

Managing National Assessment Report

Edgecumbe College

September 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Edgecumbe 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 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
- *Curriculum Booklets Edgecumbe College 2018*
- *Managing National Assessment, Teacher Handbook, Edgecumbe College 2018*
- *Student Handbook, National Qualifications, Edgecumbe College 2018*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the:

- Principal's Nominee
- Head of Faculty/Department for:
 - English
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
 - Te Reo Māori
- Teacher of:
 - Design and Visual Communication
 - Music
- 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.

Background

In April 2017 Edgecumbe College was inundated by floodwaters from the Rangitaiki River. A state of emergency was declared and 2000 people were evacuated. Edgecumbe College and 300 homes were seriously damaged resulting in significant financial hardship for families in the area. The school experienced loss of resources. Teachers and students lost learning and assessment time. There has been significant transience and upheaval for this community. The school has coped well to recover.

SUMMARY

Edgecumbe College

5 September 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

Edgecumbe College focuses on meeting the assessment needs of its students. Self-review is informed by data analysis and is used to design courses and individualise programmes for students.

To allow students to engage with their most appropriate assessment pathways, teachers provide an increasing range of differentiated subjects and Vocational Pathways. External providers are used to extend the number of options available where the school would not otherwise have the capacity to deliver assessment of these standards. Courses are personalised through provision of optional standards

Internal moderation processes are embedded. This is reflected in good external moderation results from which action plans are developed as required. Heads of Department monitor these to ensure appropriate changes are made to assessment materials and advice is sought from suitably-qualified subject specialists within and outside the school. The Principal's Nominee holds strategic discussions with teachers, documents progress and checks that responses to external moderation are timely and complete.

Data is used to effectively support student achievement outcomes. Student entries and results are reported to NZQA in a timely manner. Achievement data is analysed longitudinally and comparatively to support decisions on schoolwide goals. Currently these focus on tracking students at risk of not achieving their qualifications and providing appropriate interventions to enable them to achieve literacy and numeracy and track their own progress towards NCEA. Students are taught to check results through their Learner login, tracking sheets and the student management system.

The school uses a variety of communications to help staff, students and whānau to develop a common understanding of assessment procedures and practice. Staff and student handbooks are linked to the NZQA website to ensure that assessment information is current.

Areas for improvement

The process for students to appeal their grades needs to be clarified to teachers so that students feel more confident to use it. None of the students interviewed during the review understood how to use the appeals process, nor could they cite examples of its having been used. The Principal's Nominee agreed that this process,

and the underlying principle of natural justice, will be shared with students in assemblies and through staff professional development.

The school should develop a sign-off process on the cover sheets given out when student grades are returned. This would provide confirmation that students agree to have their work use as an exemplar, and it will meet the requirements of *The Privacy Act 1993*.

The next step in strengthening the internal moderation monitoring process is to reconcile documentation with actual practice. Teachers currently submit all internal moderation cover sheets to the Data Manager before results are reported. Senior Management needs to reconcile these with samples of student work for each subject annually. This process will provide senior management with confidence that all results reported have been quality assured.

Agreed action

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

- ensure that teachers understand, and that students are confident in using, the appeals process
- ensure that teachers meet the requirements of The Privacy Act 1993 by ensuring students give permission for their work to be used as exemplars.
- strengthen the internal moderation monitoring process by reconciling documentation with actual practice to provide senior management with confidence that all results reported are quality assured.

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26 October 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 24 July 2015 Managing National Assessment Report The school has actioned all of the six agreed action items from the last Managing National Assessment review by:

- ensuring that the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator is supported to effectively administer the assessment needs of those students requiring special assessment conditions
- requiring all teachers to document evidence of grade boundary discussions on internal moderation cover sheets before quality assured results are reported to NZQA
- appointing a Data Manager to monitor that all aspects of the internal moderation process are complete
- requiring Heads of Department to complete a standardised annual report to the Principal and for the Board of Trustees
- supporting Year 11 students to access their Learner login and the student portal on the school management system through their Kaiarahi/Whānau Teacher
- updating communications to ensure that all terminology is current
- introducing a formal induction checklist for new teachers, covering a range of assessment and moderation information.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has effective processes to respond to external moderation feedback. There is a high level of agreement between teacher and external assessor judgements. The Principal's Nominee holds a discussion with staff and develops action plans to address identified issues as required. He has developed action plans with two subject areas where low agreement rates have persisted over two years.

Strategies to address identified issues include subject teachers seeking new verifiers from outside the school, and support from suitably-qualified subject advisors. The Principal's Nominee holds a follow-up checking meeting and annotates action plans to confirm that suggested outcomes have been effectively achieved.

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)

As a consequence of a big picture review of assessment and curriculum policy the school has decided on a governance goal of "improving student progress and achievement".

Self-review occurs at all levels of the school. Review processes under development are interconnected to ensure that teachers and department leaders review and reflect on assessment practices, and that senior leaders review schoolwide goals.

Review is also integral to the ongoing teaching and learning programme and is designed to facilitate students meet their qualifications goals. Shared self-review processes provide growing confidence that any concerns relating to assessment practice will be identified and addressed.

Self-review has resulted in a number of developments in the school including:

- implementing a new timetable in 2019. It is intended that the school's new 4 day a week core programme and one day optional structure will better meet the needs of students seeking to pursue Vocational Pathways, whilst still providing access to academic programmes for students seeking to gain University Entrance.
- ensuring that standards are requested for external moderation where staff have concerns with interpretation of a standard, or are using a standard for the first time
- the Principal conducting a review of all procedures and guidelines for assessment so that these are current and emphasise the purposeful nature of moderation and monitoring affirming this requirement from a Senior Management perspective
- holding regular Heads of Department meetings to establish curriculum directions across the school and share insights gained around moderation and assessment outcomes, for example literacy across the curriculum
- developing more reflective assessment inquiry practice through standard-by-standard analysis in new annual report formats. For example, teachers shared insights on ensuring assessment measures appropriate levels of the curriculum, and accurate use of macrons in Te Reo Māori.

Effective self-review processes to manage change Self-review of policies, timetabling and courses are continuing to ensure that Edgecumbe College can meet the needs of its current cohort, effectively managing adjustment from academic to vocational pathways to meet the changing student needs. The school has had some difficulty identifying how it will proceed because of the complex ambiguities of the post-flood environment, geological requirements around a potential rebuild and the significantly changing nature of its student population.

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)

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

- developing academic and vocational pathways, which focus on primary industries, construction and hospitality, to meet students' career goals and aspirations
- offering a range of Gateway placements to develop experience in retail and industry
- providing differentiated and flexible assessment opportunities across classes in the same courses, including the use of optional standards to individualise assessment programmes
- offering relevant local contexts to engage student interest in assessment opportunities
- using milestone checks, feedback and feedforward to support students to complete assessment tasks to the best of their ability
- investigating and using strategies to gather evidence of student achievement across subject areas
- identifying students entitled to Special Assessment Conditions using school-based evidence, and ensuring they are appropriately resourced for all assessment opportunities
- conducting careers counselling meetings with students
- supporting students to identify standards that will help them to meet literacy and numeracy requirements.

Edgecumbe College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring grades awarded are valid, authentic and verified
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- managing missed and late assessment processes, further assessment opportunities and resubmissions effectively.

Mentoring to support student achievement Weekly mentoring meetings with Whānau Ako teachers provide support for students to take responsibility for their assessment. Outcomes of these weekly meetings include:

- using data to discuss the progress of each student and identify those at risk of not completing qualifications or gaining literacy or numeracy
- providing advice to students on career options and course selection
- facilitating external support such as holiday-study programmes for students.

Ensure the appeals process is understood by student and teachers The school's appeals process needs to be better explained to students and teachers. While there is a process for appeals its purpose is not well understood. None of the students interviewed understood that the appeals process is based on the principles of natural justice. They explained that they felt it may affect their achievement outcomes negatively if they questioned their grades. The Principal's Nominee agreed that it would be valuable for this to be clarified to staff and students.

Development of a Digital Assessment Policy The school should consider developing a digital assessment policy to reflect the increasing use of digital tools to collect evidence for assessment. Some storage and file-naming protocols have been developed within departments, but these need to be formalised to ensure consistency of practice school-wide. This will assist departments to organise evidence more effectively so that it is readily available for external moderation.

A reminder of the requirements of *The Privacy Act 1993* when student work is retained Teachers explained they hold student exemplars but that they have no formal written process for students to provide their approval for this. The school agrees that the addition of a student signature on the cover sheets, given out when student grades are returned, would confirm that students agree to have their work use as exemplars. This will ensure the school meets the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Agreed action

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

- ensure that teachers understand, and that students are confident in using, the appeals process
- ensure that teachers meet the requirements of The Privacy Act 1993 by gaining student permission for their work to be used as exemplars.

For consideration

To extend good practice in meeting student needs and supporting assessment practice, the school is encouraged to consider:

- developing and documenting its Digital Assessment Policy.

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)

Edgecumbe College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- having all assessment materials critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit-for-purpose
- using exemplars and clarifications documents to inform teacher grade judgements during marking
- using subject specialists from within and outside of the school, to verify a purposefully-selected sample of student work, including through benchmarking and moderation meetings
- requiring staff to document the steps of their moderation processes on the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- lodging copies of the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheets* with the Data Manager, who checks completion of all aspects of internal moderation
- providing attestation of all completed internal moderation cover sheets to the Principal's Nominee before results are reported to NZQA, for quality assurance purposes.

Edgecumbe College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring student work is available by being adequately stored
- encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan and negotiating appropriate changes.

Strengthen monitoring of internal moderation with an annual audit visit to departments The school's next step in strengthening the monitoring process for internal moderation is to reconcile documentation with actual practice.

Heads of Department proactively monitor the completion of all aspects of internal moderation. The Data Manager checks the completion of the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheets* before results are submitted to NZQA. To further strengthen this process the school agrees to add an annual audit visit to each department to reconcile stored student work and grades reported with the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* for a random sample of standards to provide Senior Management with confidence that all results reported have been quality assured.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality. Senior management undertakes to:

- strengthen the internal moderation monitoring process by reconciling documentation with actual practice to provide senior management with confidence that all results reported are quality assured.

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)

Edgecumbe College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - identifying and tracking priority learners, and those at risk of not achieving an NCEA qualification, to decide changes to assessment programmes and provide appropriate support to help them attain their goal
 - providing students with credit summaries at least once a term so that they can track their own progress
 - using the standard-by-standard tracking function on the school management system to encourage teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of standards offered in courses
 - reporting an annual longitudinal and comparative analysis to the Board of Trustees to inform them on the school's strategic goals and actions.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
 - ensuring timely submission of data files
 - submitting fees paid and financial assistance applications on time
 - ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
 - encouraging teachers and students to identify and report errors in reported results and entries by signing off returned results, checking on the school management system, and in their Learner Login.

Earlier confirmation of student entry data to confirm external entries

Management of student entries for external examinations is a priority for the school. This year the school is adjusting student entries so that these better reflect student goals and aspirations in an attempt to address the underlying reasons behind high levels of absences and voided papers in some subjects in 2017. Whānau Teachers and the Careers Advisor have discussed external entries with students to establish whether these entries are appropriate. Continued data analysis should better ensure entries acknowledge student readiness to be assessed.

For consideration

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

- ensure entries for external assessment are effectively managed to reflect student needs and intentions.

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))

Edgecumbe College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive detailed course outlines for all courses they are engaged in
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to teachers, students and parents
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

Edgecumbe College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- informing parents, students and teachers about NCEA matters through the school's Facebook page and newsletters
- using Google classroom to communicate curriculum information with Heads of Department
- publishing coursebooks and a student handbook containing assessment procedures
- publishing an assessment handbook for teachers
- informing staff about updates to NCEA throughout the year
- using student assemblies to promote honours awards, attendance as achievement and attendance at course selection.

Current links in handbooks support good assessment practice This school provides effective access to assessment procedures and this is supported through focused discussion on aspects of NCEA procedure in staff meetings. The Principal's Nominee has linked each section of the staff assessment handbook to relevant sections on the NZQA website. Students are provided with a summary list of "Must Visits Sites".

These ensure that teachers and students have access to accurate and current information on NZQA assessment requirements.

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.