

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Sacred Heart College (Auckland)**

**September 2019**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Sacred Heart College:

- 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
- *Sacred Heart College Assessment Policy*
- *Sacred Heart College Assessment and National Qualifications Policy and Procedures Handbook for Staff (Staff Handbook)*.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
  - Commerce
  - English
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - Social Sciences
  - Visual Arts
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Director-Academic Institute 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.

# SUMMARY

## Sacred Heart College

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

### What the school is doing well

Sacred Heart College provides culturally inclusive assessment to support their students to gain qualifications and become outstanding young men. The school is proud that their approach helps to ensure that students of all ethnicities achieve equitably and above national levels.

They are committed to ensuring that their systems support credible assessment. This includes staff providing a thorough response to external moderation outcomes and senior leaders checking that systems for managing assessment are consistent. Internal moderation is embedded practice.

Self-review uses achievement data and feedback from students, teachers and parents to help identify areas for improvement. The school responds effectively to ensure that any issues are resolved. They expect their self-review focus will shift more strongly towards academic achievement, in support of their overall vision for their students.

Data is well managed by the Principal's Nominee to ensure timely and accurate reporting to NZQA. Supported by the Director-Academic Institute, she works collaboratively with teachers, students and family to ensure they understand NCEA and assessment practice.

### Areas for improvement

The school must be confident that evidence used for derived grades is quality assured before results are reported to NZQA. This assurance could be provided by adding to the information to that the Principal's Nominee currently collects from Heads of Department before submitting a derived grade.

When the staff handbook is next reviewed some changes will help support teacher understanding and practice. Other next steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

**Agreed action**

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

- monitoring that evidence for derived grades is quality assured
- amending the staff handbook as noted.

Kay Wilson  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

12 November 2019

**NZQA**

**0800 697 296**

[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)

# 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 29 July 2016 Managing National Assessment Report** The three agreed items from the 2016 review have been actioned. A subject specialist is used to verify teacher judgements where assessment quality issues are identified, teachers verify grades awarded on a sufficient and purposeful selection of student work for internal moderation, and an evidence-based check has been introduced to monitor internal moderation.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school's response to external moderation outcomes effectively addresses issues with assessment quality. External moderation outcomes provide assurance that internal moderation processes are delivering credible assessment overall. The Principal's Nominee has a conversation with each Head of Department about every report. Heads of Department then comment on the moderation control sheet the outcome for every standard and any actions they need to take. The Principal's Nominee closes the loop by monitoring these for completion and effectiveness. She reported on the actions the school has taken with one subject area with ongoing quality assurance issues, which illustrated their commitment to ensuring credible assessment.

### 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)*

Sacred Heart College has had a strong vision focused on students determining to succeed at the highest level in their personal and professional life. A change of Principal has resulted in a renewed academic focus which will impact on internal review. The Principal's Nominee noted this has already resulted in increased teacher conversations about curriculum and assessment.

Their use of data, including parent and student voice, helps the school to identify the changes that need to take place and assess the impact of improvements made. The school plans a review of structures that support students towards qualifications goals, including academic counselling and tracking cohorts from year to year. To enhance their review of assessment practice they could consider how they can go from responding to issues, to being able to comprehensively anticipate them.

**Achievement analysis provides useful insight** The school provided examples that show they can respond effectively to issues found. Their analysis of University Entrance for 2018 showed overall achievement was lower than they expected. Deeper examination of the data revealed that students did not get the expected 14 credits in an approved subject which in turn led to the identification that in one class the external grades for students were much lower than the grades awarded in their practice assessment. In response the school has put in place a plan to ensure the

teacher develops understanding of the standard and is linked to an external subject specialist who checks that assessment decisions are sound. This is good practice.

The school's next step is to broaden the range of checks they routinely use to help anticipate issues. For example, introducing an annual comparison of practice grades against final grades achieved in external exams would provide a benchmark the school could use to evaluate the validity of grades awarded in practice activities.

This year the school has set up University Entrance tracking group comprising senior Deans and the three Directors. They are mentoring Year 13 students to keep them on track towards their academic goal with parents and are including parents in the conversations.

**Relationships support review** Since 2016, the Principal's Nominee has focussed on refining moderation systems and practices. She noted that in the three years since taking up the role, her conversations with staff have become more frequent and targeted on assessment practice and quality. She also observed that developing good relationships with teachers and students has led to her having deeper conversations when checking on assessment processes. A biennial check of departmental systems by her and the Director–Academic Institute is another mechanism that she uses to gather feedback to inform review.

### **For consideration**

To extend good practice in external review and self-review of assessment, the school is encouraged to consider:

- broadening the range of checks used to help anticipate issues.

## 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)*

### **Sacred Heart College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- collecting evidence for internal assessment digitally
- providing tuition groups in a range of subjects and homework clubs to targeted student groups such as New Zealand Scholarship candidates
- supporting those who are struggling on an individual student basis
- providing differentiated assessment between courses in the same subject and level
- giving them some flexibility in assessment including the option to withdraw from external exams where they have already achieved sufficient credits in a subject.

### **Scared Heart College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- managing missed and late assessment
- managing authenticity, with some subjects using Google Docs to track document production and provide transparency for students
- providing resubmission and further assessment opportunities to students that meet NZQA Examination Rules and Guidelines
- assisting the Exam Centre Manager to maintain a well-run exam centre by reviewing processes annually
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Confirm that evidence for derived grades has been quality assured** The school must be confident that evidence used for derived grades is quality assured before results are reported to NZQA. Heads of Department could provide this assurance by adding it to the information to that the Principal's Nominee currently collects before submitting a derived grade. This assurance could be from a sample of student evidence verified by a subject specialist for the assessed standard. Alternatively, the grade can be justified by comparing the pattern of grades from external assessment of a standard with those from practice assessments over several years. It will also assist them with identifying potential achievement issues before students sit their external examinations.

**Using school-based evidence for special assessment conditions** The school could consider expanding the number of applications for special assessment conditions they make to NZQA that are supported by school-based evidence. Collecting this data for students internally enables equity of student access to support by reducing the financial burden to parents of the cost of a professional assessment for evidence. It also helps to build a consistent picture of learner needs and assists teachers provide targeted learning as well as assessment support.

Students with NZQA approved special assessment conditions are well-supported by the school.



**Support for Māori and Pasifika students** The school has an ongoing commitment to supporting their Māori and Pasifika students. They employ a staff member to provide professional development on cultural responsiveness for staff, mentor students and liaison with their Pasifika community. By working in the community homework centre outside of school he gains insight from parents and students.

**Student achievement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects** The school's strategies help to contribute to the overall achievement of NCEA qualifications for Māori and Pasifika being generally equitable with their students of other ethnicities. The school reports that in some years, the achievement of Māori and Pasifika students in STEM subjects has been equal or better than students of other ethnicities. They noted however, that this varies markedly from year to year in these subjects.

### **Agreed action**

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

- monitor that evidence for derived grades is quality assured.

### **For consideration**

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

- using more school-based evidence to support applications for special assessment conditions.

## 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)*

### **Scared Heart College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists, many of whom are external to the school, to verify a purposefully selected samples of student work
- documenting their internal moderation process on a standard coversheet which teachers enter into Google Drive for Heads of Department and the Principal's Nominee to check
- monitoring the completion of internal moderation by having a control sheet for each subject area that the Principal's Nominee and Heads of Department can use to confirm that results have been quality assured
- carrying out a physical check on moderation systems and practices in every department every two years
- closely monitoring internal moderation for those standards where the school has evidence of concern.

### **Sacred Heart College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- supporting teachers to submit work for external moderation early in the year
- encouraging teachers to request standards that they would like moderator feedback on
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

**Ensure staff are following processes** The school should consider how they can enhance their monitoring processes to ensure that all staff are following the expected external moderation practices. The timing of the process for selecting a sample for external moderation is clearly stated and followed by five of the departments interviewed. However, one Head of Department verifies a random sample of student work for internal moderation which is then sent for external moderation if requested.

The recent appointment of a Data Manager should provide the Principal's Nominee with the time to include an annual evidence-based check on quality assurance processes, to complement the more in-depth biennial check.

### **For consideration**

To extend school practice in assurance of assessment quality, the school is encouraged to consider:

- extending monitoring of internal moderation to include and an evidence-based check.

## **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)*

### **Sacred Heart College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- monitoring that students meet Level 1 Literacy and Numeracy requirements in the English and Mathematics departments
- tracking students to identify those at risk of not achieving a qualification so that interventions can be put in place
- analysing annual achievement by cohort and subject, using an external agent to prepare the data
- meeting annually with Heads of Department to discuss this achievement analysis and planned actions arising out of it
- identifying any areas of concern from achievement data and putting in place actions plans to address these
- providing students and parents with access to entry and result data through the student management system portal.

### **Sacred Heart College reports accurate achievement data by:**

- submitting data files regularly to NZQA
- ensuring all entries have a result reported against them
- monitoring external entries closely to minimise late entries in externally assessed standards
- checking that mark books are up to date and accurate.

### **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))*

### **Sacred Heart College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to students in their student diary
- providing a staff handbook that contains information consistent with the student diary
- supporting Heads of Department new to the school to help them gain confidence in their leadership of assessment and moderation.

### **Sacred Heart College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- checking that teachers and students understand and are following most processes, by formal and informal means
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- providing annual fono for Pasifika parents to find out about NCEA and the boys' academic achievement
- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification through Deans assemblies and the Careers Adviser.

**Review of information to students and staff** When the staff handbook is next reviewed the advice on derived grades should be expanded to include the quality assurance expectations noted on page 8 of this report. The section on further assessment should be revised so that the description of resubmission and further assessment aligns with NZQAs expectations and the practices of teachers in the school.

### **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:

- amend the staff handbook as noted.