Managing National Assessment Report

Carmel College

June 2021

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Carmel 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 2021* (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 for enhancing 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
- *Curriculum extracts Carmel College 2021*
- *Managing National Assessment, Teacher Handbook, Carmel College 2021* (Staff Handbook)
- *Student Handbook – student extracts - Carmel College 2021* (Student Handbook)
- 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:
    - History
    - Music
    - Physical Education
    - Religious Education
    - Sciences
    - Visual Arts
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Acting Principal, Deputy Principal of Student Learning and Engagement, 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

Carmel College

02 June 2021

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 four years.

At the request of the NZQA and with the school's agreement this report was rescheduled from 2020 until 2021 due to COVID 19.

What the school is doing well

Carmel College continues to meet students' academic and vocational needs in a faith-based context centred on its core values of justice and peace. This culture supports expectations of high levels of academic attainment for all students.

Continuous self-review led by Senior Leaders, subject teachers, deans and the Head of Learning Support means staff work collegially and closely reflect on best assessment and moderation practice.

Senior management is focusing on the implementation of digital assessment processes to engage students in learning and assessment. Following their experience with online learning during the COVID 19 lockdown they have reviewed the use of digital tools to deliver assessment opportunities. To further engage students in external assessment the school is offering a greater range of digital examinations and intends offering digital practice examinations on the NZQA platform in 2021.

Ongoing review of equity initiatives supports students to achieve NCEA qualifications and pursue their chosen career pathways. These are delivered effectively through the provision of special assessment conditions, and through individualised learning programmes developed with form teacher/mentors to best meet student needs. Students at risk of not achieving their qualifications are tracked and appropriate interventions are provided.

Student wellbeing is considered at all levels and hauora is cross-referenced with academic progress by deans to support students to achieve their assessment pathways.

Effective leadership in the management of assessment practice is evident in all aspects of the delivery of the NCEA qualification. The Principal's Nominee works closely with the Deputy Principal of Student Learning and Engagement to identify issues and implement changes.

Data processes are effectively managed by the Principal's Nominee and data entry staff who proactively follow up on any changes needed. Annual departmental

analysis of achievement data is submitted to the Senior Leadership Team after results release and this effectively informs a review of courses.

Senior Management have identified the need to reduce the number of credits offered in courses to students to manage workloads and over assessment. Courses have to be approved that may offer more than the maximum suggested.

The school has effective communication systems and ensures currency of information about NCEA. Comprehensive staff and student assessment manuals provide accurate, detailed and plain English assessment practices. Students explained they are encouraged to ask questions and consider that their parents are well-informed through newsletters, the school website and the parent portal.

There are no agreed action items. Some next steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

Areas for improvement

The school needs to give further consideration to ensure it meets the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020*. This relates to a COVID 19 online student grade sign-off process trialled during the lockdowns.

Frank Moran
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10 August 2021

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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 13 May 2016 Managing National Assessment Report   Carmel College has addressed the one agreed action item from its 2016 report. The Principal's Nominee has updated the terminology in staff and student assessment handbooks.

Response to external moderation outcomes   The school has a comprehensive process to respond to external moderation. Teachers document actions they will take to resolve issues identified by external moderators including rewriting assessment materials and documenting the verification of grade boundary decisions for future reference. They hold discussions in departments with their Heads of Department to develop consistency in decision making and are encouraged to engage with the NZQA appeals process. The consistently high assessor/moderator agreement rate confirms the effectiveness of the school's processes.

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)

Effective assessment leadership at Carmel College is demonstrated through the management of assessment practice and the processes of self-review. Teachers are encouraged to take ownership for consistent assessment practice and the school's capacity to deliver the NCEA qualification is evident in high student assessment outcomes that ensure all students are provided with the opportunity to meet their assessment goals.

The school is reviewing digital assessment processes and practice to consolidate digital assessment for students and further engage them in assessment opportunities. Over the past year key changes have included scaling up the range of digital external and practice examinations provided.

During COVID lockdown in 2020 Senior Leaders identified the need to streamline assessment processes by moving these online for efficiency and clarity. This included, for example, more timely response for students who can make missed and late assessment requests and appeals online. These requests can be effectively shared with teachers and oversight is better maintained at all levels. This includes a cross-check of student wellbeing through deans and a Principal's Nominee check. This process better ensures consistency for students and provides clarity for staff.

A further aspect of online systems review includes strengthening internal moderation monitoring processes. Teachers now submit completed internal moderation cover sheets digitally, sharing these with the data manager and the Principals' Nominee. The Deputy Principal for Student Learning and Engagement provides overall monitoring of these and follows up with departments as appropriate.

Since the last Managing National Assessment review the removal of entry requirements and prerequisites to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) pathways, has led to more Maori students enrolled in these courses. This has provided these students with broader pathways for further education. As a next step the school is developing initiatives to work with its growing Pasifika community to provide these opportunities.

A schoolwide review of authenticity identified a need to build consistency in teachers' and students' understanding of the principles surrounding academic integrity when using online assessment platforms. Professional development in the use of Turnitin and other digital tools was provided. Students' understanding of the requirement to maintain all drafts in Google Classroom has been reinforced by teachers and deans. The school credits this focus with improving student and teacher understanding of version checking so that teachers can best track student progress towards the completion of an assessment.

A review of assessment processes during departmental reviews has identified in some subject areas the need to trial different evidence gathering techniques to reflect the learning styles of a greater range of students. For example, open book tasks, with the use of statistics, are now being used in Mathematics and Science rather than closed book tests.

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 2021 5.1 – 5.7)

Carmel College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- designing programmes of learning that are focussed on each student's academic and vocational interests, needs and abilities, and collecting evidence of achievement in a variety of ways

- offering differentiated courses within subjects and optional standards as appropriate

- providing regular checkpoints and appropriate feedback and feedforward discussions to support students to co-construct their understanding of the requirements of the standard

- including standards in the Religious Education programme that provides all students with more opportunities to meet the literacy requirements for an NCEA and University Entrance

- effectively tracking and mentoring student achievement progress through weekly form teacher meetings and careers advice

- identifying students entitled to special assessment conditions using school-based evidence, ensuring teachers are aware of each individual student's special assessment entitlements and providing these for internal assessments

- providing Scholarship tutorials in a range of subjects

- providing regular meetings with deans, academic deans and careers' advisor.

Carmel College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment processes through centralised Principal's Nominee sign-off to ensure consistency

- managing further assessment opportunities, resubmissions and any appeals of assessment decisions

- investigating any potential breaches of assessment rules using a process of natural justice

- ensuring the collection of credible evidence for derived grades.

Engagement of students in digital examinations   Students interviewed commented that digital examinations best meets their needs by providing them with their preferred medium for assessment. The school continues scaling up and engaging in external and digital practice examinations on the NZQA platform to provide students with a range of assessment opportunities.

Meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020*   During COVID 19 lockdown in 2020 a new online student grade sign-off system was introduced. This needs further refinement to ensure it meets the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020.*
Some students have explained they are reluctant to enter codes provided as their acceptance would be visible to others. Their concern was that while the grades themselves are not shown, the acceptance codes might allow prediction or

speculation on grades and identity of students. The school recognises this problem and plans to address it.

For consideration

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

- reviewing the way grade sign-off occurs to ensure this fully meets the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020.*

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 2021 6.4b)

Carmel College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use

- engaging with suitably qualified subject specialists from within and outside the school to verify grades for a purposefully selected sample of student work

- the Principal's Nominee keeping a register of verifiers and reflecting on the effectiveness of the professional dialogues in ensuring effective grade boundary decisions

- monitoring internal moderation completion through a digital platform and annual documented Senior Leaders review visits to departments

- Sharing the outcomes of the faculty review with the Deputy Principal of Student Learning and Engagement and the Principal's Nominee to ensure identified improvements are made before the standard is used again.

Carmel College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work to meet NZQA requirements

- ensuring samples of student work are provided by managing and monitoring storage of assessment materials digitally or as hard copy, as appropriate

- digitally submitting most selected samples of student work for external moderation

- using the queries and appeals function in the external moderation application to request more information if needed to clarify teacher understanding

- ensuring that moderation follow-up is the same for all standards regardless of the standard setting body.

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)

Carmel College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- using data to monitor and track student progress and to identify students at risk of not achieving their goals

- providing students with regular data summaries so that they can track their own progress towards qualifications

- submitting unexpected event grades regularly to ensure that students have equitable access to a result if an unexpected event is declared by NZQA

- annually reporting on longitudinal and comparative results to the Principal and Senior Management Team and providing an analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Carmel College reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner

- checking reports such as Key Indicators and entry data to identify and resolve any data issues

- using verification reports to adjust student grades for verified subjects as appropriate

- encouraging students to check their results and monitor their own progress through the up-to-date student portal on the student management system and their NZQA Learner login

- reporting results against the correct provider codes for external providers with which the school holds current memoranda of understanding and documenting a Principal's Nominee's reconciliation check.

Credit Reduction and focus on assessment opportunities   The school has reduced the number of credits offered in many courses to allow for more focussed teaching and learning time that will deepen understanding. The reduction in standards has also allowed the development of more contextualised assessment tasks to better meet student abilities and interests.

Large number of late entries for external examinations. As a response to the large number of late entries into external examinations in 2020, the Principal's Nominee will monitor the file submissions, to ensure that external entries are made in a timely and accurate manner. The school believes the increased number of late entries was a COVID response to lockdowns. They will further review this situation if it continues to be an issue.

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))

Carmel College has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and parents using a range of media and platforms

- ensuring students receive standardised course outlines for all courses they undertake

- reviewing staff and student assessment handbooks annually to maintain their currency and ensure consistent schoolwide understanding

- reporting on student progress towards qualifications, including providing live online credit summaries and access through the student and parent portal

- ensuring face-to-face communication with students through regular assemblies, conversations with form teachers, deans and senior managers as appropriate.

Carmel College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- checking whether teachers, students and parents are following processes through surveys and emails to confirm receipt of policies and understanding of any changes

- using a schoolwide assessment calendar to ensure effective assessment planning

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes at regular staff, Head of Department and Senior Leadership Team meetings

- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification

- holding regular reporting evenings for students and their families

- ensuring support is in place for new staff and enabling succession planning by ensuring that processes are systemic, rather than person-dependent

- encouraging staff to actively engage in professional development and with subject associations.

No action required

No issues with the way in which the school maintained the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicated them to staff, students and families were identified during this review.