

Managing National Assessment Report

Horizon School

July 2023

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Horizon School

20 July 2023

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.

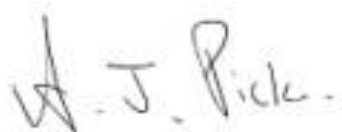
As a school with effective assessment systems and practices for national qualifications, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three to five years.

Actions and considerations

Agreed actions

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

Action	Timeframe
External and internal review	
Review and determine the future structure of NCEA programmes	Immediate
Clarify how review processes for the NCEA programme will be embedded	Within a year



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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)

External moderation response to outcomes and processes The school has developed an effective process to follow up any concerns that might be raised in external moderation reports.

Teachers will be expected to respond to any concerns raised in reports through the completion of a form which will be lodged with the Principal's Nominee. This form includes the actions to be taken to resolve the concerns raised and will be discussed with the Principal's Nominee who will also follow up to ensure that the necessary actions are completed.

The school has yet to submit any student work for external moderation but will be doing so later in 2023.

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)

A lapse in effective self-review processes appeared to be evident at the time of this review and this needs to be urgently addressed to ensure that the very successful start made by the school in developing a bespoke NCEA programme is not derailed.

The school is yet to finalise the NCEA Level 1 and 3 programmes for 2024. In the absence of these decisions, teachers will be unable to plan effectively, and students and parents will not be adequately informed in a timely manner. This situation poses a risk that needs to be addressed promptly.

If a full NCEA Level 1 programme is to be offered next year, teachers will need significant time to prepare for the delivery of the new standards. To date, there has been little to no focus on this preparation, and it will be a significant challenge to do so effectively in the remaining months of 2023. This situation will be further exacerbated by the need to plan for the NCEA Level 3 programme.

There is evidence of significant self-review processes in the recent past. The establishment of the current NCEA programmes was based on extensive research, self-reflection, and planning. In 2021, senior leadership and the Board of Trustees requested reports from teachers at mid-year and end-of-year to monitor the rollout of these initiatives. Clarity about how review processes for the NCEA programme will be embedded in school practice is also needed.

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, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023)

Programmes are designed to meet student needs A feature of the school is the focus on meeting individual student needs within programmes of learning that are cross-curricular and connected to real-life experiences. Students reported valuing this approach as well as the self-directed nature of their learning and the support provided by their teachers. This is clearly a nurturing learning environment in which students are achieving their qualification goals.

Teaching, learning, and assessment are structured around four core programmes that provide a mixture of required course work and individual choice. Through all these programmes, students have the opportunity to earn NCEA credits.

- **Formation** focusses on pastoral care, spiritual formation, studentship skills, wellbeing and service
- **Connected** focusses on English, Science and Social Science which is taught in a cross-curricular setting
- **Mathematics** focusses on this single subject which is viewed as a priority for students
- **Enriched** focusses on student choice project-based learning, mainly in Visual Art and Technology.

As students' interests and choices cannot be fully met by the current teaching staff, the school complements what their own teachers can offer by providing optional courses for students through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu. The use of other outside providers is also being considered with a First Aid course planned for later in the year.

The Course Guide for Student and Parents states that "your learning will be connected, collaborative and purposeful as you learn about yourself, your world and your place in it". The evidence sighted during this review supports this statement.

Support for students is a priority The personal support provided to students by staff and the overall welcoming and relaxed atmosphere not only enhances learning and assessment outcomes for students but also has an overall wellbeing focus.

A significant proportion of students have learning and other needs that are being addressed and accommodated both through the structure of the programmes on offer, the flexibility of assessment options (including Special Assessment Conditions) and the support offered by the school and the SENCO. For example, the school is committed to implementing the principles of Universal Design for Learning in the delivery of teaching and assessment.

Student progress is well tracked but this does not occur on a structured basis. With a small NCEA cohort and a small teaching staff in the NCEA programme (known as "the College"), teachers communicate on a regular basis on the progress of students and on any concerns. When necessary, appropriate interventions, such as home contact, are implemented to address any concerns effectively. Students are supported to monitor their own progress towards achieving a qualification through their NZQA Learner Login and a tracking sheet provided by the school.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023)

Moderation processes are effectively implemented Internal moderation practices occur according to NZQA expectations and are valued by teachers as a means to confirm their own judgements and to improve their own capabilities as assessors. This ensures that results submitted to NZQA are credible.

As this is a small school with a limited number of teachers, almost all internal moderation is completed by outside verifiers. Although this has been a challenge to set up and maintain in some cases, the decision to ensure that verifiers are experienced assessors with standard-specific knowledge is appropriate and provides confidence to senior leaders that this process is robust and effective.

The process is recorded on Internal Moderation Coversheets which are stored (along with student work) either digitally or physically. The Principal's Nominee ensures that these processes are completed prior to results being submitted to NZQA.

The Principal's Nominee also has a suitable process in place to ensure that samples of work for external moderation will be submitted when these are called for later in the year.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Horizon School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its students by:

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations
- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers to offer courses the school is unable to offer
- 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.

Horizon 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 and unexpected event grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Horizon 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.

Horizon 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

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

- monitoring and tracking student progress
- 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.

Horizon 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
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding.

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

Horizon School has effective processes and procedures for:

- keeping assessment-related communications current and accurate, and reviewing communications to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- 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.

Horizon School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- communicating assessment information.
- informing students about suitable learning pathways
- supporting students to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Horizon 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.

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 Candidates 2023*.

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
- *Student Assessment and Achievement Policy*, Horizon School, 2023
- *NCEA Level 1 & 2 Guide*, Horizon School, 2023 (Course Guide for Students and Parents)
- *Staff NZQA Handbook*, Horizon School, 2023 (Staff Handbook)
- *NCEA at Horizon College: Learning Evidence and Assessment*, Horizon School, 2023 (Student Handbook).

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Teachers of:
 - Art and Technology
 - English, Social Science and Science
 - Mathematics
- 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.

Background

Horizon School was granted Consent to Assess in June 2021 and offered a Level 1 NCEA programme for the first time in 2022 to fewer than twenty students. The programme was extended to Level 2 in 2023 with an intention to offer Level 3 in 2024. This is the school's first Managing National Assessment review.