

Managing National Assessment Report

St Peter's School Cambridge

October 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively St Peter's 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
- St Peter's School Cambridge Trust Board assessment policies
- *St Peter's School Cambridge Assessment Information for Staff 2018* (Staff Handbook)
- *St Peter's School Cambridge NCEA Assessment Information for Students and Parents/Caregivers 2018* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- the Leaders of Learning for:
 - English
 - Languages
 - Mathematics
 - Performing Arts
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
- three students.

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

St Peter's School Cambridge

17 October 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.

This review was rescheduled from 2017, with the school's agreement, because of the appointment of a new principal and subsequently a new senior leadership team.

What the school is doing well

St Peter's School Cambridge, as part of its special character, has developed a "culture of family where students are developed to their full potential" with wellbeing as a key driver. This aims to foster each student's ability to grow their capacity to lead and empower their own learning and assessment choices through a growth mindset. The school sets high expectations for student academic achievement which is reflected in its 2017 results at all levels of NCEA qualifications and University Entrance. New directions are establishing pathways for students choosing to engage with vocational pathways.

A new Principal and Senior Management Team are effectively leading schoolwide strategic changes to NCEA assessment practice and use of data to self-review. They also respond to external self-review to better use the flexibility of NCEA to meet all students' needs and to ensure students are equipped for 21st century learning.

Course design is informed by data to meet students' aspirations, abilities and career goals. The school has increased differentiation within and between courses for students. It offers dual pathways for qualifications, however most students complete NCEA. Senior Leaders approve the addition of new courses annually, based on evidence of student need. Most recently the school has extended its consent to assess to include Agri-business standards.

Self-review has led to a focus on differentiated learning to better meet student needs. To align with its special character, the school has introduced a programme of Education for Wellbeing providing all students with resilience training and academic mentoring to help them plan and make meaningful NCEA subject choices. It is anticipated this will better connect them with their chosen career pathways. An effective Enhanced Learning Department monitors those with learning challenges to meet their assessment needs.

The Principal's Nominee monitors internal moderation across departments to reconcile documentation with actual practice. She conducts internal moderation audit visits with each Leader of Learning to check moderation processes. Teachers use a well-embedded system of checks on internal moderation. Their moderation processes are signed off by Leaders of Learning before grades can be submitted to NZQA.

Data is reported to NZQA in a timely manner. Data analysis is a strength and provides a basis for schoolwide self-review through the school's Line Management system. Heads of Department analyse data longitudinally and comparatively and report to senior management, their Leaders of Learning and the school's trust board annually on strategic goals.

Senior Management proactively provides professional development to embed shared ownership of data and encourage teachers to understand how they can improve student achievement. New procedures support staff reporting their own results and providing intervention for priority learners. Data-sharing is improving the nature of student outcomes.

NCEA assessment practice is effectively managed by the Principal's Nominee. She is supported in her work by the Principal and senior management team who work collaboratively to ensure student achievement.

Areas for improvement

The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on sufficient verification by the strategic selection of student work. This should result in workload reduction.

As a next step, course outlines need only provide information about standards, credit values, version numbers and whether these are internally or externally assessed, their literacy and numeracy and UE subject status. These outlines should not include information on assessment practice. For all assessment information students need to be directed to the standardised version of the reviewed student handbook. The school intends to make this change with the introduction of a new student management system in 2019.

The school should update the staff handbook as outlined in the Communications Section of this report.

Agreed action

The school agreed that the following action will improve the quality of their assessment systems. This is:

- revise information contained in course outlines, and link these to the student handbook to standardise understanding of assessment information
- update the staff handbook as outlined in this report.

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11 December 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 8 August 2014 Managing National Assessment Report

St Peter's School has responded effectively to five of six action items raised in the 2014 Managing National Assessment review. One action is the subject of continuing action.

The school now:

- ensures that back-up files are available for materials providing digital evidence for moderation
- conducts an internal moderation audit as part of its cyclic review process
- has added a final Principal's Nominee sign-off to ensure that changes to external moderation are made in a timely manner
- uses data analysis for self-review in departments to differentiate course design
- has adopted a standardised annual report format for Leaders of Learning.

While course outlines provide adequate detail of materials contained within courses there is some inconsistency of detail on assessment practice because each course outline repeats a version of information that is contained in the student handbook. To avoid this inconsistency course outlines should only contain information particular to that course. For example, course outlines should provide information about standard numbers and titles, credit values, version numbers and whether these are internally or externally assessed, their literacy and numeracy and UE subject status. All generic assessment information should be linked online to the school's student assessment handbook. This change will be implemented with the introduction of a new student management system in 2019.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has a sound external moderation agreement rate between teachers and NZQA external moderators.

Leaders of Learning are required to develop an action plan to resolve any issues raised by moderators. The Principal's Nominee monitors the completion of these plans by checking documented outcomes through Line Managers. She also checks discussion of external moderation recorded in department minutes of meeting.

Senior Management provides support for teachers to resolve any issues. Currently, the Principal's Nominee is tracking progress in two learning areas responding to review findings through action plans. Responses include finding new verifiers, encouraging appeals to NZQA over moderation decisions, seeking professional development through subject associations, and checking and updating assessment materials against the current clarification documents. Senior Management discusses the effectiveness of these actions with Leaders of Learning, or teachers where appropriate, and records outcomes on a spreadsheet shared with the Leader of Learning.

Response to data issues NZQA conducted a Derived Grade Management Review at the school in 2018. The review showed that the school has well-managed and transparent processes, and that all applications are based on pre-existing standard specific evidence.

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 Peter's School's goal is that each student achieves to their full potential. Through effective schoolwide self-review processes and procedures teachers and managers aim to identify areas for continuous improvement by:

- responding to issues raised in external reviews
- requiring Leaders of Learning to engage in reflective inquiry on aspects of their own practice through course design, credit reduction, teaching as inquiry and as part of their appraisal to better personalise learning for each student
- running regular Principal's Nominee and Leaders of Learning meetings to discuss schoolwide goals and assessment matters to professionally develop staff
- improving shared data analysis to review student assessment outcomes and to evaluate the effectiveness of assessment programmes by examining barriers and enablers to student achievement standard-by-standard
- identifying the need to reduce blanket entry into standards to better meet student needs
- conducting Leaders of Learning reviews of student assessment outcomes and reporting findings and future actions to Senior Management and the school's Trust Board to inform schoolwide assessment goals
- identifying the need to involve middle management in leading assessment in departments through assessment conversations
- ensuring oversight of assessment processes by senior management, deans and house deans; and responding by developing a new format for the annual Principal's Nominee Quality Assurance visit.

The new Senior Management Team has embedded schoolwide review practice over the past two years. This ensures that classroom teachers, Leaders of Learning, Senior Managers and the school's Trust Board have input into review cycles that are informed by data analysis and communication.

Self-review has resulted in a range of changes within the school, including:

- a pastoral and mentoring system based on the school's Wellbeing curriculum including discussions over student's NCEA goals, study skills and career aspirations
- differentiating learning through vocational pathways, a new timetable structure and the addition of internally assessed courses to meet student need
- a Principal's Nominee interview and documented review with each Leader of Learning to ensure internal moderation procedures are being followed according to the school's and NZQA's requirements.

- a new student management system in 2019 that will provide easier access to data for analysis and to provide more immediate data summaries for ongoing adjustment of assessment programmes
- a deliberate change in the format Leaders of Learning use to report on student achievement to the school's senior leaders and The Trust Board. This now reflects on assessment successes and any potential barriers to student achievement so they are understood, and change can be resourced to better meet student need
- the development of a separate student assessment handbook provided electronically to students, parents and caregivers giving improved access to assessment information
- purposeful use of NZQA's Mythbusters with staff and senior managers to update professional understanding and ensure more consistent assessment practice
- a restructured school house and deaning system to ensure there are three deans per house, plus a Year 7 and 8 dean, including a Lead Dean who has a time allowance to upskill new teaching staff and support students' option choices.

These initiatives indicate that the school has the capacity to continue self-review to ensure school-wide ownership of effective NCEA assessment and moderation practices. The school will continue to review the outcome of these improvements on student achievement.

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)

St Peter's School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- offering optional standards in courses
- using extensive feedback, feedforward and milestone checks to support achievement
- assessing students when ready, where appropriate
- using, and investigating, strategies to gather evidence of student achievement by collecting common evidence across subject areas
- identifying students entitled to Special Assessment Conditions using a range of school-based evidence, and ensuring they can use these conditions for all assessment opportunities
- conferencing with students and identifying ways in which they can meet their literacy and numeracy requirements to gain qualifications
- celebrating students' academic success through Awards assemblies.

St Peter's School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring credible assessment through the missed and late assessment process, provision of valid extensions to submission dates, resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- using a range of strategies during assessment and marking to assist students to submit authentic work
- ensuring students' derived grade applications are based on pre-existing standard-specific evidence.

Use of flexibility of NCEA to better meet student needs The flexibility of NCEA is being used across both academic and vocational pathways to meet students' career goals and aspirations as part of the school's special character. New emphasis on Agri-Business, the Business and Entrepreneurial Centre, Equine Studies, Viticulture and an extensive range of sporting and cultural activities has extended the range of relevant contexts to engage student interest. Some courses now focus on internal assessment only and others are have begun to reduce the number of credits on offer to allow students to focus on a greater variety of possible NCEA pathways that meet their needs.

Regular mentoring ensures students are prepared for academic success A

Wellbeing curriculum providing mentoring supports students to meet their qualifications goals and set career aspirations. Tutors track their small Learning Groups throughout their secondary education to ensure they meet their goals. Regular weekly meetings develop skills and strategies to support student learning and assessment intentions.

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)

St Peter's 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 and outside of the school, to verify a sample of student work through benchmarking and moderation meetings
- requiring staff to document completion of steps in the internal moderation process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- storing copies of the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* in department folders. These are signed off by the Leader of Learning before results are reported to NZQA.

St Peter's School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work randomly to meet NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are available for external moderation by being adequately stored.

Strengthened internal moderation monitoring The Principal's Nominee has strengthened the monitoring of internal moderation to develop shared understanding across all levels. This process is developing improved teacher understanding of the purpose of internal moderation while providing senior management with confidence that results are quality assured. Monitoring captures the outcomes of assessment conversations over quality assurance processes in departments, and provides senior management with greater oversight of departmental processes.

The Principal's Nominee makes visits to departments check each of the stages of internal moderation in their moderation folders, documents these visits and holds a discussion with the Leader of Learning. She also makes strategic checks on departmental minutes of meeting. Follow-up progress is documented by the Leader of Learning on a shared departmental spreadsheet and the Principal's Nominee dates changes as they are completed. She holds any further strategic interviews as appropriate.

Strategic Selection of student work for verification to reduce workload The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on sufficient verification by the strategic selection of student work. Learning Areas 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.

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)

St Peter's School effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - teachers analysing achievement data to inform current year courses and programme design
 - tracking student achievement to identify priority learners
 - effectively supporting students to review their progress data and reach academic or vocational goals by tracking their own progress through the *My St Peters* app and their NZQA Learner login
 - ensuring students are informed about and have access to financial assistance
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - frequent and timely reporting of results to NZQA
 - having students sign off that their results are accurate before teachers report these, and scanning these sheets for final checking by the Data Manager before they are reported to NZQA
 - holding current memoranda of understanding with external providers and checking these against results reported against their provider codes
 - assisting all students to gain access to their Learner login and encouraging them to check any discrepancies in results with their teachers.

Staff professional development on data supports student assessment outcomes The school has developed reflective data practice by providing professional development for teachers and managers on interpreting data. This is supporting students at-risk of not achieving their goals.

Teachers analyse standard-by-standard data and provide this analysis to their Leaders of Learning. Line Managers discuss individual student progress with Learning Group Tutors to better inform evaluation and individualise student programmes.

Data conversations identify barriers and enablers to student assessment outcomes This year each Leader of Learning delivered a data presentation to the Principal and the Trust Board. They considered barriers and enablers to student achievement through comparative and longitudinal data analysis.

This practice is developing a greater shared understanding of student assessment pathways by highlighting the need for differentiated internally assessed courses that aim to better meet the needs of passion learners or provide vocational pathways for some students. The Principal's Nominee explained this strategic initiative has resulted in more evidence-based schoolwide learning conversations. For example, Leaders of Learning have held discussions on equitable access to Science,

Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, and ways in which learning areas can differentiate courses to better meet the needs of specific cohorts and improve assessment pathways for students.

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 Peter's School has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating assessment policy and procedure through email, Leaders of Learning and staff meetings
- supporting teachers new to the school
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

St Peter's School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- checking whether teachers, students and parents are following processes by emailing their community to explain assessment processes and inviting queries
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- surveying student voice to establish that students are aware of what they need to achieve to gain a qualification
- providing information in a handbook and shared discussion of NCEA practices during mentor/mentee meetings, and through conversations with house and lead deans

Provide information on the use of student work as exemplars While the school meets the requirements of *the Privacy Act 1993* when returning student work, students have the right to give permission before teachers use their work as exemplars. There is currently no information covering this requirement in the handbook. The school has acknowledged this and will include appropriate information in the next edition of the handbook.

Align all course outlines with schoolwide assessment information Consistency is needed in aligning course outlines with information in the school's handbook. In one subject area information in the course outline conflicts with that in the school's missed and late assessment policy, and resubmission and further assessment policies.

Changes to Staff Handbook required This review identified several additional changes to communications need to be made to ensure consistency and clarity. These are:

- stating explicitly that where there is a breach of the rules a Not Achieved grade will be reported rather than "no grade". This will align with actual practice
- clarification of the appeals timeframe across all subject areas to ensure fairness
- updating "National Qualifications Framework" to "New Zealand Qualifications Framework".

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:

- revise information contained in course outlines, and link these to the student handbook to standardise understanding of assessment information
- update the staff handbook as outlined in this report.