

Managing National Assessment Report

Reefton Area School

June 2021

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 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
- *Reefton Area School, Procedures for Assessment for National Qualifications (Staff Handbook)*
- *Reefton Area School, Procedures for Assessment for National Qualifications, Student Guidelines*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Curriculum Team Leaders for:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
- Special Educational Needs Coordinator
- 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

Reefton Area School

30 June 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

Reefton Area School aims to offer teaching programmes that meet the needs of each individual. 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 a shared responsibility between senior leaders and teachers, taking into account student voice. This has led to changes in assessment-related practice and a review of their impact on improving outcomes for students.

The Principal's Nominee and Curriculum Team Leaders 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.

Staff understand the importance of and value the internal and external moderation of assessment judgements, ensuring the follow up of any necessary actions. Along with effective monitoring by the Principal's Nominee, this ensures that only credible assessment results are reported to NZQA.

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 by Curriculum Team Leaders and Senior Management to review teacher practice and standards assessed, inform how to best support individuals' progression and evaluate the effectiveness of changes. Students monitor their own progress towards completing qualifications, and 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 effective communication that allows staff, students and their families to gain a common understanding of NCEA and school assessment procedures.

Areas for improvement

The school needs to develop a process to ensure standard-specific evidence is available to report derived and emergency grades for all external entries. Changes have been made in response to the 2017 Managing National Assessment review, but an effective ongoing process needs to be established.

Some other steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

Agreed action

The school agreed that an action will improve the quality of their assessment systems. This is to:

- develop and embed a process to ensure standard-specific evidence is available to report derived and emergency grades for all external entries.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

10 September 2021

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 4 July 2017 Managing National Assessment Report The 2017 review had three agreed actions.

Progress has been made with ensuring standard-specific evidence is available to report derived and emergency grades for all external entries. However, the school needs to continue to develop a successful process which can be embedded into ongoing practice. Agreed next steps are outlined in the assessment practice section of this report.

The other agreed actions related to ensuring entries for external examinations reflected student intentions and reviewing documentation annually to ensure they reflect current practice. These have both been fully resolved. External entries are discussed with students during the year and finalised and submitted at an individual student level to meet NZQA's timelines.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has effective processes to respond to external moderation. These ensure senior management is fully informed of issues and involved in the review of outcomes where required.

The Principal's Nominee reads each report and shares them with the relevant Curriculum Team Leader. Subject areas are expected to reflect on the outcomes, and where actions are required, they complete a written response to the Principal's Nominee. She reviews the responses and monitors the completion of actions to ensure an effective resolution of the issue. One subject area has a pattern of some ongoing issues and is now using a different verifier to improve assessor judgements.

The Principal's Nominee summarises the outcomes of external moderation in a report to the Board of Trustees.

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 school has the capacity to undertake self-review. Review is a shared responsibility and can be instigated by senior leaders or teachers. Due to the small size of the school it is based on the concept of questioning if they are meeting the needs of individual students. This leads to some changes that are sustained, but others that stay in place for a short time to meet a certain need.

A school strategic focus is to ensure students can follow a pathway that meets their goals and the teacher enquiry process is currently exploring this idea. The Kāhui Ako, consisting of top of the South Island schools including several other area schools, is focused on student wellbeing, so this is reviewed through student voice

and is considered in changes the school makes. School NCEA processes are reviewed through senior syndicate meetings. Curriculum Team Leader review in their subject areas focuses on each individual student's progression and how they can best meet cohort need.

Changes that come from review are evaluated for effectiveness and to see if any further development is possible. For example, in response to a need to ensure students were making good use of their digital tools, the school introduced Hāpara as a digital supervision tool, but this has expanded to also using it as teaching tool.

The school is currently concerned about low engagement in external assessment. The impact of greater personalisation of entries and students gaining enough credits from internal assessment to gain a qualification without undertaking external assessment could be possible areas to investigate. Considering encouraging students to link completing intended assessment with supporting their intended pathways and promoting the value of course and certificate endorsement are some strategies that may provide ways forward.

For consideration

To extend good practice in external review and self-review of assessment, the school is encouraged to consider:

- how to encourage greater student engagement in external assessment.

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)

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

- offering a full range of subjects and then deciding if they can be provided through school-based classes or a variety of distance learning
- running mixed level 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
- supporting students to continue at school beyond Year 13 if it supports their intended pathway
- managing student workload through individualised assessment and negotiating assessment deadlines with students and other learning areas
- using the individualisation of assessment to ensure transient students receive coherent assessment programmes
- continuing timetabling classes once examination leave starts at the end of year for students to receive assistance with preparation for external assessment, continue with internal standards and undertake further assessment opportunities.

Reefton 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
- safeguarding student privacy.

Develop and embed a process to ensure standard-specific evidence is available to report derived and emergency grades for all external entries The school needs to continue to develop a successful process to ensure standard-specific evidence is available to report derived and emergency grades for all external entries. The process needs to be embedded into ongoing practice.

Initially in response to the agreed action in the 2017 review, the school ran examinations supervised by the Exam Centre Manager aligned with when Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu provided practice external assessment for the students undertaking courses with them. This did not successfully support students as it was too early in the year and they were not ready for assessment. This caused some assessment related stress for students and did not provide useful results for derived grade applications.

Last year the school did not have derived and emergency grades available for all external entries. The school is currently considering providing a three-hour examination session in term 3 to assess external standards across all subjects.

To ensure the process is sustainable, the school should consider various models to decide how they can best support successful outcomes for their students whilst also ensuring it provides standard-specific evidence to support derived and emergency grades for all external entries. This could be a timetabled exam period, assessment in class time, separate standards over several sessions, assessment at different points of the year, and could be a mixed model to meet subject, individual student or cohort need.

Effectively supporting students to make informed decisions about assessment choices In term 4 each student meets with the Principal's Nominee and other relevant staff such as the subject teacher and distance learning coordinator to discuss their subject choices for the next academic year. This covers topics such as their intended career pathway, in what areas they have previously had success, and what support they would need to succeed with distance learning. These discussions are revisited at the start of term 1 before finalising their programme to ensure they are on an appropriate pathway and set up for success.

Providing special assessment conditions The school currently has no students with special assessments conditions. They have identified a junior student who could be supported by accessing special assessment conditions, and school-based evidence is being gathered to support an application.

In 2020 a student transferred to the school with existing special assessment conditions and the school ensured systems were in place to provide support, but the student chose not to use them.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- develop and embed a process to ensure standard-specific evidence is available to report derived and emergency grades for all external entries.

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)

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

- ensuring all new or modified assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists within and 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 submitting it to the Principal's Nominee so that it can be checked before results are sent to NZQA
- using relief staff to facilitate moderation where required
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions.

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

- negotiating appropriate changes to remove standards that are no longer assessed but are selected for moderation
- querying assessment reports when required
- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring student work is stored securely so it is available for submission.

Effective monitoring of internal moderation The school's process for monitoring internal moderation assures senior management that all reported results are credible.

The school has clear expectations and processes for internal moderation which are understood and followed by all staff. The Principal's Nominee knows the individuals that teachers use for grade verification so is assured of their suitability. She reads the notes and emails made during moderation discussions and follows up any concerns.

As new Achievement Standards are introduced through the current review, the staff realise they may need to change their verifiers if they do not have current standard specific experience.

Consider suggesting standards to be included in the external moderation plan

The school should consider the benefits of encouraging staff to suggest standards for the external moderation plan. It would give them the opportunity to align the standards they will receive feedback on with their own self-review and development processes.

For consideration

To extend school practice in assurance of assessment quality, the school is encouraged to consider:

- encouraging staff to suggest standards to be included in the external moderation plan.

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)

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

- analysing results for individual students, with a focus on individual and cohort progression and next steps, which informs the modification of courses and teaching practice.

Reefton Area School reports accurate achievement data by:

- closely managing and checking the setting up of markbooks in the student management system
- having teacher and student checks of results at key times during the year
- reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- recording Not Achieved results as appropriate
- closely managing late entries
- storing Memoranda of Understanding digitally and reconciling them with results and provider codes before reporting them to NZQA.

Student progress effectively tracked 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 provides a termly update which is discussed in senior syndicate meetings to decide if any support mechanisms need to be put in place. Concerns identified by class or form teachers are also discussed between the termly meetings if required.

A summary of the mid year and end of year updates is shared with the Board of Trustees.

Students are also expected to keep track of their own progress towards their assessment goals and are shown how to register and use their NZQA Learner Login to access their entry and results data.

Consider how to progress opening student and parent access to the Student Management System to improve access to entry and result data Giving students and parents access to their portal into the Student Management System would allow them improved access to information on entries and results. It would enable them to more easily monitor their results, understand which standards they could be assessed in and provide clear information when to assist in making assessment decisions. The school only sends internal standard entries to NZQA once a student has been assessed and external entries once they are confirmed in term 3 so students cannot see these through their NZQA Learner Login earlier in the year. Increased visibility of their possible external entries could support engagement in external assessment.

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:

- progressing plans to give students and parents access to entry and result information in the Student Management System.

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))

Reefton Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- providing students with clear and consistent outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to staff, students and their families using a range of methods.

Reefton Area School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- discussing assessment related matters in fortnightly senior syndicate meetings to reinforce processes and highlight changes
- presenting NZQA and school assessment-related processes to parents and students at a meeting aimed at Year 10 students, and following up with families unable to attend
- ensuring staff and student access to both digital and hard copies of assessment handbooks
- annually discussing information in the student handbook in form time and subject teachers reinforcing the same messaging
- discussing NCEA assessment in biannual student, parent, teacher conferences.

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.

No action required

No issues with the way in which the school maintained the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicated them to staff, students and families were identified during this review.