporting teachers new to the school to understand assessment procedures at the school, and to use the student management system.

Ambury Park Centre Incorporated assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- checking whether teachers and students are following processes
- knowing that students understand what is required for each assessment.

Staff handbook update required Suggestions were made at the review for improvements in assessment documentation to ensure it reflects school practice and NZQA requirements. This will ensure staff new to the school have a clear understanding of good assessment practice. The school should:

- update information regarding resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- update the external moderation process to reflect actual practice
- provide clarity around the entering of reported grades using the school's student management system
- include procedures for applying for Special Assessment Conditions.

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:

- make changes to documentation in the school's staff handbook as noted in this report.