Managing National Assessment Report

Papakura High School

March 2017
What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA’s review of how effectively Papakura 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 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 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 review
• Papakura High School Curriculum Policy
• Papakura High School Staff Handbook for NZQA Assessment 2017
- "Papakura High School NZQA Assessment Course Handbook for Students Completing NCEA Courses"
- A sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal’s Nominee, three students and Heads of Department for Mathematics, Physical Education and Health, Social Sciences and Technology.

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.

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6 June 2017

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SUMMARY

Papakura High School

31 March 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. 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. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

What the school is doing well

Papakura High School has processes in place which ensure credible assessment for national qualifications.

The Principal’s Nominee provides experienced support for assessment. Regular meetings with Heads of Department around quality assurance ensure there is a consistent understanding of process throughout the school and any identified issues are dealt with in a timely manner.

Aspects of assessment practice such as managing authenticity, dealing with possible breaches of assessment rules, missed and late assessments and reporting not achieved are understood, communicated and consistent.

Internal moderation is embedded within the school. Staff select a purposeful selection of student work at grade boundaries for grade verification. Monitoring from Heads of Department and the Principal's Nominee ensures that the school only reports results for internal assessment that have been subject to the school’s internal moderation process.

Assessment data is managed effectively to ensure results reported to NZQA are accurate.

Areas for improvement

The school should review reasons for the high number of Not Achieved results being reported. This review should include checking the appropriateness of entries and that course design gives students a fair opportunity to achieve. Strategies such as differentiating programmes and assessing students when ready will assist in improving the assessment outcomes for students.

Recording verification discussion of student work will further strengthen internal moderation processes within the school.

There are some minor updates suggested for inclusion in the next review of assessment-related documentation to align it with current practice.
Agreed action

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

- investigate ways to improve the assessment outcomes for students
- require staff to document discussion around grade boundaries
- update documentation as noted in this report.
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, 3v)*

**Action Items from 2 August 2013 Managing National Assessment Report** The school has addressed the four agreed action items from this report.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** Staff are required to respond to any issues identified and when appropriate develop an action plan. The Principal’s Nominee monitors the results from external moderation and follows up with staff on their response.

The most recent external moderation submission was December 2016. There was no material received by NZQA for 5 of the 49 requested standards. The Principal’s Nominee identified this occurred where staff had left the school and there had been a change in leadership of the Department. She plans to review and strengthen the storage of student material and exit arrangements for Heads of Departments.

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)*

Review of assessment in the school is led by the experienced Principal’s Nominee. She oversees the robust processes within the school and ensures they are consistently applied. Any issues such as data errors are identified early, and actions put in place to rectify these in a timely manner.

Heads of Department meet regularly with the Principal’s Nominee throughout the term to discuss curriculum issues, both individually and together as a group. This enables close monitoring of aspects such as assessment practice and moderation. As updates are received, or clarifications needed, these can be actioned and communicated readily.

Heads of Department review the success of courses annually through completing an evidence-based review of student achievement for each standard within their courses. From this analysis, targets for the following year are developed and adaptions such as staffing and contexts implemented.

The next step for the school is to extend their review process to unpack reasons behind data trends and to justify the rationale for aspects of assessment undertaken in the school. One such example could be addressing reasons for the high rate of Not Achieved, as noted in the later in this report.

**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, 2.6 I & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 5.5)

Papakura High School demonstrates some effective processes and procedures for meeting the needs of their students by:

- adapting assessment to make use of local contexts to meet interests of students
- developing department websites, digital learning and online assessment opportunities to improve accessibility of assessment for students
- using a range of outside providers as a way to widen the range of assessment opportunities for students
- identifying and supporting students entitled to special assessment conditions.

Papakura High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- missed and late assessment, authenticity and the follow up on any suspected breaches of the assessment rules
- assisting with the management of external examinations
- ensuring valid evidence is available for derived grades
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Improve assessment outcomes for students

Schools should tailor assessment so that students, with their teachers, can select standards that will enable them to demonstrate what they can achieve. Evidence from this review suggests that this is an area the school should examine.

A high percentage of student entries over the last few years have a Not Achieved result being awarded as the assessment outcome, particularly in internally assessed standards. In 2016, this level was over twice the national rate for schools of a similar decile. In addition, there were several examples of students who received Not Achieved for every standard in a course, and often across more than one course.

There are several ways to develop assessment programmes for students that meet their individual needs and show what they can achieve:

- Individualising programmes to offer students standards and courses where they have a fair opportunity to achieve.
- Offering different standards or contexts to students in the same class.
- Offering fewer standards to some students in order to enable them to "do less better". Students in a class do not all need to be assessed for every standard offered in a course.
- Making use of optional standards so that identified students can be extended over and above the generic standards offered to all within a course.
- Assessing students when ready through flexible timeframes.
Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

• investigate ways to improve the assessment outcomes for students.
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)

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

- critiquing all assessment material prior to use
- using subject specialists within and outside the school to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work
- holding current student exemplars to inform future assessment decisions
- Heads of Department and the Principal’s Nominee monitoring to ensure the school only reports results to NZQA that have undergone the process.

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

- using a valid random selection process that meets NZQA requirements
- responding effectively to moderator’s findings.

Document the verification discussion around student borderline work Staff are required to complete an Internal Moderation Cover Sheet either online or hard copy to record completion of the process. Examples sighted during the visit showed purposeful selection of student work, however, there was limited documentation of the verification discussion undertaken. Documenting the discussion will serve as a valuable reference for teachers in subsequent years, as well as enabling management to monitor the effectiveness of the process undertaken. As well as the use of the Internal Moderation Cover Sheet, documentation could include copies of an annotated student cover sheet, marking sheet, or emailed exchanges.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school’s internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality. Senior management undertakes to:

- require staff to document discussion around grade boundaries.
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)*

Papakura High School effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - involving staff in the tracking and mentoring of students through small groups that meet weekly
  - using a ‘traffic light’ system to identify students at risk of not achieving their academic goals
  - encouraging students and families to access achievement data through the parent portal on the school’s student management system
  - departments undertaking data analysis for every assessment and standard to assist in planning for the following year

- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - reporting results to NZQA on a regular and timely basis
  - using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
  - endeavouring to have all entries reported to NZQA with a result
  - supporting eligible families to apply for financial assistance
  - using the correct provider code for assessment undertaken by external providers
  - reconciling reported results from outside providers with Memoranda of Understanding.

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

Papakura High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive assessment outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and their families
- annually reviewing the accuracy of information provided to students, parents and caregivers
- ensuring consistent understanding and application of assessment practice through robust oversight by the Principal’s Nominee.

Update documentation Documents sighted during the visit were of an overall good standard. Some suggestions were made for improvements in documentation to ensure they reflect school practice and NZQA requirements. When they are next updated, the school should:

- standardise language between documents such as reassessment/further assessment opportunity, appeals, and breaches
- update application information for special assessment conditions
- specify that NCEA Level 3 requires 80 credits, of which 20 credits may be from Level 2 or above
- clarify that University Entrance requires 14 credits from three approved subjects.

The student handbook is currently issued in hard copy. As the school continues to develop its digital environment it may be timely to review this form of delivery to align it with other ways of communication and ensure it easily assessible for all. The document contains relevant assessment procedures for students. In some cases, these are repeated verbatim from the staff document. Adjusting the language of the handbook may assist in making the document more user friendly for the intended audience.

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:

- update documentation as noted in this report.

For consideration

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- the language level and mode of delivery of the student handbook.