

Managing National Assessment Report

Rototuna Senior High School

September 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Rototuna Senior High 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 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
- *RSHS NQF Assessment Policies and Procedures* (staff handbook)
- *RHS Curriculum and Student Achievement Policy*
- *RHS Student Achievement Information*
- links to other relevant curriculum documentation
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- a Deputy Principal
- Poutiaki / Learning Area Leaders for:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Performing Arts
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
 - Technology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Principal's Nominee and two Deputy Principals 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

Rototuna Senior High School opened to Year 11 students in 2017. It has progressed through the addition of year levels annually with Year 13 starting in 2019. The school has a current roll of around 540 students. This is Rototuna Senior High School's first Managing National Assessment review. The return cycle of all newly consented schools with no significant issues is two years, to provide the opportunity for assessment practice and quality assurance systems to be embedded.

SUMMARY

Rototuna Senior High School

11 September 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 issues. As this is the first Managing National Assessment report for the school, it is anticipated that the next review will be conducted within two years.

What the school is doing well

Rototuna Senior High School is committed to providing personalised, authentic learning opportunities for its students.

The overall learning programme offers students varied opportunities for achievement through Learning Advisory, Impact Projects, and Modules. Currently assessment towards national qualifications has come only from Modules. However, the option of assessing standards in other areas of the school's curriculum may be offered as appropriate. Modules are integrated, co-taught and designed around authentic learning contexts. Programmes of learning and assessment for NCEA qualifications continue to evolve as students move through the year levels. Continual review forms a significant part of this evolution. Review processes are underpinned by data analysis and the use of learner and teacher voice.

Assessment is viewed as "falling out" of learning. Teachers encourage students to present evidence for assessment in a range of ways. Where applicable students are assessed when ready. Assessment practices that have been developed within the school are regularly reviewed and discussed to ensure they are fit for purpose to ensure credible assessment. More recently, a greater focus for the school has been on reinforcing these assessment practices and expectations to ensure a collective understanding and consistent approach.

Internal moderation is well understood by staff. Learning areas record the process in a way that suits their systems and teachers, and that meets NZQA requirements. The Principal's Nominee has access to all internal moderation material and holds meetings with Poutiaki to review practice. External moderation outcomes are discussed, and action plans are developed and monitored for completion when issues are identified.

Data is used to monitor the progress of all students towards meeting personal, qualification and pathway goals. The school has introduced a wide range of networks to support and mentor students. Data analysis is reinforced by unpacking the narrative behind the outcome or trend. Accurate results are reported to NZQA in a timely manner and any errors or concerns are identified and addressed.

Assessment information communicated to teachers, students and whānau is reviewed regularly. The school is developing a number of common templates aimed at supporting teachers to unpack assessment standards, construct curriculum

progressions and explore the relationship between the two. Supporting documentation provides fit for purpose student information about what is required.

An open and collaborative approach between and including staff and students is evident. The Principal's Nominee is supported by the Principal and senior leadership team, who alongside the Poutiaki and teaching staff, work together to support student success. Teaching, learning and assessment practice is continuously evaluated and reviewed to ensure positive outcomes for students and credible assessment for national qualifications.

Areas for improvement

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

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7 November 2019

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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)

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has completed two years of submission for external moderation and has developed a response to external moderation process. Teachers reflect on moderator feedback to confirm their own understanding of the standard. Where consistency issues are indicated, the Principal's Nominee requires a response. Relevant teachers note the main points from the feedback, provide reflection and next steps. This information is recorded online enabling follow-up on the completion of the intentions by Poutiaki and the Principal's Nominee.

The school should now develop a way to track external moderation responses for subject areas longitudinally over several years. This will enable trends to be identified including any areas with ongoing issues who may require additional guidance and support.

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)

Rototuna Senior High School has a culture committed to review and reflection. The school continues to review and develop its programmes and model of assessment to meet the needs of each subsequent year level and the increasing student roll. Self-review supported by data analysis and student and staff voice informs this development.

Once the school started to report results to NZQA, its assessment processes and procedures were reviewed and adapted to ensure they were fit for purpose and reflected actual practice. More recently, alongside continued review, the focus has been to embed and ensure understanding and consistency of assessment practice across learning areas.

Teachers undertake timetabled professional learning opportunities (*mahi tahi*) each week. Staff have agency to select professional development that meets their needs. This includes unpacking areas of managing national assessment. Aspects of managing national assessment that have been identified as a focus of future review and professional development for staff include:

- missed and late assessment with a particular focus on extensions
- what constitutes sufficiency of evidence for achievement.

Self-review is a collaborative and responsive process that includes ongoing and robust professional dialogue. The school is committed to ensuring the implementation of best practice in learning and assessment and collegial ownership of effective NCEA assessment practice. This approach will assist the school in

ensuring it remains flexible and adaptable to meet and respond to student need while preparing them for their future pathways.

For consideration

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

- developing ways to track longitudinal data for external moderation outcomes.

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)

Rototuna Senior High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- offering integrated courses and a thematic approach in which assessments are genuine, authentic extensions of the learning experiences
- offering varied opportunities for collecting evidence of student achievement, including naturally occurring evidence
- identifying those eligible for special assessment conditions using school-based evidence and supporting them to access entitlements
- monitoring and supporting them to achieve NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements through:
 - clearly indicating standards that contribute towards literacy and numeracy within modules
 - requiring Year 11 students to select at least one English and one Mathematics module
 - offering Work and Study Skills literacy and numeracy unit standards for identified students
- introducing “Whero” and “Karakā” classes for identified students who require additional support to achieve their qualification goals
- where appropriate, assessing them when they are ready
- supporting the management of NZQA external examinations and reviewing practice to identify improvements
- developing learning and assessment opportunities by engaging with outside providers and extending the schools Consent to Assess.

Rototuna Senior High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- offering appropriate opportunities for resubmissions that meet NZQA requirements
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Schoolwide focus on learning not assessment Student programmes focus on learning outcomes that are not dictated by year-bound national assessment. The school actively prioritises planning and assessment for learning, with assessment expected to fall out of learning.

Year 11 is promoted as the start of a two-year journey towards NCEA Level 2. Students are expected to achieve between 20 and 40 credits during Year 11 rather than achieving NCEA Level 1. The intent is that this will enable deeper learning. Students aim to gain NCEA Level 2 by the end of Year 12.

This year is the first Year 13 cohort for the school. Their programme currently includes a number of specialist modules in a single curriculum area. The overall

focus is on future pathways and supporting students as they prepare for their direction following school. Developing the future Year 13 programme is a particular area for review with the move towards a more integrated course design.

Student assessment for qualifications comes predominately from Learning Modules. Modules are co-constructed, taught and assessed collaboratively by two teachers to cover two curriculum areas. They are semester-based and focus on naturally occurring evidence from authentic, real life contexts.

A students' programme also includes Project-based learning and Learning Advisory groups. Although no assessment for national qualifications has occurred in these areas, the school is open to the possibility of developing the opportunity if appropriate, genuine, naturally occurring evidence is being produced and is relevant to the learner. Students interviewed are positive about the school's approach. They demonstrated agency for, and engagement in, their learning.

No action required

No issues with the school's management of assessment for national qualifications were identified during this review.

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)

Rototuna Senior High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to clarify and support assessment judgements
- documenting the internal moderation critiquing and verification processes for each standard before results are reported, including documenting discussions on grade judgements for future reference
- monitoring the completion of the process through:
 - Poutiaki tracking that internal moderation has occurred for every standard where results are reported to NZQA
 - the Principal's Nominee having access to all internal moderation material
 - meetings between the Principal's Nominee and Poutiaki to reconcile the documentation with actual practice.

Rototuna Senior High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

A variety of internal moderation processes evident The purpose for and deliberate intent of internal moderation continues to be reinforced with teachers. This includes best practice around strategic selection and expectations for documentation. Poutiaki are clear about requirements and have adapted processes to fit the strengths and nuances of their own learning areas and individual teachers. For many, this has seen the use of online systems to record verification decisions, while others prefer hard copy. Some areas use the suggested *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*, and others have developed their own form. Having this flexibility, within clear guidelines, has promoted ownership of the process as it can be undertaken in a way that works for each learning area.

External moderation outcomes reflect internal moderation processes The school is encouraged to continue to reinforce the nature of the internal and external moderation relationship to support robust practice. Feedback from external moderation can provide confirmation of the effectiveness of internal moderation. Assessors should share the outcomes of moderator reports with their grade verifiers. Where the moderator report indicates consistency, this will confirm the internal moderation process and understanding of the standard.

In areas where an issue has been identified, the school is encouraged to include in its external moderation response process, a reflection on internal moderation. This may be particularly relevant for new staff to the school. The reflection could include reviewing the extent to which the strategic selection of samples of work for grade verification is understood and implemented. It could also include a review of the verifier used, such as ensuring they are a subject expert with recent standard-specific experience and considering if a change of verifier is warranted. Varying this professional assistance from time-to-time can be worth considering even in areas where the same verifier has been used successfully for several years. This will help ensure there is an objective view and that assessors remain maintain understanding of the standard.

For consideration

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

- using feedback from external moderation to support and reflect on the internal moderation processes.

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)

Rototuna Senior High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- monitoring and tracking student progress, including students at risk of not achieving their chosen assessment pathway
- informing changes to standards and assessment programmes for the year ahead in conjunction with gathering student voice to evaluate courses, and help guide future programmes, contexts and standards.

Rototuna Senior High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring that regular datafiles are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner
- using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data errors
- actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the student portal on the student management system and their NZQA Learner Login
- ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn, as appropriate.

Effective monitoring processes and support for student achievement

The school effectively uses assessment-related data and a range of support strategies to assist students to set and reach their goals. These include:

- using the twice weekly extended Learning Advisory time for kaiarahi to work alongside students to support well-being, set and/or amend learning goals, monitor progress and help them reflect on their learning. This helps create effective individualised assessment pathways and provides a focus for students
- having kaiarahi as the key person in establishing and maintaining links with the parents and whānau of learners in their designated group. This includes co-ordinating conferences that review semester options and student choices to ensure there is appropriate core skill and curriculum coverage to meet the learners needs and/or identified pathways
- establishing a proactive approach to identifying students that may be of concern. This ensures that contact can be made early, in line with the school's goal of "no surprises"
- introducing Academic Coaches who closely work with designated groups within the school to support learners, particularly those at risk of not achieving their achievement goals. The Academic Coaches regularly share relevant data with the wider teaching team involved with the learner to ensure all key people are aware and part of the process
- strengthening the data analysis of students by unpacking the narrative behind the numbers. This holistic approach has resulted in more meaningful and personalised tracking that ensures all students' learning goals are recognised.

This holistic approach including both qualitative and quantitative data provides comprehensive information on each student. The data also allows adjustments to be

made to personal learning programmes when and as needed to reflect learning needs and expectations meaning students are monitored and supported to attain their qualification and pathways goals as appropriate.

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))

Rototuna Senior High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- reviewing the accuracy and relevance of all information provided to learners and whānau to ensure they are fit for purpose and current
- utilising digital tools such as Facebook, streaming of NCEA evenings, the school website and portals alongside hard copies of material to maximise visibility of, and access to, assessment information
- supporting students and whānau to monitor NCEA progress through the student management system portal and NZQA Learner Login
- assisting students in planning programmes that meet their interest, abilities and future aspirations by including Vocational Pathways details in course information
- ensuring memoranda of understanding for external providers are held centrally and reconciled with reported results.

Rototuna Senior High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- ensuring relevant NZQA updates are circulated to NCEA teachers and discussed as necessary
- running an induction programme that includes outlining assessment procedures to support teachers new to the school
- running NCEA information evenings throughout the year for current and prospective students to assist with understanding NCEA and the school's approach
- reinforcing assessment procedures, documentation and best practice through Poutiaki and Learning Area meetings and through a range of timetabled staff professional learning programmes and opportunities
- providing academic support and mentoring through Learning Conferences which occur three times a year and involve kaiarahi, subject teachers, the learner and their whānau.

Development of clear, concise and consistent assessment information The school continues to develop documentation and strengthen systems that support teachers in unpacking assessment standards and understand how these link to the curriculum. Examples include:

- developing consistent templates and standardised documentation for teachers to assist in planning and critiquing
- ensuring learning areas access and engage with standard clarifications and conditions of assessment to confirm the understanding of the standard is current
- constructing and communicating 'progressions' to show the understanding required to meet, and the development needed to progress to successive curriculum levels

- unpacking the correlation between curriculum level data generated from learning experiences and NCEA achievement outcomes
- producing standard cards that unpack what is required in assessment standards, relevant ways to collect evidence for achievement and communicating this in a concise, consistent and user-friendly manner.
- responding to student feedback to ensure accurate course descriptions are written that reflect the reality of the learning and assessment programme to be undertaken.

Sharing information such as curriculum level progressions and standard cards with students and whānau have helped support understanding by providing a scaffolded platform for learners to grasp the necessary learning.

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.