

Managing National Assessment Report

St Paul's College (Auckland)

September 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively St Paul's College-Auckland:

- 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
- *School Policies St Paul's College 2016*
- *NCEA, Staff Handbook, St Paul's College 2019*
- *NCEA Student Handbook, St Paul's College 2019*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum
- Head(s) Department for:
 - Commerce
 - English
 - Humanities
 - Physical Education
 - Religious Studies
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy Principal - Curriculum 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 Paul's College (Auckland)

6 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

St Paul's College is a Catholic boy's school with a high population of Pacific Island students. The school 'enrols the whole family' which means that families are supportive of all areas of the boy's education. The Principal talks about the four areas of importance to the growing of 'Men of Courage': Dream it – Design it – Make it happen- Communicate it.

Self-review has led to the introduction of several initiatives to encourage and improve engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. These include review of the junior and Level 3 Science programmes, changing of the Technology assessments to achievement standards and examining the Mathematics programme to build knowledge from the junior school.

The introduction of staff year level 'trackers' in the senior school, as well as fortnightly tracking meetings has enabled the school to identify students at risk of not achieving a qualification, as well as the high achieving students. This has helped the school to individualise assessment programmes as well as put interventions in place to support students.

Internal moderation processes are well understood and consistently applied by the teachers involved in this review visit. In response to the last Managing National Assessment report the school reviewed its internal moderation process to ensure robust procedures were in place, verification of students work for internal moderation focused on work at grade boundaries, and discussions with grade verifiers was documented.

Data analysis is used to inform changes to assessment programmes. Each department uses the analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of their courses. This information is shared with the Principal and Senior Leadership team and recommendations for future planning is discussed.

A range of communication methods are used to ensure staff, students and families are well informed about assessment and practices. All students interviewed knew about these practices and the requirements to gain a NCEA qualification. They felt well supported by all staff, mentioning the Careers Advisor, Principal's Nominee and Deputy Principal-Curriculum as their 'go to' people.

Areas for improvement

The college needs to formalise their response to external moderation by documenting action plans so that the Principal's Nominee and Deputy Principal-Curriculum can monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these actions.

Suggestions were made during the review for improvements and updating of assessment documentation to ensure that it reflects school practice. This will help clarify processes and support teacher and student understanding.

Agreed action

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

- ensure staff response to external moderation is appropriately recorded and evaluated
- make changes to documentation in the school's handbooks as noted in this report
- ensure the random selection of student work for external moderation meets NZQA requirements.

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6 November 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 August 2016 Managing National Assessment Report

There were four agreed actions in the 2016 review, two of which related to internal moderation. The school's response is detailed later in the report. All memoranda of understanding are reconciled with reported results and appropriate changes made to the staff handbook.

Response to external moderation outcomes Staff interviewed noted that an action plan was required when external moderation returned 'not consistent' or 'not yet consistent'. However, when this happened or how effective it was, are not recorded on a response form. Without this final step, senior management has no record that these actions have been completed before the standards are assessed again, or that their effectiveness has been evaluated.

The school's external moderation agreement rate has improved over the past three years. Internal moderation systems have been strengthened which is reflected in the improvement.

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)

St Paul's College effectively uses its internal review processes to identify improvements that provide greater opportunity for students to gain qualifications, as well as improving assessment processes and practices.

Māori and Pacific engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects The school's NZQA's STEM equity data has led the school to review of Mathematics, Science and Technology programmes to see how they can make STEM subjects more accessible and raise achievement at Level 3. The result of this review includes:

- the introduction of a Level 3 Health Sciences course which is a combination of Biology, Physics and Chemistry, so that more students will be able to take a Science course at Level 3
- the introduction of a junior Science programme which includes electrical systems which leads to Physics and Engineering in the senior school
- a change to the Mathematics programme and teaching with curriculum specialists now teaching the Year 7 and 8 classes, introducing an extension programme in Mathematics in Year 9 and 10 with a specific focus on Algebra
- a change in the assessment of Technology from unit to achievement standards as well as collaboration with Design and DVC in a new specialist

space to encourage more students to participate in Technology-based subjects.

Improving merit and excellence endorsements a focus While St Paul's College is pleased with the overall achievement of their students, reflection on the achievement data showed that course and certificate endorsements could improve. In response the school reviewed the number of credits offered in each subject and discussed having quality assessment rather than aiming for a large number of credits. This has led to departments reducing the number of credits offered in each course to a maximum of 20. Senior managers expect that these changes will lead to an increase in merit and excellence endorsements.

Clarification of the Derived Grade process St Paul's College has identified through staff discussions that there is inconsistent understanding of derived grades. They intend to review their derived grades processes to ensure evidence is based on authentic standard-specific evidence from practice examinations or other appropriate assessments. They plan to provide departments with consistent guidelines to follow through updating the staff handbook and delivering professional development at targeted staff meetings.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure staff response to external moderation is appropriately recorded and evaluated.

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

- identifying and supporting students requiring and entitled to Special Assessment Conditions
- offering multilevel classes to meet student needs
- careers advice and support for all senior students
- assessing students when ready by offering flexible time frames for assessment submission, where manageable and appropriate.

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

- applying procedures for students to appeal assessment related decisions
- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on missed and late work, extensions, resubmissions, and further assessment opportunities
- monitoring authenticity of student work submitted for assessment by using suitable strategies during assessment and marking process
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Individualised programmes to meet student needs The College has systems to individualise assessment programmes in response to changing student needs, using effective tracking. The Dean of Student Learning, the Deputy Principal-Curriculum and year level staff 'trackers' monitor the achievement of each student in discussion with staff at fortnightly meetings. Students at risk of not achieving a qualification or meeting their achievement goals are identified using a traffic light system at key times during the year. Examples of timely interventions and support are extra tuition for excellence and scholarship students and concentrating on three approved subjects for Level 3 students aspiring to attain University Entrance.

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

- critiquing new and amended assessment activities before use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to clarify and support assessment judgements
- using subject specialists to verify student work
- documenting the internal moderation process, including noting verification discussion and decisions on internal moderation sheets
- monitoring by Heads of Department and the Principal's Nominee to ensure the internal moderation process is completed prior to results being reported to NZQA.

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

- selecting samples of student work for external moderation
- successfully submitting an increasing number of samples of student work digitally
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

Focus on reducing workload by considering grade verification requirements for sufficiency Departments currently assure the quality of grades awarded by including work at grade boundaries when verifying assessor judgements. However, most of those interviewed verify more samples of student work than this.

The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on sufficient grade verification by the strategic selection of student work. 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.

Consistent practice needed for the random selection of student work for external moderation The process of random selection is not consistent across all departments. A common system needs to be developed, documented and communicated to staff that covers current NZQA requirements for selection of samples of student work for external 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 of student work for external moderation meets 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 Paul's College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- providing regular updates of engagement and student achievement to students and families
- celebrating student achievement through student awards.

St Paul's College reports accurate achievement data by:

- students signing off each assessment grade before it is submitted to NZQA
- using NZQA Key indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
- ensuring all internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
- ensuring a memorandum of understanding is held for all outside providers against whose codes results are reported
- assisting students and family to monitor NCEA progress through the parent portal and the NZQA Learner Login
- submitting results to NZQA in a timely and regular basis.

Effective use of data to effect change Departments at St Paul's College provide two reports based on achievement data. The first is to the Board of Trustees and looks at achievement comparing internal with external assessment, decile rating, comparison with other Catholic schools and student ethnicity. The second report is a detailed standard by standard report to the Principal and other members of the senior leadership team. The report analyses each standard, variations, anomalies, low achievement rates and any other interesting outcomes. Discussions with the Principal then look at future planning, using this information to inform teaching and assessment practice.

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 Paul's College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring that students are provided with sufficient assessment information about each of their courses
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and families using a range of methods and media
- supporting teachers new to the school to understand assessment procedures, and to use the school's student management system.

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

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes at Head of Department and staff meetings
- ensuring relevant NZQA updates are circulated to NCEA teachers and discussed as necessary
- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Update documentation Some suggestions were made for improvements in documentation to ensure they reflect school practice and NZQA requirements. When documents are next updated, the school should:

- provide information on the derived grade processes
- update the external moderation processes of random selection of student work and the follow up of moderation outcomes
- specify that NCEA Level 3 requires 80 credits, of which 20 credits may be from Level 2 or above, and the achievement of 10 literacy credits and 10 numeracy credits.
- clarify that University Entrance requires 14 credits from three approved subjects.

The student handbook could be simplified and use language to make the document more user friendly for its intended audience.

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:

- make changes to documentation in the school's handbooks as noted in this report.