

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Marcellin College

March 2019

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Marcellin 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
- *Marcellin College Assessment of Students Policy*
- *Marcellin College NCEA Assessment Student Guidelines*
- *Marcellin College NCEA Teacher Assessment Guidelines 2019 Procedures*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the:

- Principal's Nominee
- Subject leaders for:
  - Commerce
  - Creative Arts
  - English
  - Religious Education
  - Science
  - Social Sciences
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy 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

## Marcellin College

21 March 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

The school is focussed on raising student achievement and ensuring credible assessment by developing highly effective review systems. The Principals Nominee, supported by the Senior Leadership team, has identified and co-ordinated several key changes that have contributed to increased student attainment and improved understanding of NCEA and assessment. The aim is to have sustainable change developed from collective ownership and engagement in the vision.

A key focus is on improving student success by assessing when ready. Clarifying teacher understanding of what constitutes an adequate assessment opportunity for students, what credible assessment look like, teacher understanding of internal moderation and systems for responding to external moderation. These reviews are all helping to strengthen the school's assessment environment. In 2018, a trial in one course has led to development of a useful model for assessing student readiness which will be used in all NCEA courses this year. Extending this model across all courses with help teachers to identify where interventions are needed and ensure that assessment is consistently appropriate.

The school uses a range of information to identify areas for improvement and evaluate success; including student, teacher and parent voice. The analysis of achievement has been strengthened and provides teachers with valued critical feedback. Improvements in the management of data have led to greater data accuracy and timeliness of reporting to NZQA.

The value the school places on relationships is evident in their improvement approach which includes all members of the school community. It is illustrated both in their review of school documentation and engagement of families in achievement initiatives. There are no agreed action items. The school has identified some next steps which are detailed in the body of the report.

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13 May 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 1 July 2016 Managing National Assessment Report** The three agreed actions from this report have all been addressed. The verification process has been clarified with teachers, the critical analysis of achievement data expanded, and information to students updated. The school noted that they are in the process of further clarifying strategic selection for internal moderation verification and updating the handbooks for students and teachers.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has strengthened their process for responding to issues identified in external moderation reports. In 2018 they introduced an action template that is used where external moderators flagged inconsistencies that promotes effective assessment planning. Completed by the Head of Department, the plan is reviewed by the Principal's Nominee who checks that the documented actions resolve issues. Teachers and the Principal's Nominee shared examples of how this approach has effectively improved assessment quality.

### 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)*

Since the Principal's Nominee took up the role in 2018, school review of NCEA has focussed on improvements that have mainly involved assessment credibility and student achievement. The resulting wide range of interventions aim to promote sustainable change that focuses on developing NCEA best practice. This approach has resulted in significant improvement in student achievement, assessment practice and teacher engagement.

**Student readiness for assessment shows school's review approach** The school's capacity to carry review that aims to deliver sustainable improvement is illustrated by their student readiness initiative. The model used was informed using data and student voice, included trialling of possible solutions with measured outcomes before moving to school-wide adoption.

Analysis of 2018 results identified that in one course internal and external results were inconsistent, both internally and with national data. A subsequent survey of students found that they had not felt ready for assessment in aspects of the course, which resulted in them not submitting work. In response, the school used an inquiry model to develop and trial an approach. Targeting internal standards, they focused teachers on developing an explicit understanding of, and communication about, student readiness for assessment. A cohesive approach was ensured by including the Deans and Head of Department in interventions.

In 2019, the student readiness initiative is being extended school wide for NCEA assessment. Draft student readiness criteria have been developed in consultation

with Heads of Department. Professional development at the start of this school year focussed on helping teachers know how to check that students are ready for assessment. Heads of Department are developing a checklist for each standard assessed.

Looking ahead to 2020, the school plans that teachers will record in the student management system a readiness assessment for each student to track and measure the impact of interventions on attainment and success. Evaluation of the trial showed a significant improvement in students submitting work on time and their achievement.

In 2018, to help identify lack of student readiness for assessment the Principal's Nominee introduced a 'Not' report. Sent automatically from the student management system, the report identifies any result that is 'not achieved', work 'not submitted' or entry 'not applicable'. It alerts the Principal's Nominee of potential issues to investigate with Heads of Department and Deans and ensure that suitable interventions are then in place for students and teacher practices where needed.

**Relationship focus supports sustainable change** The school values relationships as an important part of their special character and for the significant impact they have on student achievement. This value is evident across all systems and in their approach to change. Review of school handbooks illustrates this. Using a staged approach to update the handbooks has allowed the school's history to be acknowledged and preserved the dignity of staff. It allowed teachers to give permission for changes to be made to assessment practices, thus helping to keep them positive and comfortable during the change.

The school's achievements in the last 12 months are commendable. Moreover, when embedded, these changes are well placed to ensure improvements result in sustainable systems and outcomes. Well supported by the Principal and Deputy Principal, the Principal's Nominee's approach aims to develop understanding and ownership, leading to increased teacher, student and parent agency. Teachers and students value his considerate, thoughtful, open and professional manner.

#### **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)*

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

- providing a 'kaitiaki' period for academic mentoring each fortnight to focus students on pathways and academic achievement
- entering all students for assessment, then in consultation with families withdrawing any identified as not being ready for assessment
- applying for special assessment conditions, with a few supported by school-based evidence.

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

- managing missed and late assessment
- ensuring that evidence for derived grades is standard specific and verified
- checking that resubmission and further assessment opportunities meet school and NZQA expectations
- supporting the Exam Centre Manager to provide a quality external examination experience for students
- having students sign receipt of grades after each assessment confirming they are not appealing the grade
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Focus on external examination** The school is seeking to improve participation in externals and achievement outcomes by changing student mindset and focus. External examinations are valued, both as an indicator of the integrity of their learning and assessment systems, and for helping to keep student life chances open. Given their readiness approach, the school does not expect all students to participate in external assessment. However, many do and in 2019, the aim is to improve examination attendance and reduce the voiding of papers by having students remain in practice examination sessions for the full three hours to use the time wisely and providing them with better preparation.

**Initiative improves Māori achievement** The development of a Māori achievement group in 2018 resulted in significant improvement in the attainment of participating students. A Head of Department took on the role of Kaitiaki, meeting weekly with Māori students to set targets and monitor progress. A cornerstone of the approach was forming strong relationships with students and whānau. The school found that whānau were initially very apprehensive about participating but over time became actively involved and were important to the group's success. When the group starts again in term 2 this year it is a parent who will take up the Kaitiaki role.

### **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)*

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work
- using a shared spreadsheet for teachers to record completion of internal moderation
- the NCEA Administrator monitoring internal moderation completion using an evidence-based process checking internal moderation cover sheets and assessment packs
- not submitting grades to NZQA until internal moderation is complete.

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

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored
- encouraging teachers to query and/or appeal moderation reports.

**Focus in 2018 has re-established robust internal moderation** The school took a 'what gets measured gets done' approach to internal moderation following their finding in 2017 that there was some inconsistency. This approach included training staff to better understand and manage internal moderation activities, engaging subject specialists from other schools to assist where teachers were not consistent in their judgements and providing relief to help teachers focus on developing good practice. The effectiveness of this approach was noted by the teachers who described consistent and coherent understanding of expectations and showed evidence of meeting them.

**Focus on developing teacher confidence in strategic selection** At the start of 2019 the school provided staff with guidance on sufficient 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.

### **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)*

### **Marcellin College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- tracking student progress towards qualifications.
- providing every student with a staff member to support them with their achievement progress

### **Marcellin College reports accurate achievement data by:**

- timely and regular submission of data files
- ensuring Memoranda of Understanding are held for all external providers.

**Focus on critical analysis of achievement** In 2018, to promote more effective data analysis and increase student engagement and achievement the school changed their analysis and evaluation of achievement data. A 'Stop/Start/Continue' analysis was introduced that evaluated every standard assessed. Heads of Department met with the Principal and Principal's Nominee to discuss their analysis. Heads of Department reported they valued the opportunity for open, frank discussion along with critical feedback on, and support with, their planned next steps. This discussion informed departmental reports and annual action plans, which were shared with the Board of Trustees. The school found that for teachers these changes have resulted in greater focus on ensuring that standards offered to cohorts are appropriate, aimed at quality rather than quantity of assessment and designed to increase engagement.

**Improved process improves data quality** Two changes have been made to data management processes resulting in a significant improvement in the quality and consistency of entry and result data reported in 2018. Analysis of student achievement data for 2017 highlighted entries with no result and that one department did not report some student results. In response the Principal's Nominee provided teachers with greater guidance on entry and withdrawal of students and introduced a mark book check before the final data submission for the year.

### **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))*

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

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- engaging Māori and Pasifika families in their student's achievement, aided by tailored workshops, their small school size and special character
- collecting feedback from parents to inform school review
- gathering student voice to inform effectiveness of assessment practice
- supporting teachers new to the school to meet school expectations when assessing NCEA students
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

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

- checking that teachers, students and parents are following processes and seeking their input
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- a focus on documenting clearly assessment processes and forms
- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

**Student understanding strengthened** Following the last Managing National Assessment review the school has strengthened processes for developing student understanding of NCEA, including knowledge about their qualification's pathway and tracking of progress toward achieving this. The students interviewed could confidently describe their qualifications goals, what they needed to do to realise them and how many credits they have achieved to date. They value the way the school provides multiple channels to support their achievement and felt well informed. The Principal's Nominee has plans to further simplify the student guide and will then remove any student material replicated in the teacher guide to aid version control.

### **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.