

Managing National Assessment Report

BLENNZ: Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ

November 2017

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively BLENNZ:

- 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 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, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report 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 2017* (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.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee and two teachers.

There was a report-back session 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

Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) provides educational programmes and specialist support services to children and young people throughout New Zealand who are blind, deafblind and low vision. The organisation comprises 14 regional vision and resource centres, and includes a residential facility on the Homai campus, Auckland.

There are a number of different options available for students within the school including:

- the residential transition Kickstart programme on the Homai Campus for students aged 17 to 21 years
- students supported by regionally based Resource Teachers Vision enrolled in mainstream schools
- short term immersion courses for groups of learners where assessment is undertaken by BLENNZ.

BLENNZ first reported results to NZQA in 2005. Since the last Managing National Assessment report in 2013, the school has assessed thirteen students against one standard through an immersion course in 2015, and reported results assessed by an outside provider for a small number of students in 2015 and 2017.

SUMMARY

BLENNZ

1 November 2017

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*:

- for assessing the limited range of standards they offer
- by managing relationships with external providers who offer assessments
- by managing relationships with external providers who report results on the school's behalf.

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.

What the school is doing well

BLENNZ has processes in place to support credible assessment for national qualifications. Assessment programmes are developed to meet the individual needs and pathways of students. The school works with a student's school of enrolment, or outside providers, and delivers short immersion courses to offer appropriate assessment opportunities.

Processes for moderation are understood and practised. The central storage of all assessment material ensures internal moderation can be monitored and work is available if required for external moderation. The school has a documented arrangement with students' schools of enrolment for reporting results undertaken through an immersion programme.

Areas for improvement

The school has identified the need to review its procedures to ensure they meet the current requirements of NZQA and reflect the context of the school.

Memoranda of understanding are required when the school uses an outside provider to make clear the processes for assessment, including who is required to report results.

Results should be reported to NZQA in the year of completion so students can track their progress.

Assessment documentation needs to be updated in order to meet current NZQA requirements and to reflect the character of the school.

Agreed action

The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems. These are to:

- report results to NZQA in a timely manner
- monitor that external providers report results accurately
- ensure and monitor that appropriate relationships with external providers are clearly documented
- update documentation as discussed in this report.

Kay Wilson
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FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

How effectively has the school responded to external and internal review?

External review

Evidence found that external review actions have been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Items from 20 March 2013 Managing National Assessment Report

There were no actions identified in this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has not had any standards requested for external moderation since the last Managing National Assessment report.

Internal review

Evidence found that the school is effectively 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 acknowledges that as they have undertaken very little assessment since the last Managing National Assessment report, their review of processes and procedures for assessment for qualifications has been limited.

The school indicated its intention to build the capacity of the school to offer more assessment in the future. Discussions around the action items identified in this report indicate some specific areas to initially focus review processes on. It will be important to consider how the different scenarios for assessment operating within the school operate, in terms of managing assessment and the reporting of results.

No action required

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice were identified during this review.

How effectively does the school's assessment practice meet the needs of its students?

Evidence found that assessment practice is meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 5.5)

BLENNZ has effective processes and procedures for:

- meeting the qualification needs of students by developing an Individual Learning Plan or Individual Transition Plan for each student
- liaising with Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, other external providers and/or a student's home school to develop a programme of assessment where appropriate
- ensuring the procedures of the external provider assessing a standard are followed
- making use of assistive technologies where appropriate to support student to achieve to their potential
- communicating the importance of producing authentic work to students and Resource Teachers Vision.

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 found that internal and external moderation are ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 6.4b)

BLENNZ has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- critiquing assessment materials prior to use
- using subject specialists from outside the school to verify teacher judgements of student work
- documenting the internal moderation process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*.

Centralised storage ensures material available for external moderation The Principal's Nominee holds student work centrally so it is available if required for external moderation.

No action required

No issues with the school's internal and external moderation were identified during this review.

How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

Evidence found that data management and use supports student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)

BLENNZ effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - using data to inform the development of Individual Education Plans and track student progress
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - allocating ESAA secure logins to appropriate staff to manage NZQA data functions
 - ensuring students are entered for those standards intended to be assessed
 - using the correct provider code for assessment managed by external providers.

Timely reporting of results needed Over the last two years, the school has used an outside provider to provide assessment of some standards. This organisation required the school to report the results, however, this was not done until the following year. Reporting results in a timely manner, ideally in the year of assessment, enables students to monitor their results, track progress towards their academic goals, and ensure the results are included in NZQA's annual qualifications check.

Ensure school of enrolment reports results In 2015 the school assessed students as part of an immersion course. The school arranged that the student's school of enrolment would report the results with the BLENNZ provider code. This review found that only eight out of twelve students had their results reported. In three of these cases, the home school had reported the result using an incorrect version number.

Using the Standard Search function available through its Provider login, BLENNZ can view results reported by other schools using their provider code. The school is encouraged to use its Provider login to reconcile its records with results reported by other providers. This will ensure students get the results due to them.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management and use of assessment-related data. Senior management undertakes to:

- report results to NZQA in a timely manner
- monitor that external providers report results accurately.

How effectively does the school's communication inform staff, and students and their families about assessment?

Evidence found that school communication ensures understanding about assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7ii(b))

BLENNZ demonstrates effective processes and procedures through:

- communicating course details through the student's Individual Education Plan and Individual Transition Plan as appropriate
- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Ensure a documented relationship with external providers is in place To ensure the school has a record of the nature of its assessment relationships with external providers, memoranda of understanding and subcontracting agreements should be held centrally and reconciled with reported results. These should be agreed to and signed before the delivery of any assessment commences. This ensures the relevant obligations such as, who is responsible for entries, reporting results, and fee payment are transparent. This review identified an example of the use of an outside provider with no evidence that a documented formal agreement was in place.

Update assessment procedures The school's assessment procedures are not up to date. Before these are next published, they should be updated to:

- standardise the language between school documents and NZQA, such as consent to assess rather than accreditation
- ensure the information relating to further assessment opportunities meets NZQA requirements
- expand information about internal moderation to include critiquing and verification which match the terminology on the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- review processes and information so that they fit the school's context.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, students and families. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure and monitor that appropriate relationships with external providers are clearly documented
- update documentation as discussed in this report.