

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Niue High School

2019

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Niue 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
- *Niue High School Staff NCEA Policy Handbook, 2019*
- *Niue High School Student/Parent Handbook, 2019*
- *Assessment Calendar for 2019*
- a sample of Niue High School Head of Department six monthly reports to the Principal
- a sample of long-term plans for Years 11, 12 and 13
- a sample of monitoring and tracking documentation used by the Principal to record interviews with students when discussing progress
- an analysis of Niue High School NCEA student achievement, 2019

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, Heads of Department and NCEA teachers for all subjects, and three students.

There was a report-back session with the Director of the Niue Education Department, the Principal and the Principal's Nominee at the end of the review visit to highlight good practice and areas for improvement, with suggested strategies, and next steps, and to agree on any action required.

## Background

Niue High School is the only secondary school on Niue Island.

The Niue Education Department is responsible for the governance of the school.

A Managing National Assessment review is undertaken in Niue High School annually, under a joint agreement between the Niue Education Department and NZQA to ensure the school is completing credible NCEA assessment.

The school annually assesses students for the New Zealand national qualification, the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), at Levels 1, 2 and 3.

The school offers sufficient courses for Year 13 students to achieve NCEA Level 3 and University Entrance.

The range of courses offered at all levels can change markedly from year to year depending on staff capability and student interest.

For the majority of students, English is their second language.

# SUMMARY

## Niue High School

12 – 16 August 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 most issues. The next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted in 2020.

### What the school is doing well

Niue High School's strategic aim is to provide a quality education for students in a positive environment which reflects Niue's national goal *Halavake ke he Monuina* (successful journey through life).

The school's focus on student achievement is evident in continued improvements for students participating in NCEA at Levels 2 and 3 and the award of University Entrance. Students are encouraged to take every opportunity to achieve and are supported to do so through active monitoring and tracking by teachers and senior leadership.

Assessment practice is understood and well managed by teachers. Consistent school-wide processes ensure that results for qualifications reported to NZQA are credible. Internal moderation practice is effectively managed by the Principal's Nominee. All teachers interviewed for the review critique tasks, verify grades from a purposeful selection of student work and document this process. Senior leadership monitor the completion of moderation for each standard assessed and for which results are reported to NZQA.

Differentiation of assessment opportunities within and between courses is increasingly being used to meet the needs of a diverse range of student abilities and aspirations. Some subject areas are now investigating using optional standards to support vocational pathways.

External moderation outcomes are addressed by Heads of Department who complete action plans to resolve issues identified by NZQA moderators. Senior leadership are aware of historical and current concerns raised in external moderation reports and manage actions to improve outcomes.

The Principal's Nominee analyses and evaluates NCEA results which are reported to the Principal and the Niue Education Department. Heads of Department and teachers reflect on these outcomes in their future course design. The annual Teacher as Inquiry projects of many NCEA teachers focus on improving student achievement outcomes for targeted standards.

Reports of results and entries to NZQA are timely and accurate.

Strong leadership and sound communication of assessment procedures and processes by the senior management has led to effective practice. Open discussion with staff and students ensures a consistent understanding of shared expectations when managing NCEA assessment. The students interviewed for the review were well informed about the NCEA qualification and acknowledge the support of staff in assisting them to present their best evidence of achievement.

The Principal's Nominee has a thorough knowledge of school NCEA assessment practice and manages changes and issues to improve current practice within the cultural context of Niue High School. Staff acknowledge his professionalism, approachability and support. The Principal's Nominee is supported in his work by the Principal who alongside staff, supports students to achieve.

### **Areas for improvement**

As discussed with senior leadership, to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student cohort the school should consider further use of the flexibility of the NCEA assessment model in meeting the needs of students.

The school should personalise individual students' assessment plans and where appropriate assess students when they are ready. Departments should continue to investigate and deliver standards that provide all students with learning and assessment experiences to allow them to succeed. This could involve more focus on vocational pathways, and the use of core skills and supported learning standards.

### **Agreed action**

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

- remove the conditions of student assessment stated in the staff and student handbooks as outlined in the report.

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6 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)*

### Action Items from 12 – 15 August 2018 Managing National Assessment Report

The school has actioned or partially actioned all recommendations from the last review including:

- where appropriate, standards being purposefully selected at grade boundaries for internal moderation grade verification
- clarification of the requirements for evidence to report derived grades being based on standard specific evidence

The submission of samples of student work for external moderation for one standard, for an Industry Training Organisation was not sufficient. An action plan has been developed to ensure the current submission meets expectations.

The attendance requirement when managing student assessment opportunities has not been removed from documentation.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The agreement rate for external moderation between NZQA moderators and teacher judgements has declined since the last review. Two contributing factors have been identified by senior management as the cause for this decline. Internet connectivity issues with the use of the moderation application tool for digital submissions led to only half the standards requested being submitted in 2018. The school also has made a strategic decision to select standards that teachers want specific feedback on due to isolation and the difficulty of engaging with a range of subject experts. NZQA is supporting the school to resolve digital submission issues.

All external moderation outcomes that are Not Consistent or Not Yet Consistent are followed up by the Head of Department through an action plan with strategies to address identified issues. Completion is monitored by the Principal and Principal's Nominee.

The school has a clear process for evaluating the outcomes of expected improvements including reselection of Not Consistent standards in the next year's external moderation assessment plan.

### 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)*

Informed by data analysis and senior leadership direction, review occurs school-wide and at department and teacher level by:

- discussion and sharing of good practice at NZQA Working Group meetings of senior leadership and Heads of Department

- reflecting on NCEA student achievement by Heads of Department in biannual reports to the Principal
- senior leadership requiring Heads of Department to report on focus areas identified by the Niue Education Department when designing programmes to meet student needs. These include improving student achievement, staff development and supporting digital teaching and learning.
- robust monitoring of all assessment practice by the Principal's Nominee who after discussion with the Education Management Team, initiates changes to improve NCEA assessment practice.

The school is developing a more collaborative approach to the management of NCEA assessment practices which is evident in recent initiatives including:

- Heads of Department being given access to the NZQA Niue High School secure website to view entries, and results reported, and to submit samples of student work using the Moderation Application Tool
- requiring all teachers to undertake an inquiry project which this year includes a focus on improving student achievement outcomes from targeted standards
- the introduction of Religious Education standards in Level 3 compulsory Vagahau Niue Language and Culture courses to provide assessment opportunities for the increasing number of students returning from New Zealand who have limited Vagahau Niue language skills
- development of a mentoring programme that ensures that new teachers, mainly from jurisdictions outside New Zealand, have a good understanding of standards-based assessment as required for the NCEA assessment model
- an exchange programme with Howick College in Auckland where teachers are selected to visit twice a year to investigate approaches for the delivery of NCEA courses
- introduction of impromptu department visits by the Principal's Nominee to check the documentation and actual practice of NCEA assessment processes including moderation
- purchase of a class set of bookable digital devices to encourage teachers to support students to collect evidence digitally to increase the options for engagement in the learning and assessment process.

### **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 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)*

### **Niue High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- effective use of differentiated assessment of achievement standards between and within courses
- using local contexts to adapt assessment tasks to provide genuine and authentic learning that engages the interest of students
- providing milestone checks, feedback, feedforward and conferencing to support students to present their best evidence
- encouraging students to use digital tools where appropriate and feasible, to engage them in the learning and assessment process
- ensuring students have adequate assessment opportunities to meet literacy and numeracy requirements
- collecting evidence from checklists, audio and video formats, where appropriate

### **Niue High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- managing missed and late assessments, resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- following the principles of natural justice when using the appeals process and investigating possible breaches of the rules
- using a range of strategies to ensure student work is authentic
- managing an examination centre
- ensuring derived grades are based on standard specific evidence
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Meeting student needs through assessment opportunities** When providing assessment opportunities, the school should focus on personalising individual students' assessment plans and where appropriate assessing them when ready.

School documentation states that, "*students can be withdrawn or removed from assessment opportunities for standards because of poor attendance, repetitive failure or an attitude and effort that does not meet the minimum requirements of the course.*"

The NCEA assessment model is designed to allow personalisation of programmes rather than restricting student progress for poor attendance, learning challenges or behaviour. Courses should be designed to allow students access to assessment opportunities when they are ready to be assessed, as long as authenticity is maintained. It is appropriate to offer flexible timeframes for assessment submission, when manageable. Where an adequate assessment opportunity is not provided, students should be withdrawn from that standard.



**Developing vocational pathways** The school should encourage all departments to investigate offering students vocational pathways given the increasing diversity of the student population due to absenteeism and students arriving from New Zealand.

The school has developed vocational pathways through working with BCITO and providing student workplace experience in hospitality and agriculture. The Social Science department is investigating the reintroduction of Tourism unit standards as an option in Geography courses and the Physical Education and Health department is interested in providing standards in first aid and sports coaching.

**Supporting students with learning barriers** Teachers identified the increasing number of students with poor literacy and numeracy skills due to learning difficulties, disrupted education and poor attendance. To facilitate success the school should consider investigating providing core skills and supported learning standards for these students to experience success and where culturally appropriate, identify those students requiring extra support for assessment opportunities.

### **For consideration**

To extend good practice in meeting student needs and supporting assessment practice, the school is encouraged to consider:

- assess students when they are ready, when appropriate
- personalise individual student's programmes of study by offering a range of standards or of different assessment timeframes
- develop vocational pathways as a viable option for assessing students to meet qualification requirements
- investigate using core skill and supported learning standards to allow all students to experience success
- identify students requiring extra support for assessment opportunities.

## 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)*

### **Niue High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- critiquing all assessment materials prior to use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- using subject specialists to verify grades on strategically selected samples of student work, where appropriate
- documenting the internal moderation process by using the *NZQA Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- keeping benchmark exemplars to inform future assessment decisions.

### **Niue High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

**School practices support effective monitoring of internal and external moderation processes** The school is to be commended on the efforts of all teachers to meet requirements for internal and external moderation given issues of isolation and poor digital connectivity.

The Principal's Nominee supports all subject areas to complete grade verification and respond to outcomes. Processes are monitored to ensure samples of work have been suitably verified before results are reported. A mentoring programme for new teachers to NCEA and sponsoring professional development visits to Howick College are increasing the capacity of the school to develop robust moderation quality assurance processes, within their context.

### **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 for data management and use supporting student achievement outcomes.  
(CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)*

### **Niue High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- reviewing courses to modify assessment opportunities as necessary
- annually reporting student achievement outcomes to the Principal and Niue Education Department to inform strategic direction
- sharing an analysis of NCEA student achievement data with all teachers at the beginning of each academic year
- monitoring and tracking student achievement progress through termly meetings of all NCEA students with the Principal
- celebrating student achievement success through awards and recognition at assemblies.

### **Niue High School reports accurate achievement data by:**

- timely and accurate reporting of entries and results to NZQA and addressing error reports as necessary
- ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
- actively managing entries for external examinations
- requiring all teachers and students to attest that their entries and results have been entered correctly.

**Improving student achievement through effective use of data** The school's continued focus on student success is evident in recent improvements in participating student achievement at Levels 2 and 3 of the NCEA qualification and the award of University Entrance. These trends reflect the effective monitoring of each individual student's achievement progress, the increasing reflection on standards offered in courses and the high expectations by senior leadership and teachers for students to succeed.

### **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))*

### **Niue High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- communicating consistent NCEA information on assessment policy and procedures through staff and student handbooks
- holding regular staff meetings to update teachers on NCEA information and discuss best practice
- inviting parents, caregivers and students to attend conference interviews each term with teachers to discuss achievement progress
- managing student workloads through the publication of an assessment calendar
- requiring a course outline be provided to students listing all standards offered and assessment conditions
- reporting all results and adequately storing samples of student work when teachers exit the school.

### **Niue High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- facilitating shared ownership of the assessment process through regular discussions at the NZQA Working Group meetings, staff meetings, parent-teacher conferences and student assemblies
- inviting New Zealand Ministry of Education personnel and NZQA School Relationship Managers to provide professional development on current best assessment practice and the outcomes of the NCEA review
- monitoring all aspects of NCEA assessment practice to ensure school-wide consistency
- checking, through regular interviews with the Principal, that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

**Mentoring of new teachers to NCEA** The Principal's Nominee effectively mentors' new teachers to NCEA to support school-wide credible assessment. Currently Niue High School is staffed by new teachers from jurisdictions that have limited understanding of the NCEA assessment model and standards-based assessment. Senior leadership have identified this as a strategic issue and actively provide considerable support to new teachers ensuring their understanding of NCEA assessment practice meets the school's NCEA requirements. This means that the highest standards of quality assurance are maintained.

**Conditions of Assessment** As outlined in the assessment section of the report the school needs to remove the reference in the staff and student handbooks to withdrawing students from assessment opportunities because of attendance, repetitive failure or poor behaviour.

**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:

- remove the conditions of student assessment stated in the staff and student handbooks as outlined in the report.