

Managing National Assessment Report

Saint Catherine's College

May 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively St Catherine's 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
- *St Catherine's College Curriculum Statement*
- *St Catherine's College Board of Trustees Curriculum Policy*
- *St Catherine's College Board of Trustees Assessment and Reporting Policy*
- *St Catherine's College Staff Assessment Handbook, 2019*
- *St Catherine's College Student Handbook for Assessment, 2018*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
 - Creative Technologies
 - Languages
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Education
 - Social Sciences
- three students.

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.

SUMMARY

St Catherine's College

22 May 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 Catherine's College has developed review processes which allow it to focus on their mission statement of 'Spiritual, Human and Academic development.' In this context the school aims to pursue excellence through inquiry and scholarship, and to provide a balanced curriculum. Review is an established practice leading to professional development and change.

Teachers work with students to develop assessment plans, often in multi-level, multi-context classes which enable the school to offer a broad curriculum. The school has notably increased the number of students being identified and applying for and using special assessment conditions entitlements over the last year.

The processes followed for ensuring that internal moderation occurs are sound. The school is proactive in selecting a wide range of standards for the external moderation cycle and makes effective use of the feedback in planning.

The Principal's Nominee closely manages school assessment data. This has led to timely and accurate reporting of grades, and the reporting of a high number of results suitable for derived or emergency grades.

Students are well informed about NCEA and assessment processes through the comprehensive and up-to-date handbook they receive each year, which is supported by the whānau system and year level meetings.

Areas for improvement

To ensure that students gain credit for work assessed by external providers a memorandum of understanding between the school and each external provider must be obtained prior to the course being offered, and reconciled with the results reported. Filing a copy signed by both parties would strengthen this process.

Agreed action

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

- ensure that all memoranda of understanding are signed by both parties, stored centrally and reconciled with reported results.

Kay Wilson
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04 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 30 May 2016 Managing National Assessment Report All action items from the 2016 Managing National Assessment review have been addressed. Moderation has been strengthened by the Principal's Nominee meeting with departmental leaders to review internal moderation processes and analyse external moderation outcomes in accordance with the agreed actions. Results and entries are checked on the NZQA website to ensure the accuracy of data.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has maintained a high level of agreement between assessors and NZQA moderators. Where there has been disagreement, effective processes ensure that the appropriate staff develop an action plan. The Principal's Nominee follows up by meeting with the relevant staff to ensure that agreed changes are put into place in the subsequent assessment cycle, and then later to review the effectiveness of the change.

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)

In 2018 the Education Review Office recommended that the next step for St Catherine's was a focus on 'internal evaluation processes and practices that better inform decision making for improvement.' In response the school has strengthened its internal evaluation by undertaking several schoolwide curriculum reviews, a student well-being survey, and regular departmental review cycles. The goal has been to identify areas of strength and determine where improvement can be made.

In their review of the 2018 assessment cycle, senior managers have required curriculum leaders to focus on standards where the results have not been as expected, and/or it has been identified that student engagement is poor. This review is leading to target-setting by teachers and departments following planned changes to teaching, programmes of learning, and/or assessment plans. The next step is for the school to continue this review cycle by analysing the impact of the changes made.

The school has reviewed low levels of attainment and equity for students in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) subjects. They have implemented several strategies which are discussed in more detail in the assessment practice section of 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 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 Catherine's College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- providing opportunities for students to co-construct learning and assessment plans
- partnering with local schools and other external providers in order to meet student needs
- using a variety of methods for capturing student assessment evidence, as appropriate
- applying for and providing special assessment conditions for an increasing number of students
- assessing when ready, where appropriate.

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

- managing missed and late assessment, including applications for extensions
- investigating appeals and breaches of assessment rules
- monitoring student submissions for breaches of authenticity
- ensuring that appropriate evidence required for emergency and derived grades is collected
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Multi-level classes meet student needs Teachers are managing the learning and assessment needs of students through individual and co-constructed learning and assessment plans. Students from two, or more, year levels are timetabled into the same class where the numbers are small, for example in languages and creative technologies.

Equity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects at Level 3 St Catherine's College has implemented several strategies in response to low levels of attainment and equity for Pacific and Māori students. From 2018 the school has put greater focus on teaching numeracy skills to students in Year 10, resulting in the Level 1 Mathematics course being more focused on learning core content needed for Science and Technology courses. Some Year 11 students have been advanced into Level 2 Mathematics, so that more students might do both Calculus and Statistics at Level 3 over two years.

In 2019, 'ExSTREAMES projects' are being introduced in the junior school. These are a cross-curricular project designed to increase engagement and interest in STEM-based learning. The next step for the school is to review the impact of these changes.

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- retaining benchmark exemplars of student work
- using subject specialists to verify grades awarded for a purposefully selected sample of student work
- collaborating with colleagues in other schools to share grade verification responsibilities as required
- monitoring that all reported grades have been subject to the school's internal moderation process.

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

- self-selecting standards from across departments in order to strengthen their self-review
- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored in departments.

Further improvement to the internal moderation process The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on what constitutes sufficient grade verification by the strategic selection of student work to reduce workload while retaining the integrity of the quality assurance process. There are many small classes at St Catherine's College and very often all the student work is being verified. However, there is no fixed, or predetermined, amount 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.

Recording discussions around grade boundaries on the *Internal Moderation Coversheet* strengthens the internal moderation process. Some departments did this well and others left the comment section blank. Capturing the discussions provides valuable evidence of robust moderation processes and useful information for future verification discussions, particularly when external moderation outcomes differ from the grade agreed by teacher and verifier.

Grade Score Marking for internal assessment is not appropriate There is evidence on *Internal Moderation Coversheets* that some departments use Grade Score Marking to indicate high and low achievement within grade bands. Appropriate marking of internal standards requires assessment of the evidence based on the standard. This leads to useful discussion around boundaries for verification of grades. Grade Score Marking is a process designed to identify distribution patterns of results across large cohorts for externally assessed achievement standards. It is not appropriate for internal assessment, where decisions are based on standards-based

evidence. The school should consider requiring all departments to follow the same process for marking internal assessment against the standard and indicating proximity to grade boundaries.

For further consideration

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

- providing further guidance to all departments about the strategic selection of student samples for grade verification.
- having a uniform approach to indicating grade boundaries when marking student work, which does not include using grade score marking.

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

- identifying students capable of advancement in Mathematics so that more students might include Level 3 Mathematics and Calculus in their course over 2 years
- reporting annually to the Principal and Board of Trustees to inform strategic planning
- analysing data for trends in outcomes when making decisions about standards and assessments within courses.

St Catherine's College reports accurate achievement data by:

- actively managing the setting up of, and any required amendment to, markbooks by the Principal's Nominee
- submitting regular data files and correcting errors
- checking the Key Indicators and responding to any issues that arise
- checking that results are provided for all entries or that students are withdrawn, as appropriate.

Memoranda of understanding with external providers To ensure that students gain credit for work assessed by external providers, the school needs to have all memoranda of understanding completed, counter-signed, and centrally stored prior to results being reported. Correctly completed memoranda of understanding are evidence of the partnership agreement between the school and the external provider and set out their respective obligations. They can then be reconciled with results reported by the school to ensure accuracy.

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:

- ensure that all memoranda of understanding are signed by both parties, stored centrally and reconciled with reported results.

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 Catherine's College has effective processes and procedures for:

- reporting results to students and their families in the student management system, which enables checking and monitoring of progress towards goals
- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating NCEA requirements and assessment procedures to staff and students
- reviewing handbooks annually to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

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

- sending an electronic copy of the student handbook annually to all students via email and running year-level meetings to reinforce key points
- reinforcement of important information by classroom and whānau teachers
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities in meetings to discuss changes
- regular, direct communication between the Principal's Nominee and Heads of Departments.

Consistency of course outlines The school should ensure that information about further assessment opportunities, resubmissions, and access to numeracy and literacy is consistently provided for every course. The staff handbook sets out guidelines for what course outlines are to include. The development of a template for course outlines would strengthen the common understanding of assessment practice, reduce repetition, prevent inconsistent information and ensure students were fully informed about numeracy and literacy opportunities.

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:

- developing a template for course outlines to ensure they are consistent.