

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Auckland Girls' Grammar School**

**2018**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Auckland Girls' Grammar 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 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
- *Policy 1: Curriculum Delivery and Student Achievement*
- *Staff Moderation Guidelines (updated 2016)*
- *Assessment Guidelines for Teachers 2018*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

At the time of the visit, the following documents were provided:

- *Staff Moderation Guidelines (updated 2018)*
- a copy of the *NZQA information 2018* PowerPoint (for students)
- *2018 NCEA Assessment Information* (an excerpt from the student diary).

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, three students, and Faculty Coordinators for Languages, Mathematics, Physical Education and Health, Science, Te Reo Māori and The Arts

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

## Auckland Girls' Grammar School

21 March 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 three years.

### What the school is doing well

Over the last year Auckland Girls' Grammar has taken a number of initiatives to improve outcomes for students. The Senior Leadership Team responded to data showing that students were achieving at a lower rate than students in similar schools by setting explicit achievement targets and supporting students to reach them. The results in 2017 showed a marked improvement at all three levels of NCEA, where the attainment levels are now above similar schools. Further improvements for 2018 are planned.

Under the strong leadership of the Principal's Nominee, faculty coordinators monitor the completion of a robust quality assurance programme that assures the school's management that results reported to NZQA are credible. Actions planned in response to issues raised in external moderation are discussed in the faculty and the line manager monitors that the actions are completed. This is an effective process.

A written summary in the student diary, reinforced in assemblies and tutor group means that students are well informed about expectations for completing assessments and requirements for qualifications. This report includes some suggestions for the next edition.

### Areas for improvement

The school's leadership team agrees that it will review how identification of students eligible for special assessment conditions is managed. As part of this, it should ensure that messages to parents accurately state that in many cases evidence can be gathered by the school rather than needing a report from an independent assessor.

In 2017, an issue was identified in an external standard that was provisionally assessed within the school and verified by NZQA. There is currently no clear and documented process to manage follow up to give the leadership team confidence that appropriate actions have been completed. The school has agreed that this will be addressed.

The school has improved how entries and results for internal assessments are managed as agreed after the last review, the next step is to check that entries in external entries reflect each students' learning programme.

### **Agreed action**

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

- review the process for identifying, making applications for, and supporting students eligible to use special assessment conditions for assessments
- review the process to follow up on verification reports for external standards that are provisionally assessed within the school
- review entries in external examinations to ensure they reflect individual's learning programmes and their academic goals
- implementing the suggestions for documenting how verification reports will be followed up, information about special assessment conditions will be communicated and providing teachers with up-to-date details about NZQA's external moderation application as discussed in the communications section of this review.

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17 May 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 25 June 2015 Managing National Assessment Report** The two agreed action items from the 2015 review have been addressed.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has an effective process to follow up issues identified in external moderation.

**Response to data issues** The school has made a number of effective responses to issues identified.

- The 2015 Education Review Office report identified that school achievement targets and planning could better focus on students at risk of not achieving. In 2017, the school set very explicit targets for achievement. The results for all levels of NCEA showed a significant improvement. The school has identified the next step is to improve merit and excellence rates.
- In 2015 and 2016 around 12 percent of entries in internally assessed standards had no result reported. In 2017, this had reduced to around one percent.
- The school noted the lower participation and achievement in STEM subjects for Māori and Pasifika students than for students of other ethnicities. Preliminary discussions have started on how it plans to address the differences.
- The school noted an increase in 2017 in the number of students absent or choosing to not attempt some of the papers in an external examination. They have focused on this as an area for review.

### Internal review

*Evidence found that the school is effectively 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)*

Under the leadership of the principal and school's senior managers, the school reviewed assessment practice and, as a consequence, made a number of changes designed to improve the outcomes for students. Some of the changes are:

- increasing the contact time in tutor groups to enable meaningful mentoring
- establishing the Extended Leadership Team to identify and support learners at risk of not achieving a qualification
- introducing a line management structure with each deputy principal taking responsibility for several faculties, including ensuring consistency of assessment practice
- teachers investigating how they can manage their assessment workload such as by using one context for more than one assessment task either within or between subjects

- the mathematics department will this year only assess students against the numeracy unit standards if they have not met the NCEA numeracy requirements using achievement standards.

**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)*

### **Auckland Girls' Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- supporting students identified as at risk of not completing a qualification by:
  - looking at individual strengths and helping with self-management
  - having conversations to plan actions, meet deadlines and decide priorities
  - providing further assessment opportunities or individualising the assessment programme
- differentiating assessment programmes between and within courses.

### **Auckland Girls' Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- providing clear information about when assessments are to be completed
- managing a fair process for missed and late assessments
- ensuring that students are informed about the expectations to submit authentic work
- having a process to investigate appeals
- ensuring derived grades are based on standard-specific, authentic evidence from practice examinations or practice assessment done under appropriate conditions
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

**Provision for students to access special assessment conditions** Currently only a very few students at Auckland Girls' Grammar School are approved an entitlement to use special assessment conditions. NZQA's expectation is that nationwide between three and five percent of the cohort meet the criteria for entitlement. The leadership team agrees that access to special assessment conditions is an area for review. The SENCO and some teachers are working with the RTLB to develop strategies for identifying and supporting students who may be eligible, by using school-based evidence. As part of removing barriers to students accessing support, the staff handbook should be amended to remove the requirement for students to provide a report from an educational psychologist in order to receive assistance.

**Action needed to follow up reports on verified external standards** For some externally assessed standards, teachers provide a provisional grade for the student work before sending a sample for verification of grades by NZQA. If there are differences between the provisional grade and the verification grade the school is expected to use the feedback to revisit, and if necessary, adjust the school's remaining provisional grades. The school also has the option to appeal NZQA's decisions.

In 2017, for one standard at Auckland Girls' Grammar School, the verified grades for half the sample were lower than the provisional grades. The department chose not to



appeal NZQA's grade decisions. The school was unable to provide sufficient evidence that a robust review of the remaining grades against NZQA's verification report had taken place. The school has agreed to review processes so they can be confident there is effective follow up.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- review the process for identifying, making applications for, and supporting students eligible to use special assessment conditions for assessments
- review the process to follow up on verification reports for external standards that are provisionally assessed by the school.

## 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)*

### **Auckland Girls' Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists, from within the school as well as external colleagues, to verify a sample of student work. In most faculties, the sample is selected purposefully
- documenting the completion of a robust quality assurance process
- having the faculty coordinators monitor quality assurance before a sample is checked by the Principal's Nominee or Academic Coordinator.

### **Auckland Girls' Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- inviting faculties to request standards to be included in the external moderation, however, more faculties could be encouraged to nominate standards that would provide useful feedback
- selecting samples of student work for external moderation randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being adequately stored
- following up any issues raised in external moderation.

**Purposeful selection for internal moderation** Faculty coordinators discussed the range of valid methods used to verify that grades awarded are consistent with the standard. For some faculties, teachers were selecting more than needed to be confident of the results. This can result in additional workload. NZQA expects that a sufficient and purposeful selection of work, generally that at grade boundaries, will be verified so that the school can be confident that grades awarded are valid. A sufficient sample will take into account the experience of the teacher with that standard.

**Moderation processes robust and embedded** The Principal's Nominee provides clear leadership around internal moderation with the support of the other deputy principals. The requirements are well documented, communicated and understood by staff. Faculty co-ordinators know that they are accountable and that completion will be monitored.

The Principal's Nominee ensures that the same quality assurance processes are applied when grades for assessments completed by students in the associated Teen Parent Unit are reported with the school's provider number.

**Persistence with new external moderation process** The school engaged with NZQA's newly introduced external moderation application in 2017. Submission was scheduled for the start of the year when there were still development issues with the new process. The teachers are to be commended for their persistence in completing

submissions. The next step is for the school to submit work digitally if the evidence of achievement is produced digitally by students.

### **For consideration**

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

- reminding teachers that the sample of student work selected for verification should be sufficient and purposeful, thereby providing an opportunity to reduce teacher workload
- encouraging teachers to submit work for external moderation digitally if the evidence of achievement is produced digitally.

## 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)*

### **Auckland Girls' Grammar School effectively:**

- uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:
  - setting clear goals for individual achievement and for the cohort
  - monitoring student progress, identifying students at risk of not achieving Level 1 literacy and numeracy or a qualification and providing appropriate support
  - supporting teacher inquiries on improving student achievement
- reports accurate achievement data by:
  - checking the accuracy of external entries to ensure minimal late entries
  - reporting results against the correct provider codes of outside providers with which the school holds current memoranda of understanding

**School is reviewing entries in external examinations** The school identified that in 2017 there were a large number of entries in external examinations where students either did not attempt a standard or were absent for the session. In some cases, this meant students did not meet the school's pre-requisites for study at a higher level. This could also affect entry to tertiary or other courses. An initial analysis concluded that some students who had completed the qualification prior to the examinations did not attempt some standards or sessions.

The Principal's Nominee plans to ensure that students are aware of the consequences of missing an examination. As part of this, the number of credits offered to students should be investigated. The school will also expect teachers to review entries prior to the key dates to make sure they reflect students' learning programmes. It is suggested that the school's provider login be used to make the final review of entries.

### **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:

- review entries in external examinations to ensure they reflect individual's learning programmes and their academic goals.

## **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))*

### **Auckland Girls' Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake. All outlines share a common format.
- ensuring that students set attainment goals and understand how to achieve them
- providing students with information about assessment expectations in their student diary and in a PowerPoint presentation
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to teachers
- supporting teachers new to the school to meet expectations around assessment practice and quality assurance.

### **Auckland Girls' Grammar School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- informing students of what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

**Suggestions for the next review of communications** When the staff and student handbooks are next reviewed, the Principal's Nominee agreed that the following changes will be included:

- how verification reports for externally assessed standards that provisionally assessed internally will be followed up
- information for parents and teachers that provides current information about eligibility and applications for special assessment conditions
- up-to-date details about NZQA's external moderation application including encouragement to submit work digitally if appropriate.

### **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:

- implement the suggestions listed above when the handbooks are next reviewed.