

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Waitakere College**

**July 2018**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Waitakere 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 2018* (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
- *Senior Subject Guide, Waitakere College, 2018*
- *Vocational Pathways and Academy Opportunities, Waitakere College, 2018*
- *New Zealand Qualifications Framework Assessment Procedures and Guidelines, Waitakere College, 2018* (Staff Handbook)
- *NCEA: The Waitakere Way, Waitakere College, 2018* (Student Leaflet)
- a sample of newsletters to parents and copies of presentations made to students and parents
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal, three students, and Curriculum Leaders for Dance and Geography, Drama, Health, Mathematics, Music and Physical Education.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Principal's Nominee, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal 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

## Waitakere College

5 July 2018

### 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 four years.

### What the school is doing well

Waitakere College has actioned all the recommendations following the previous Managing National Assessment review. All assessment-related matters are ably managed by the experienced Principal's Nominee. Comprehensive procedures have been established which are supported by thorough quality assurance requirements. Senior leaders can be confident that results submitted to NZQA are credible.

Self-review is an embedded process at the school and is informed by data analysis. Teachers engage in a personal inquiry process, Curriculum Leaders analyse student achievement and submit annual reports, and senior leaders evaluate these and provide a schoolwide strategic focus. The expansion of the academy programmes and a focus on improving student attendance are just two of a number of examples of the outcomes of self-review.

There is a sense of shared ownership of self-review across the school that supports the meshing of the processes that occur at various levels. Senior Leaders can have confidence that any concerns relating to assessment practices will be identified and addressed.

Assessment practices are sound and consistently applied. Courses are designed to meet the needs of students and are flexible where appropriate and responsive to varied assessment opportunities including the digital submission of assessments.

The comprehensive process that has been developed to monitor student achievement and to identify students who need additional mentoring is a feature of the school. Actual and teacher-forecast future achievement is used to compile this view. Students at-risk of not achieving qualification goals are identified and this information is effectively communicated to teachers. A number of mentoring groups have been established to support these students.

Procedures to complete internal and external moderation are thorough, well-understood by teachers and consistently applied. Any issues raised in external moderation reports are followed up and monitored to ensure the needed changes are made.

Student data is effectively managed, results submitted to NZQA in a timely manner and any issues are identified and efficiently resolved by the Principal's Nominee.

The school effectively communicates assessment policy and procedures to students, teachers and parents. The brief procedures summary that is available to teachers is a particularly effective document. Student-led conferences and the course selection interview processes that involve parents are examples of good practice that emphasise face-to-face communication to ensure common understanding.

### **Areas for improvement**

As the number of samples of student work selected for external moderation that are submitted digitally is increasing, a policy to determine the suitable storage of these digital materials should be considered to mitigate any risks.

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4 September 2018

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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 6 August 2015 Managing National Assessment Report** This report detailed four items to be actioned and the school has taken appropriate steps to address these. The action items were to:

- review the school's random selection method for external moderation
- implement a process by students and teachers to check external entries are accurate before the final submission date
- strengthen the use of assessment-related data by completing comparative analyses of internal and external results
- update the assessment documentation.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** Curriculum Leaders are expected to review external moderation reports and develop plans to address any concerns that have been raised. These are reported to the Principal's Nominee in a detailed feedback form. During the subsequent departmental review process, Senior Leaders ensure that Curriculum Leaders have completed these agreed actions.

This is a comprehensive process and acts to provide confidence to Senior Leaders that concerns raised in moderation reports are being addressed.

### 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 is an embedded practice at the school and is integral to the ongoing teaching and learning programme and to students' achievement in qualifications. It occurs at all levels, is informed by data analysis and is an inter-connected process with teacher self-review cycles informing the review that occurs in departments and onwards to the schoolwide review undertaken by Senior Leaders.

The school has effective review processes and procedures to identify areas for on-going improvement by:

- requiring teachers to engage in an inquiry process to reflect on aspects of their own practice
- using data analysis to review student assessment outcomes and to evaluate the effectiveness of assessment programmes
- Curriculum Leaders reviewing student assessment outcomes and reporting findings and future actions in a departmental report, which are then discussed in meetings with Senior Leaders

- Senior Leaders developing a strategic plan to ensure assessment programmes will continue to meet students' needs in the future
- the Principal's Nominee holding an annual Quality Assurance review with each department to ensure that required procedures are being followed according to school and NZQA requirements. Curriculum Leaders also complete a self-review tool to support this assurance process
- having regular Curriculum Leader meetings to discuss school-wide assessment matters.

Self-review has resulted in a number of developments at the school, including:

- the increase in the number of academy and other Vocational Pathways programmes offered to better meet the achievement and qualification needs of students
- further development in processes to forecast future student achievement and the appointment of an Assistant Principal to lead this work
- a focus on improving student attendance as low and irregular attendance has been identified as a key contributing factor in some students not achieving their qualification goals
- the continuation of the school-wide staff mentoring programme known as Poutama, which promotes Māori achievement.

The meshing of the self-review process, the shared ownership of these practices and the leadership underpinning it provide confidence to senior leaders that any concerns relating to assessment practices will be identified and addressed.

#### **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 2018 5.5)*

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

- designing programmes of learning that are focussed on their interests, needs and abilities
- using local contexts to adapt assessments from genuine and authentic learning and to engage student interest
- offering multi-level courses where appropriate
- negotiating with them the standards to be undertaken in their assessment programme when appropriate
- encouraging students to access Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects, including making a mathematics-oriented subject compulsory in Year 12
- offering varied opportunities for the collection of evidence towards assessment including from Polyfest presentations and by using digital formats
- where appropriate, assessing students when they are ready although acknowledging the need for students to meet assessment deadlines
- extending assessment opportunities by offering vocational and trade-based courses such as the extensive Academies programme
- preparing students for future assessment developments through involvement in the digital trials and pilots
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements and providing these resources for internal assessment where appropriate

### **Waitakere College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring grades awarded are valid, authentic and verified
- providing one further opportunity for assessment when appropriate
- providing resubmissions to students, as appropriate, that meets NZQA requirements
- investigating appeals by students of assessment decisions
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- managing missed and late assessment processes
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Monitoring of student achievement is well developed** The school has developed effective ways to both monitor the achievement of students and to communicate the



outcome of this monitoring to teachers. An Assistant Principal has been appointed to lead this process.

At various times during the year, the Assistant Principal gathers and analyses student achievement data to develop a view of overall and specific student achievement. Actual and teacher-forecast future achievement is used to compile this view.

Using this analysis, lists are prepared of students at-risk of not achieving their qualification goals. This information is distributed to teachers and prominently displayed so that teachers can readily recognise those students who may need additional support.

**Mentoring opportunities are provided for students** Students identified as needing additional support are offered mentoring opportunities to enable them to achieve their goals. This is co-ordinated by the Assistant Principal who oversees academic monitoring. Very good qualification results over a number of years are a testament to the effectiveness of this approach. Examples of mentoring include:

- specific year level mentoring groups
- a target group with a focus on students aiming to achieve University Entrance
- the “Great Potential” groups for Year 13 Māori and Pasifika students
- the Career Navigator Industry programme.

**Digital assessment policy has been introduced** The school has a schoolwide Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approach supported by a robust and comprehensive digital infrastructure. In response to the increasing use of digital assessment, a policy has been developed that focusses on the format of digital assessment, the assurance of authenticity, digital submission and the capture of student work. This approach provides schoolwide certainty as opportunities for digital assessment are explored.

#### **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 2018 6.4b)*

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- strategically selecting borderline samples of student work for verification purposes
- using subject specialists to verify the selected samples and, where appropriate, using verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the process on Internal Moderation Coversheets and lodging a copy of each Coversheet with the Principal's Nominee
- keeping benchmark exemplars to inform future assessment decisions
- thoroughly monitoring and reviewing departmental moderation processes during the annual departmental review cycle.

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

- encouraging Curriculum Leaders to recommend standards to be included for external moderation each year
- randomly selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are stored so that they can be provided for external moderation.
- actively encouraging the digital submission of student work
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes.

**Digital storage policy should be considered** The number of samples of student work selected for external moderation that are submitted digitally is increasing. This raises the risk associated with inappropriate storage of these materials such as materials not being stored on the school's secure network or permissions settings only enabling the teacher to view the material.

The school should consider a schoolwide policy that details the requirement for digital storage of moderation samples to mitigate any risks.

### **No action required**

No issues with the school's internal and external moderation were identified during this review.

### **For consideration**

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

- developing a policy on the storage of digital samples of student work selected for external moderation.

## 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)*

### Waitakere College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure they allow students to meet their achievement goals and informing changes to standards offered
  - encouraging professional learning enquiries around understanding of assessment and improving student achievement
  - tracking student achievement to identify students at risk of not achieving their chosen assessment pathway
  - reporting an analysis of NCEA achievement to the Principal and Board of Trustees each year to inform strategic goals and actions
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - ensuring that datafiles are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner
  - checking reports such as the Key Indicators to identify and resolve any errors
  - ensuring low levels of late external entries and internal entries with no results
  - reporting results against the correct provider codes of outside providers with which the school holds current memoranda of understanding
  - actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the student portal on the student management system and the NZQA learner login
  - submitting fees paid and financial assistance applications on time.

### 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))*

### **Waitakere College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive comprehensive outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to teachers, students and parents
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

### **Waitakere College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- holding NCEA information evenings for parents and NCEA assemblies for students
- regularly informing parents about NCEA matters through the school's newsletter
- publishing an assessment handbook containing assessment procedures
- publishing a student leaflet containing key schoolwide NCEA procedures
- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year.

**Procedures summary sheet available for teachers** The Principal's Nominee has prepared a summary sheet for teachers that details required NCEA procedures in brief with links to more comprehensive explanations in the staff handbook. This an effective approach that enables teachers to easily access the key procedural information needed.

**Conferences that include parents support good communication** The school holds a series of student-led conferences during the year to report on student progress and achievement. In addition, course selection interviews are held each year involving parents and students to ensure that appropriate courses are selected and that everyone has a clear understanding of the implications of decisions made.

This commitment to a face-to-face process is good practice that ensures that the school, student and parents have a common understanding at these key times.

### **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.