

Managing National Assessment Report

Reefton Area School

March 2025

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Reefton Area School

26 March 2025

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 years.

At the request of NZQA the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2024.

Actions and consideration

Agreed actions

The school agreed that three actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. These are:

Action	Timeframe
External and internal review	
Implement a regular review cycle for assessment communications to ensure that they are up to date and fit for purpose.	Within 2025
Continue to review the school's engagement with external examinations, including assessment programmes, the timing of school practice examinations, and the generation of derived grades.	Term 2 2025
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Ensure that all memoranda of understanding with external providers are regularly reviewed and meet NZQA requirements.	Within 2025

For consideration

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

- further promoting the use of Pūtake, NZQA's learning management system, to improve their teachers' capability as assessors.



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12 May 2025

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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 30 June 2021 Managing National Assessment Report

Reefton Area School has yet to embed an effective system to ensure that a credible derived grade is available for each external examination entry. The school has made attempts to improve student engagement in both school practice examinations and in external examinations, but this remains an issue. The school is encouraged to continue its review of engagement in external assessments, as discussed later in this report.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes The school has effective systems in place to respond to the majority of issues raised by external moderators. If moderation reports have indicated concerns about consistency with the assessment of a standard, the teacher and the Principal's Nominee have met to discuss the outcome. The teacher has documented actions that they plan to take before using the standard again, and this has been reported to the Principal's Nominee. Teachers' responses have been collated by the Principal's Nominee and included in a report to the Board of Trustees, and moderator feedback has also been discussed at senior syndicate meetings. This thorough system of review gives teacher and senior leaders multiple opportunities to understand the feedback provided and implement changes as appropriate.

There is one learning area for which there has been a pattern of ongoing inconsistency identified through external moderation; this issue has now been resolved with a change in staff.

The action plans created in response to external moderation feedback have included a range of effective strategies to improve teacher understanding of the standard, of assessment practice and of student work. As classes are small, often the work for each student assessed for a standard has been submitted for external moderation, meaning that feedback for each student may be applied to how they are assessed in the future. As the school has few teachers of senior subjects, the majority of subject-specific development has occurred outside the school with expert colleagues at other schools, yet the Principal's Nominee has kept a close eye on the development of assessment capability across the staff.

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)

Systematic, student-focused review Reefton Area School has effective review processes that involve staff working closely together to meet the needs of both cohorts and individual students. All senior teachers have stand-alone departments and discussion of senior curriculum and assessment matters occurs at syndicate level. The Principal's Nominee collates data and analysis for the Board of Trustees, which also feeds back to the syndicate once a term. Systems are put in place to support new members of staff in their largely independent roles. All teachers are involved in identifying and supporting students at risk of poor achievement or disengagement. The school's strategy to support students to complete the literacy

and numeracy NCEA co-requisite requirement is an example of this school-wide approach. The school has strengthened teaching and learning of the skills required, enhanced testing to determine when students are ready to be assessed and has continued to develop how students are prepared to sit the online assessments.

Review of assessment communications The school needs to implement a regular review cycle for assessment communications to ensure that they are up to date and fit for purpose. The current staff and student assessment handbooks were last reviewed in 2021, allowing some errors and omissions to arise. A regular review cycle would help to ensure that key systems and processes as well as current priorities are communicated clearly. Next steps include developing guidance on authenticity to include the use of generative Artificial Intelligence, and ensuring that explanations of NCEA, University Entrance and endorsement requirements are readily accessible to students.

Continued review of engagement in external assessment The school agrees that ongoing review of students' engagement in external examinations is needed to ensure that a broad range of pathways are kept open for students as long as possible and that they develop the skills they may need for ongoing study and assessment. Although practice examinations have been scheduled and examination entries made in the past, there has been limited student engagement. This is due to a range of factors, including students' success in obtaining apprenticeships, employment and entry to tertiary courses that has meant that their motivation to complete exams at the end of the year has faltered. There is little community expectation that students will sit exams, and it has not been an embedded part of the school calendar, with teachers scheduling their own practice exam sessions. The school's ongoing review of this situation will include:

- the extent to which students are supported to develop the skills they need to sit formal exams for achievement standards, including students who are also pursuing courses outside of the school
- the timing of school practice exams, so that students and teachers are ready for them and the feedback supports students to prepare for the external exams
- supporting teachers to ensure that school practice exams generate authentic, standard-specific evidence, and that grades are quality assured and submitted to NZQA before the start of external examinations.

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, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025)

Pathway-focused learning and assessment programmes Reefton Area School offers courses that cater for an impressive range of employment and training pathways, despite its small size and relative isolation. It is not unusual for Reefton students to complete the requirements for Level 1 and Level 2 largely through external trades-based courses, well before the end of Year 12. Many senior students attend courses in Greymouth one day a week. The Principal's Nominee's close monitoring ensures that students who leave the school during the school year progress either to employment or to full-time training. Students who wish to access courses that are not available locally are able to access them online. Students

interviewed for this review described being well supported to identify and pursue their interests and aspirations.

Memoranda of Understanding with external providers To support students to complete assessment with external providers, the school needs to ensure that all memoranda of understanding are regularly reviewed and fit for purpose. The school currently has most of these agreements readily available, but they are not all sufficiently detailed to enable the same level of detailed tracking as happens within the school's own courses. Completing a review of relevant agreements this year will both support this year's students in their courses and contribute to the school's ongoing review of how standards delivered by external providers contribute to students' overall qualifications.

Accurate data enables effective monitoring of student progress The experienced Principal's Nominee has effective systems in place to ensure that entries and results are reported accurately to NZQA. Her oversight of the school's data is assisted by all teachers and students checking that each grade has been entered correctly, both in the school's student management system and in their NZQA logins. Each step of the process is efficient and well-documented, enabling student progress to be monitored closely by all involved, and ensuring that decisions about student programmes are well-informed.

Moderation to ensure assessment quality

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025)

Moderation completion well-documented Complete and detailed records are kept of internal moderation processes, assuring senior leaders that all results reported to NZQA have been subject to quality assurance. Teachers fill in the school's moderation template, including appended verification comments from moderators outside the school. The Principal's Nominee checks that critiquing has been completed, the verifier is appropriate, and there is sufficient evidence that verification and final assessor judgements are credible. When these checks are complete, the Principal's Nominee enters grades in the student management system to submit to NZQA, where teachers check that they have been entered correctly. The process described is effective in giving the Principal's Nominee an ongoing standard-by-standard and overall oversight of moderation processes within the school.

Improve teacher access to assessor support The school could consider further encouraging teachers to access the assessor support materials available on Pūtake, NZQA's Learning Management System. While teachers have accessed assessment support materials on the NZQA and Ministry of Education websites, they are yet to make use of Pūtake courses, or the Assessor Practice Tool that allows teachers to practise their assessment skills with a selected range of exemplars. Pūtake also hosts modules on general assessment guidance that could be used to build assessment capability across the teaching staff.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Reefton 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 culturally appropriate focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations
- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers and extending the school's Consent to Assess if required
- 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
- identifying and providing support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals
- implementing strategies to provide opportunities to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Reefton 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 grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Reefton 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.

Reefton 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

Reefton 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 and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Reefton 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.

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

Reefton Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- 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.

Reefton 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.

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Reefton 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 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 NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025*.

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
- *Procedures for Assessment for New Zealand Qualifications*, Reefton Area School, 2021.
- *Procedures for Assessment for New Zealand Qualifications – Student Guidelines*, Reefton Area School.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Curriculum Team Leaders of
 - English
 - Mathematics (senior)
 - Physical Education
 - Science
 - Social Science
- Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)
- 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.