

Managing National Assessment Report

Ruru Specialist School

April 2025

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Ruru Specialist School

3 April 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 to five years.

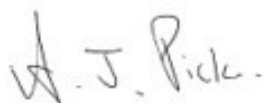
At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2021.

Actions

Agreed actions

The school agreed that the following action will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. This is:

Action	Timeframe
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Update NCEA assessment documents to reflect practice.	Ongoing.



Amanda Picken
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Support

29 May 2025

NZQA

0800 697 296

www.nzqa.govt.nz

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 28 September 2018 Managing National Assessment Report

The school has addressed the action item from the previous report. The school has applied for special assessment conditions for relevant students. This enables external providers to be aware of any NZQA-approved conditions an eligible student may have for assessments and remove potential barriers to achievement.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes Since the last Managing National Assessment review, the school has received consistent reports for the standards it has submitted for external moderation. Feedback is reflected on and used to improve future practice.

In 2022 and 2023 the school did not submit materials to NZQA for one of the standards on its moderation plan. The Principal's Nominee now checks the external moderation plan during the year so if the teaching programmes change and a standard is not being assessed, or an error is found such as missing an external provider code amendments can be made. This has already been actioned for 2025, and changes have been made to ensure the external moderation plan reflects the planned teaching programme.

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)

Ruru School uses internal review and reporting processes to ensure that assessment practices are credible and to provide appropriate opportunities for students to achieve their goals. A key mechanism utilised by the school is the Individual Career Plan (ICP) meetings held twice a year. These meetings are student-led and involve whānau. Their approach covers many aspects, such as reviewing goals already attained, identifying and prioritising distinct learning needs and setting new specific individualised learning goals that meet individual needs and future pathways aspirations. Student feedback is vital in this and helps direct programmes. The goal for every student is a successful transition from schooling to the community and workforce. Student programmes prioritise the hauora of students rather than focusing solely on gaining credits. Therefore, students undertake taster courses or participate in activities that do not offer formal assessment.

The school continues to investigate ways to recognise achievement for its students particularly as Supported Learning standards can no longer contribute to NCEA certificates. While Supported Learning standards will still appear on a student's Record of Achievement, the school continues to consider other options including New Zealand Certificates. To do this the school could apply for accreditation to deliver a programme approved for another educational provider as discussed during the review visit.

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)

External providers support student programmes ICP meetings are central to developing student programmes that meet their needs and interests. Programmes include work placements in the community and engagement with external providers to offer assessment. The school holds Memoranda of Understanding on a shared drive with all these providers. The Principal's Nominee monitors these to ensure they are current and fit for purpose. In this way, the school can be confident that results reported using these providers come from credible assessment practices.

Consistent data management evident Data management is managed by the Principal's Nominee who has a clear understanding of the importance of accuracy and timeliness. Data is consistently provided to NZQA through the web portal. Despite only one person with access to submit results, all related processes and results are discussed within the team. This gives a shared understanding of expectations. Results are reviewed and analysed to inform future practice. One person oversight ensures correct implementation and consistency

Ensuring equitable and credible assessment practice The school is aware of the importance of ensuring the authenticity of evidence submitted for assessment by students. The school uses assessment practices that maximise the chance of success for its students. Materials purchased from commercial organisations are reviewed and adapted to contexts relevant to students. Assessment conditions cater for identified needs of their students. This includes non-time bound internal assessments with flexible timeframes, presentation of evidence in a variety of ways and access to reader and/or writer assistance. There is ongoing and regular discussion on processes to support the authenticity of student evidence. This includes teaching and supporting staff to ensure there is no over guidance or scaffolding. This ensures results reported are credible.

Updates needed to NCEA assessment handbook NCEA documentation held by the school and provided for the Managing National Assessment review is out of date and does not reflect teacher practice or understanding. The Principal's Nominee is currently updating this document. Accurate information about processes and expectations will support consistent messaging and help minimise any risks to credible assessment practice that may arise from changes in personnel. The review identified the following aspects which should be amended to align with NZQA's guidelines and terminology:

- removing all reference to work for moderation being randomly selected
- providing a template for actions such as appeals, authenticity declarations and breaches as applicable
- ensuring the information reflects the language of processes of Ruru School
- ensuring information is clarified about reporting not achieved when a student has had an adequate opportunity but submitted no evidence.

Internal 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)

Internal moderation processes are understood and followed by teachers. The Principal's Nominee will only submit results to NZQA following sighting of a completed internal moderation cover sheet. This ensures that all results submitted to NZQA have been through a quality assurance process.

As classes have small numbers of students, the verification of evidence tends to occur across the cohort. NZQA recommends choosing a sufficient sample depending on factors such as the experience of the teacher, previous external moderation history and the student cohort.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Ruru Specialist 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 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

Ruru Specialist 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 where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have submitted no work
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Ruru Specialist 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
- 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.

Ruru Specialist School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting sufficient samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes and providing support for assessors where appropriate
- using external moderation outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation processes.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

Ruru Specialist 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.

Ruru Specialist 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

Ruru Specialist School has effective processes and procedures for:

- 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
- celebrating students' success.

Ruru Specialist 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 Ruru Specialist 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 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
- *Ruru Specialist School NZQA Staff Handbook*

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal
- the Principal's Nominee
- a Deputy Principal / Teacher
- a Team Leader / Teacher.

The discussion included a report-back session to highlighting good practice and areas for improvement, with suggested strategies, next steps, and to agree on any action required.

Background

Ruru Specialist School teaches students from ages 5 to 21 years with special educational needs. Currently any students undertaking NCEA assessment attend a satellite classroom in the Southern Institute of Technology / Te Pūkenga, or at a local secondary school. Its first and previous Managing National Assessment review was in 2018. The school was granted consent to assess in 2021.

In the past 3 years the school has reported a total of 27 results across 4 standards using its own provider code. These have been in the areas of Supported Learning and Tikanga. Results for standards assessed by external providers with which the school holds Memoranda of Understanding are also reported. These arrangements are held centrally with online oversight by the Principal's Nominee