

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Fraser High School

August 2017

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Fraser High 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 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, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report 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 2017* (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
- *Fraser High School Assessment and Reporting Procedures 2015 - 2017* (Staff Handbook)
- *2017 Assessment Procedures Handbook for students and their families*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, Assistant Principal's Nominee, three students, Leader of Curriculum for Mathematics, Physical Education and Health, Science, Technology, and Leader of Learning for Health, and Food Technology.

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

## Fraser High School

**16 August 2017**

### **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**

Fraser High School has processes in place to ensure credible assessment for national qualifications and to meet the academic and vocational needs of its students.

Initially prompted by the high number of agreed action items identified in the previous Managing National Assessment report, the school employed an outside consultant and underwent a full review of its assessment processes and procedures. Since then, it has developed capacity to undertake its own self-review and has successfully focused on improving processes, ensuring consistency of credible assessment and improving staff awareness of best assessment practice.

Teachers and students now demonstrate a shared understanding of all aspects of assessment and qualifications. The school has developed this through its collaborative approach. Moderation, data management, assessment practice and communication practices are effectively managed by the Principal's Nominee, and a Deputy Principal and strongly supported by the rest of senior leadership.

Assessment programmes are designed to meet the interests of students. Monitoring and support is provided with the aim to help transition students towards their future pathway.

Internal moderation is an embedded process. Student work selected for verification is purposefully selected by focusing on examples around grade boundaries. The online internal moderation application allows visibility and monitoring of all aspects. External moderation feedback is used to review the effectiveness of the internal moderation process and as a resource to improve future teaching of the standard.

Data submissions to NZQA are accurate and timely. Staff use achievement data to review their programmes, track progress of students to their achievement goals and identify students at risk of not meeting requirements.

Communication documentation is up to date and reflects the audience for which it is intended. Student and staff material is linked to ensure a consistent message. These documents are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.

### **Areas for improvement**

Greater use of the NZQA Learner login is encouraged as it shows the results reported by the school and provides access to links such as ordering certificates and paying outstanding fees.

Course material issued to students should be reviewed. Clarifying requirements with staff including review of a common template will ensure students receive a consistent message about assessment across their courses.

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14 November 2017

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# FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

## How effectively has the school responded to external and internal review?

### External review

*Evidence found that external review actions have been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3v)*

### Action Items from 23 and 24 October 2014 Managing National Assessment

**Report** This review identified 13 agreed items that would improve the quality of the school's assessment systems. These items were across all four areas reviewed and have been addressed as follows:

- **Assessment Practice** School-wide discussion on assessment practices has seen a focus on gathering evidence for assessment, resubmission and further assessment opportunities. Staff are encouraged to seek professional development support through attendance at Best Practice Workshops. In addition, use of the NZQA website and subject associations is also promoted.
- **Moderation** Significant work has been undertaken on improving the effectiveness of the school's internal moderation processes. This has occurred through staff training, reinforced with a visual flow chart of the process displayed across the school, especially in staff workrooms. The success of this is evident from the staff's consistent understanding of expectations including the appropriateness of verifiers, sufficient and purposeful selection and documentation of verification discussions. An online internal moderation application has been developed and is used throughout the school. This enables effective monitoring of all aspects of internal moderation. Staff are engaging with the online external moderation processes and many are using Google and Moodle to submit material for moderation. Effective responses to external moderation are discussed later in this report.
- **Data** The number of students registered to use their NZQA Learner login has not increased. This issue is discussed in the Data section of this report. High security access through Education Sector Authentication and Authorisation (ESAA) has been increased to the Principal, Deputy Principals and Assistant Principal's Nominee. Entries into external examinations are made to meet the needs of individual students. Reflection on attendance and achievement in these is analysed and forms part of future programmes. The school is aware of NZQA deadlines for external examination entries, and manages its processes to meet these.
- **Communication** The Principal's Nominee role is now shared and includes a member of the Senior Management Team. This has led to a greater ownership and ensures continuity during times of staff leave. Review and development of course outlines issued to students has been undertaken and is discussed further in the Communication section of this report.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school responds appropriately to external moderation outcomes. Staff use feedback as a learning tool leading to improved assessment practice. When issues are identified, the Principal's Nominee meets with individuals, department and faculties, as appropriate, to discuss findings, investigate possible reasons for it and identify next steps. Part of this process involves reflecting on the internal moderation undertaken to ascertain if any factors contributed to the external moderation outcome. This is good practice.

One Leader of Learning interviewed shared their experiences following a couple of years of external moderation low agreement rates. Discussion and review led them to identify that the verifier used did not have standard-specific experience. A change was instigated to use a more suitable colleague from outside the school, with a subsequent improvement in agreement rates.

The Leader of Learning acknowledges the importance of external moderation to encourage reflection on internal moderation and will continue to review verifiers to ensure the department remains aware of, and is marking to, the current standard. This may include changing suitable verifiers after a few years to ensure the verification remains objective.

### **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)*

The previous Managing National Assessment report prompted the school to initiate a comprehensive review of all its systems. The school employed an outside consultant to work with them to critically appraise all curriculum areas, assessment practices, and school processes. Significant work was undertaken during this time to identify any inconsistencies and/or misinterpretations.

As a result, the school now demonstrates a consistent understanding of practices and procedures, and shared responsibility for ensuring the credibility of its reported results. The school's collaborative approach to self-review demonstrates that not only does it now have the capacity to identify assessment-related issues and, where changes are needed, to make an appropriate response, but also to continually seek to improve current practice and performance.

**Biennial review supports robust review of systems** All faculty areas are involved in a biennial review led by members of the Senior Leadership Team including the Principal's Nominee. The focus of the review seeks an answer to the question; "How effectively does the Department ensure the credibility of assessment for national qualifications?" The Leader of Curriculum or Leader of Learning involved prepares by reviewing aspects of their assessment practice. This could include items such as external moderation feedback along with any possible implications for other standards offered in the department, storage of student work, authenticity, resubmission, use of clarification documents as well as identifying any areas for support or further discussion.

A report, written by the Principal's Nominee, summarises the nature of the discussions, including any recommendations and this is forwarded to relevant staff including the Principal. In other years the Principal's Nominee arranges a more informal meeting with the Leader of Curriculum to review their assessment practices and address any concerns.

**Future focus on meaningful pathways for students** The school has indicated that its future focus is on ensuring meaningful and responsive pathways for its students. There has been a move away from credit focused outcomes to designing programmes looking at the pathways and next steps for students to support them to transition from school. This has also involved reflecting on course design within the junior school and what that may look like as students move into NCEA study.

The school has identified that while 35 percent of their current Year 13 students need NCEA Level 3 and University Entrance, the majority have returned to school for other reasons. Almost a quarter of students do not have a clear idea of their future pathway meaning the challenge for the school is to devise programmes that are meaningful for them. The dual enrolment of senior students with tertiary pathways is one example the school has used to extend its available options.

Leader of Curriculum and Leader of Learning meetings provide a regular forum to discuss best practice around assessment and gathering of evidence. There has been a conscious move away from single, whole class, timebound assessments towards alternative forms of assessment including naturally occurring evidence and more personalised learning. The school is aware of possible issues with maintaining the credibility of different forms of assessment such as ensuring authenticity, and ensures discussion is held and a shared understanding of expected, best practice, is gained.

The school is committed to using the flexibility of the NCEA assessment model to meet student needs while continuing to develop its effective culture of self-review thus ensuring robust assessment practice.

**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 found that assessment practice is meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6 I & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 5.5)*

### **Fraser High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- using Google docs to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information to support students to present their best evidence
- applying for, and delivering special assessment conditions for students who have a recognised and documented need
- where appropriate, assessing students when they are ready
- engaging with outside providers to offer vocational and trade-based courses and assessments
- adapting assessment to make use of local contexts and link with 'outside reality' to help engage students
- negotiating with students the standards to be undertaken in an assessment programme to reflect their needs, interests and future pathways
- providing multi-level courses in core subjects
- use of differentiated programmes for students including a mix of prescribed and optional standards selected, with guidance, according to their interest and future pathway
- developing an integrated approach to courses where evidence can be used for more than one standard at a time.

### **Fraser High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on missed and late work, extensions, resubmissions, and further assessment opportunities
- managing authenticity through a shared understanding of process and strategies for staff and students
- supporting teachers to collect a range of evidence of achievement, particularly through naturally occurring evidence, and the use of digital tools
- reporting Not Achieved where a student has presented evidence that is not at the standard, or has had an adequate assessment opportunity and submitted no work
- efficiently managing NZQA external examinations.

### **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 found that internal and external moderation are ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 6.4b)*

### **Fraser High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring new and amended assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- purposefully selecting samples of student work at grade boundaries for verification of assessor judgements
- engaging with suitably-qualified subject specialists from within and outside the school as verifiers
- supporting and assisting in maintaining standards by moderating student work from other schools
- documenting the critiquing and verification processes for each standard before results are reported, including documenting discussions on grade judgements
- having Leaders of Learning monitor the completion of the process and provide to the Principal's Nominee an attestation to confirm this.

### **Fraser High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- 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.

**Online internal moderation application provides transparency** Since the previous Managing National Assessment report, the school has developed an online internal moderation application for recording of all aspects of the process and enabling monitoring of its completion. It enables the Principal's Nominee and Leaders of Curriculum to view where departments are at, at any time. It also supports ensuring the effectiveness of the process undertaken, by presenting information on all aspects of internal moderation including:

- the number of entries for each standard, samples selected for verification, and grades the verifier disagreed with
- the use of outside moderators
- moderation feedback and discussion on borderline examples.

The Principal's Nominee and Deputy Principal uses the online tool throughout the year to confirm internal moderation has been completed for standards where results have been reported to NZQA. The school is encouraged to develop a system to record this monitoring process to ensure all curriculum areas are covered over the course of a year, and any areas of concern are noted for future reference.

Discussions held during the Managing National Assessment visit suggested another couple of areas of review that would improve the use of the internal moderation online application tool by staff. Teachers value verification discussion held around samples of student work and document this in the online tool. There is, however, no

current way for teachers to access this from previous years. As this information serves a valuable reference to the reason for awarding grades, the school is encouraged to consider investigating a way to enable either printing or accessing previous years' discussions.

Where numerous teachers assess the same standard, it is important to ensure that all teachers are part of the internal moderation process and that the Leader of Curriculum is able to monitor the internal moderation for each teacher. Clarification of this with all Leaders of Curriculum would ensure their monitoring encompasses all staff assessing a standard.

### **For consideration**

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

- recording monitoring of the internal moderation process by the Principal's Nominee for future reference and to ensure coverage of all areas
- reviewing and clarifying aspects of the online internal moderation application as discussed.

## How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

*Evidence found that data management and use supports student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)*

### Fraser High School effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - tracking and monitoring progress to identify students at risk of not achieving their chosen assessment pathway
  - reviewing achievement data throughout, and at the end of the year, to inform future teaching and assessment programmes
  - gathering student voice to evaluate courses, inform changes to programmes, contexts and standards
  - reporting annually to the Principal a discussion on aspects of achievement and assessment practice that worked well and areas identified for improvement
  
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
  - submitting fees paid and financial assistance applications on time
  - working to ensure low levels of late external entries
  - ensuring all internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
  - managing results for students who are in Year 10
  - using the correct provider code for assessment undertaken by external providers.

**Continue to encourage use of Learner login** An agreed action item from the previous Managing National Assessment report was to focus on increasing the numbers of students using their NZQA Learner login. The school has tried to encourage this by regular reminders at assemblies, tutor group support, letters to parents and reminders at meetings. However, the percentage of students who have registered to use it has continued to drop over each of the last three years since the last Managing National Assessment report. The Learner login is the definitive way for students to check that entries and results have been reported accurately, make requests for review and reconsideration of external examinations, and order Certificates and their Record of Achievement. The school is encouraged to continue to review and improve the process for supporting students to register and use their NZQA Learner login.

### For consideration

To extend good practice in managing and making use of assessment-related data, the school is encouraged to consider:

- continuing to review and improve the process for encouraging students to register for and use their Learner login.

## How effectively does the school's communication inform staff, and students and their families about assessment?

*Evidence found that school communication ensures understanding about assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7iib)*

### **Fraser High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students are provided with assessment information for all courses they undertake
- communicating up-to-date and easily accessed assessment information to staff, students and their families in print, in person and digitally
- supporting teachers new to the school and Provisionally Registered Teachers through fit-for-purpose forums
- reviewing communications to ensure they are current and meet the needs of the audience
- ensuring a memorandum of understanding is held centrally for all outside providers against whose codes grades are reported.

### **Fraser High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- publishing a student NCEA assessment handbook that is written in a style and language suitable for the audience
- ensuring relevant NZQA updates are circulated to NCEA teachers and discussed as necessary
- discussing with students what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes.

**Review use of common templates for course outlines** The school has an expectation that students are provided with information on their courses at the start of each year. Following an agreed item from the previous Managing National Assessment report, a common course outline template was developed from the school's student management system. Despite this, some course material sighted during this review differed in format and in the information it contained. Furthermore, in one area material given to students differed from what was presented to the Principal's Nominee for checking.

The school acknowledges it is good practice for course information to follow a common template. This makes them recognisable and easy to understand for students and parents. Details such as further assessment opportunities can be communicated in a standardised manner. Schoolwide assessment practice meanwhile, can be managed through a central document with the use of links to this and/or the NZQA website ensuring a consistent and up-to-date message. The use of a common outline does not preclude different departments including subject-specific information. The school is encouraged to review the material issued to students and the use of a common template for course information.

**Effective documentation supports common understanding** Following the last Managing National Assessment review, a comprehensive review of documentation was undertaken. This has resulted in communications that are accurate, written to

meet the needs of the relevant audience and consistent in message. The student handbook is succinct and organised around a series of frequently asked questions. The answers are written in a straightforward manner that can be easily understood by the students and their families. The staff handbook includes the questions and answers taken from the student handbook so that teachers are aware of the language and information used to communicate assessment information to students and families. This is good practice.

### **For consideration**

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- review the use of a common template for course information.