Managing National Assessment Report

St Peter's College Palmerston North

June 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively St Peter's College 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
- *New Zealand Qualifications Framework, School Guidelines and Procedures 2019, St Peter's College (Staff Handbook)*
- *National Certificate of Educational Achievement, Student Handbook 2019, St Peter's College*
- *Student Assessment and Achievement Policy, St Peter's College*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the:

- Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Head of Curriculum
- Heads of Department for:
    - Commerce
    - Materials Technology and Design and Visual Communication
    - Science
    - Social Sciences
    - Visual Art
- Teacher in Charge of:
    - Physics and Digital Technology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy Principal – Head of Curriculum and the 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

St Peter's College

6 June 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

St Peter's College has a shared culture and values that encompass the holistic development of the whole person. This student-centred approach is supported by a collective commitment to meeting students' needs, to improve achievement and foster well-being.

The school's high expectations, thorough knowledge of student's needs and student self-responsibility are important components contributing to high levels of engagement in assessment. Teachers actively support students and, through the development of positive relationships, create an environment in which students feel empowered to achieve. Evidence of the effectiveness of this approach is the high achievement at all qualification levels over the past years.

The college has demonstrated its capacity to respond effectively to review, to improve and embed effective NCEA practices, and ensure school-wide consistency and ownership of assessment. Achievement data and student voice is used at all levels of the college to inform course and programme design that reflect the school's vision.

Teachers described a variety of programmes used to differentiate and provide opportunities to gather evidence of students' achievement that allows best evidence to be presented. Assessment practice is underpinned by the principles of transparency and fair assessment.

Effective monitoring of student progress towards personal achievement goals occurs through academic mentoring. A range of academic and vocational opportunities are offered to provide relevant and engaging pathways for students, including through outside providers.

Robust internal moderation processes are evident in the consistent practice identified during the review. The school's annual audit of departments confirms that documentation reflects actual practice, ensuring only credible results are reported to NZQA. Senior leadership monitor that Heads of Department address any issues identified in external moderation.

Data analysis and tracking processes are comprehensive and effective, with academic counselling and early interventions supporting the improvement of student achievement outcomes. Literacy and numeracy are actively targeted to support the

attainment of qualifications. The management of assessment data is efficient, ensuring results reported to NZQA are complete, timely and accurate.

Working alongside the Principal and senior leadership team, the experienced Principal's Nominee competently leads assessment practice. She provides clear direction of best practice, sets high expectations, effectively manages changes and resolves issues to support student achievement. The college can be confident that any concerns related to assessment practice will be identified and addressed in a timely and appropriate manner. Staff acknowledged the role of the Principal's Nominee in maintaining the integrity of assessment practices, ensuring outcomes are consistent, credible, and meet NZQA requirements.

Effective communication of NCEA information informs professional learning and promotes consistent understanding. The college has a range of communications that allow staff, students and their whānau to gain a common understanding of NCEA and school expectations and assessment procedures. The students interviewed for the review were well-informed about the NCEA and considered teachers positively supported them to achieve.

Areas for improvement

Student work for external moderation must be selected to NZQA requirements. This will enable the school to confidently use external moderation results to measure the effectiveness of their internal moderation quality assurance practices.

Some course outlines do not adhere to the school requirements clearly outlined in the staff handbook. Using a course outline template with the required assessment details is best practice, as consistent information is provided to students and their caregivers.

Agreed action

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

- ensure the selection process of student work for external moderation meets current NZQA requirements

- provide consistent assessment information in all course outlines.

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26 July 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 31 October 2016 Managing National Assessment Report
There were two agreed actions from the 2016 review, namely:

- review the process for identifying the students entitled to special assessment conditions

- review the requirements of the course outline template and ensure it is consistently applied by all departments.

The provision of special assessment conditions has been strengthened, resulting in an increase in the number of students receiving entitlements. A school-wide approach has been implemented to identify and assess students, to support applications. A data base of students' specific learning, physical and medical needs has been developed, and school-based evidence is used for some applications. Staff are well informed of student entitlements and appropriate assistance is provided for both internal and external assessment.

The consistency of information in course outlines is a work in progress as discussed in the communications section of this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes   Actions in response to external moderation outcomes are documented by the Head of Department in their report to the Board of Trustees. The Deputy Principal – Head of Curriculum monitors action plans for completion and evaluates their effectiveness when issues are identified. This approach provides an effective response to external moderation outcomes by identifying patterns and potential issues in a subject area, allowing support to be initiated.

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)

Self-review focusses on the vision of providing students with the best opportunity to achieve through a holistic approach reflecting the special character of the college. This is based on the key pillars of professional collaboration, strong partnership with whānau and shared expectations and responsibility.

Data is used to interrogate student achievement to support changes to assessment practice and programmes aimed at improved outcomes for students.

Leadership also supports self-review with a focus on continuous improvement to best meet the needs of students, while ensuring credible assessment. The Principal's Nominee, working alongside senior leaders, is committed to increasing school-wide consistency, ownership and improvement in NCEA practice and processes. She

regularly shares best assessment practice to encourage self-review and ensure assessment practice is robust and current. Student achievement is enhanced through the collective effort of a stable and dedicated staff maintaining collegial relationships within and external to the college.

School leadership and the effective use of data has resulted in a number of initiatives, including:

- increasing Connect to Succeed mentoring time to provide greater life skills and career education, linked to learning pathways and achievement

- providing real-time data through the student management system, allowing teachers to reflect on student progress, resulting in timely responses to individual student achievement issues

- listening to student voice about their assessment experience through discussions between students, subject teachers and mentors, to make changes to course design

- the increased use of Google platforms to gather evidence of achievement to engage students and make learning and assessment more accessible

- preparing students for future assessment directions through planned involvement in digital examinations this year

- increasingly submitting external moderation material digitally to encourage the capture of evidence using digital tools

- focussing on the quality of achievement, including attainment of certificate and course endorsement through managing student workloads by:
    - limiting the number of credits offered in each course
    - offering some Year 12 students the same option twice, and decreasing the number of Year 13 option subjects, reducing overall courses studied

- extended the length of learning time blocks to offer further opportunities for individualised support, enriched learning, and assessment time

- teacher inquiries to reflect on teaching and learning practice, including strengthening literacy strategies to assist students to meet qualification requirements

- evaluating the consistency of internal moderation processes, including annually reconciling cover sheets with student work, through an annual audit undertaken by the Deputy Principal – Head of Curriculum, to provide senior leadership with confidence that reported results are credible.

These initiatives indicate the college's capacity to strategically plan to ensure programmes continue to meet students' needs. Effective leadership, a collaborative approach to assessment practice and close monitoring of individual student progress reflect a culture that increasingly utilises the flexibility of the NCEA model. This approach maintains robust quality assurance and the credibility of the qualification. Success is evident in the high levels of student engagement and attainment comparable to that of schools of similar decile.

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)

St Peter's College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- increasing the number of options available to students by engaging with external providers to offer vocational and trade-based courses

- providing differentiated learning and assessment opportunities within the same class and across classes in the same subject, including offering optional standards

- designing courses with learning contexts that are genuine and authentic, engage student interests, and reflect the special character and student's cultural backgrounds

- using milestone checks, feedback, and feedforward to assist students to present their best evidence of achievement

- broadening the ways evidence of student achievement is collected, including through portfolios, oral presentation and digital tools, to reflect student strengths

- assessing students when they are ready through flexible timeframes, as appropriate

- providing challenge by supporting senior students to enter for New Zealand Scholarship and undertake university studies, and offering junior students NCEA assessment opportunities, as appropriate

- supporting students to work towards a Vocational Pathway award by mapping Vocational Pathway standards to courses offered.

St Peter's College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring consistent assessment practice on missed and late work, appeals of assessment decisions and providing valid resubmission and further assessment opportunities

- using a range of strategies to assist students to present authentic work, including checking Google revision histories

- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have submitted no work

- ensuring student evidence for derived grades is valid, standard-specific and verified

- motivating students by celebrating academic achievement through awards and acknowledgement of success

- effectively managing NZQA external examinations and reviewing practice to identify improvements

- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993* in the issuing of student results and using student work as exemplars.

Mentoring integral to supporting student development and achievement The college has an effective academic mentoring programme, Connect to Succeed (C2S) to support students with goal setting, career pathways and progressing to complete qualifications.

Within each C2S group a Learning Coach, trained in academic coaching, provides ongoing support tailored to the student's need, through regular conversations. Learning Coaches discuss progress towards personal goals, preparedness for upcoming assessment and how to manage assessment workloads. Coaches use achievement data to monitor individuals' progress towards qualification attainment. The mentoring sessions also allow teachers to clarify the college and NZQA assessment practice for students. Students interviewed indicated they valued the positive relationships with their mentor, and approachability of staff to support their achievement.

Partnering with parents through ongoing communication is central to the success of C2S. Parents are involved in decisions about changes to assessment plans, which also further helps them to understand NCEA.

Support for Māori and Pacific students to provide Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) pathways Māori and Pacific students are supported to achieve in STEM subjects, with resultant Level 3 success for Māori equivalent to other students. Alongside whole school practices, the college has implemented strategies to provide equitable access for Māori and Pacific in STEM subjects, including:

- introducing the Puhoro Science Academy in 2018 for Year 11 Māori students, and continuing into 2019 for both Year 11 and 12

- providing targeted tutorial support in Science and Mathematics for Pacific students through Pasifika Power Up programme, tutorials prior to examinations or as required, and peer tutoring

- providing a new Creative Digital Technology course in 2018 that embraces project-based learning, incorporating Māori cultural values and Pasifika Fusion theme as assessment contexts

- looking for funding to support Māori and Pacific students from Year 7 into appropriate STEM pathways.

Strong leadership and advocacy for students, including leading the Māori Pou and Pasifika Education Plan, encompassing high expectations, cultural inclusion and partnership with whanau, support progression in STEM pathways.

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 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)

St Peter's College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring assessment tasks reflect the standard by having amended or new tasks critiqued prior to use

- using clarification documents, bench mark exemplars, documented discussions on grade judgements and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment decisions

- using subject specialists within and outside the college to verify assessor grade judgements for a sample of student work

- documenting the completion of internal moderation prior to reporting results to NZQA.

St Peter's College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being stored securely

- encouraging teachers to recommend standards to be included for external moderation

- reflecting on external moderation feedback to inform changes to assessment tasks and grade decisions

- meeting the moderation requirements of industry training organisations.

Strategic selection of student work for internal moderation   Teachers interviewed choose to verify more samples of student work than needed to meet NZQA quality assurance requirements. The feedback provides teachers with confidence in their verification decisions and informs review of the tasks and the standards offered.

The college should consider encouraging staff to undertake sufficient verification through the strategic selection of student work at grade boundaries. Strategic selection has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

Selection for external moderation should meet NZQA requirements   For consistency and ease of selection, the college expects teachers to use the student management system to generate the external moderation submission sample. This method is outlined in the staff handbook and meets current NZQA requirements that the selection method for external moderation must not be manipulated.

The college agreed to clarify selection requirements with staff to ensure the outcomes of external moderation can reliably evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation.

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:

- ensure the selection process of student work for external moderation meets current NZQA requirements.

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)

St Peter's College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- annually reporting an analysis of NCEA achievement at departmental and school-wide level to the Board of Trustees to develop ongoing strategic direction.

St Peter's College reports accurate achievement data by:

- supporting students and whānau to use the student management system portal, a digital application and their NZQA Learner login to monitor NCEA progress and check reported results for accuracy

- timely reporting of results to NZQA that have been checked for accuracy

- using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data issues

- using sign-off processes with students to confirm the accuracy of the internally assessed grades reported and external entries

- ensuring entries submitted to NZQA have a reported result or are withdrawn as appropriate

- reporting results against the correct provider code of external providers with which the college holds a current Memorandum of Understanding.

Comprehensive data analysis underpins robust tracking and monitoring Data analysis and use is a strength of the college. Current, comprehensive information for individuals and groups of students is used across all levels of the school to monitor achievement progress. This approach allows appropriate support and interventions to be made when needed.

All students are actively tracked. Students at risk of not attaining their achievement goals are identified early and receive academic counselling and assessment programmes are modified, as appropriate. A small group of identified Level 1 and 2 at-risk students are successfully offered a work skills programme delivered by an external provider at the end of the year.

Literacy and numeracy are targeted, and specifically designed courses and inventions are offered to assist students gain the requirements of NCEA and University Entrance. Strategies to support literacy development are a focus of staff professional learning.

Student voice is valued for informing changes to assessment practice and programmes. Teachers meet student needs by evaluating course design and delivery, leading to adjusting standards, assessment tasks and providing authentic contexts to reflect student interests and learning styles.

In collaboration with teachers, school leaders strategically review data to inform and reflect on student achievement, measurement against school-wide goals and targets, and the effectiveness of changes made. Teachers undertake reflective analysis of achievement data as part of teacher as inquiry projects, to improve student

achievement. High expectations of student success have been realised through multi-layered and inclusive data evaluation.

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))

St Peter's College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive course booklets for all subjects they undertake
- regularly communicating assessment information to staff, students and parents using face-to-face, written and accessible digital means.

St Peter's College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- presenting NCEA focussed student assemblies and parent evenings
- knowing that students understand assessment practices and what is needed to gain a qualification, through strong relationships with staff and student voice
- holding regular learning conferences with parents and students to discuss achievement, goals and progress leading to the gaining of a qualification
- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year
- using Head of Department and staff meetings to clarify changes of procedures, expectations and to facilitate discussion on assessment best practice
- targeted professional learning, including reinforcing the requirements of resubmission and further assessment opportunities at staff meetings and providing time for internal moderation
- supporting new Heads of Department and teachers through an induction programme on the school's assessment and moderation processes.

Best assessment practice supported by staff and student handbooks   Current and fit for purpose documentation supports ownership and consistent application of assessment policies and NZQA requirements across the college. The handbooks are user-friendly, concise, coherent plain English documents, covering key information. Clear direction on how to follow best practice is evident, including providing strategies and frequently asked questions and scenarios. The college has also digitalised assessment communications to enhance access for users.

Updating course outlines to provide consistent assessment information
Succinct and consistent information for all courses should be readily accessible to students and their caregivers. Some course outlines need updating to include the requirements listed in the staff handbook. Senior leadership indicated their intended next step is to align documentation with practice using a customised school template.

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:

- provide consistent assessment information in all course outlines.