

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Sacred Heart Girls' College (New Plymouth)**

**March 2019**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Sacred Heart Girls' 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
- *Sacred Heart Girls' College NCEA Assessment Policy 2019 – Student Guide*
- *Sacred Heart Girls' College NCEA Assessment Policy 2019 – Teacher Guide*
- *Sacred Heart Girls' College Curriculum Policy*
- pre-review information from the Leaders of Learning interviewed
- the school's *Digital Strategy* and *Digital Policy and Procedures*
- *Understanding Our NCEA Results 2018* (NCEA analysis to Board of Trustees)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

Two School Relationship Managers met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- NZQA Assistant
- Leaders of Learning for:
  - English
  - Mathematics
  - Physical Education
  - Religious Education
  - Social Science
- Teacher in Charge of:
  - Digital Technology
- two students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Principal's Nominee and NZQA Assistant 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

## Sacred Heart Girls' College (New Plymouth)

20 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

A vision of supporting each student in a spiritual and culturally inclusive learning community underpins the school's focus. Assessment decisions place the student at the centre of teachers' and the school's decision making.

Sacred Heart Girls' College uses the flexibility of the NCEA model to meet the individual needs, interests and career aspirations of its students. The school's *Pathways Programme* enables an extensive range of academic and vocational assessment programmes to be offered through outside providers. Student agency is encouraged, enabling them to choose a pathway that reflects their interests or chosen career.

The cornerstone of the school's mentoring and student support is GEMS (*Goals Encourage Mana and Success*). This programme involves GEMS teachers monitoring student achievement, guiding course selection, identifying those at risk of not achieving a qualification and coordinating support, as appropriate. The school is proud of its NCEA and University Entrance achievement rates, which are significantly above national and decile attainment rates for all NCEA Levels. Māori student achievement at Level 3 in three STEM (*Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics*) subjects reflects the school's initiatives and proactive support for Māori students to engage with and be successful in these subjects.

The school's digital strategic plan is supported with professional learning and working at individual teachers' pace has led to an increase in the use of technology tools to gather student evidence. The development of storage protocols has enabled the school to submit external moderation digitally. The strategic plan is a working document, regularly reviewed and evolving as the school's digital journey progresses.

The school should consider reviewing authenticity procedures and clarify with teachers, strategies to ensure digital evidence collected is authentic. The gathering of assessment evidence digitally requires different and new strategies to ensure student work submitted is authentic.

The Principal's Nominee leads assessment practice with confidence, clarifying expectations and facilitating discussion on best practice. The school's quality assurance processes are embedded and well managed by the experienced

Principal's Nominee and NZQA Assistant. A robust audit process confirms credible results for national qualifications are reported.

Leaders of Learning, teachers and Senior Leadership use evidence based self-review to inform next steps, changes to assessment programmes offered and the ongoing achievement of annual and strategic goals.

The school website, Face Book and Application (App) are extensively used to provide assessment information to students, parents and staff. These digital platforms enable real time information and alerts to be provided to parents and students.

### **Agreed action**

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

- include in the next update of the staff handbook:
  - the process for monitoring internal moderation
  - the external moderation follow-up process.

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2 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 20 October 2016 Managing National Assessment Report

The following agreed actions from the 2016 review have been completed. The school has:

- clarified with staff that student work for grade verification should be a purposeful selection
- ensured that the random selection for external moderation is not subject to further verification
- monitored that staff document the grade reported and verification discussion on the moderation cover sheets
- put in place measures to ensure internal entries have a result reported or are withdrawn if no assessment has taken place.

The updating of the staff hand book with the processes for monitoring internal moderation and following-up on external moderation to reflect the good practice described at the 2016 review has yet to be completed. These two processes have been under review over the past two years as the school:

- moved to incorporate the use of digital tools for monitoring internal moderation
- developed digital storage protocols to reflect the increase in digital evidence collected and to facilitate the submission of digital evidence for external moderation
- introduced *Learning Coaches* as part of the external moderation follow-up process.

The school agreed to include the new processes when the staff handbook is next updated.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** External moderation reports are reviewed by the Principal's Nominee. Leaders of Learning develop an action plan, with the Principal's Nominee to address issues where *Not Consistent* and *Not Yet Consistent* are signalled in reports. Assessor support is provided, where appropriate.

Leaders of Learning discuss the completion of their external moderation actions with their *Learning Coach*. Coaching conversations occur regularly throughout the year to ensure actions are completed and moderation feedback informs changes to internal moderation understandings.

The Principal's Nominee reports annually to the Principal on moderation outcomes and the planned actions. The completion of the actions is reported by *Learning Coaches* as part of the Appraisal process.

As a next step the school is encouraged to use the Moderation Application to select standards for external moderation, including targeting those standards where actions

have been required to address identified issues. This will enable the school to evaluate the effectiveness of actions and follow-up process.

### **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)*

Self-review is an embedded practice at the school. It is integral to the ongoing development of teaching and learning programmes and assessment practice. Review occurs at all levels and focusses on providing students with opportunities to engage in learning and assessment experiences that are authentic, inclusive and support individual aspirations.

The school uses the *Social Discipline Model* when working with staff to develop their capability. Acknowledging effort, encouraging reflection to identify next steps and sharing of experiences has supported the following changes:

- An NZQA Assistant position has been created to share the workload of the Principal's Nominee and ensure knowledge is not held by one person. The NZQA Assistant has reviewed and refined the procedures for monitoring internal moderation. Her biannual audit confirms moderation documentation reflects actual practice and is used to reinforce good practice or provides advice where required.
- A strategy has been developed to guide the school's next steps toward digital assessment. This has included the identification of and support for two staff to trial a fully digital internally assessed course, including marking online in 2018. Sharing these teachers' experience with other staff has supported and encouraged the ongoing development of digital assessment schoolwide. This strategy positions the school well to engage in on-line external examinations in 2019. Students interviewed commented they enjoyed working in these two subjects and that it assisted them to present their best work.
- Protocols for storing evidence have been developed to ensure work is readily accessible, the file correctly named with appropriate access rights. This has increased the work submitted digitally for external moderation.
- The school's "*Growing Middle Leaders*" programme supports Leaders of Learning to lead assessment and achievement in their area. The programme has been reviewed and evolved to now include *Coaching Conversations* with their designated Senior Leader. Discussion throughout the year includes course analysis, NCEA achievement analysis, completing actions in response to external moderation and planned changes to courses offered. On-going review and identification of next steps are the focus of these conversations.
- In 2019, each Leader of Learning is allocated a *Critical Friend* from another subject area. The school anticipates this has the potential to break down subject silos and encourage the further development of cross curriculum assessment, which is beginning in some subject areas.

These changes provide evidence of the school's capacity and ability to effectively evaluate NCEA assessment practices and procedures. The school responds to the changing qualification and assessment needs of individual students to achieve the school goals while supporting teacher understanding and development.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice. Senior management undertakes to:

- include in the next update of the staff handbook:
  - the process for monitoring internal moderation
  - the external moderation follow-up process.



## 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)*

### **Sacred Heart Girls' College (New Plymouth) has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- individualising assessment programmes to enable students to undertake an assessment course that meets their needs including:
  - assessing students when ready though flexible timeframes
  - negotiating with students the standards to be undertaken in their assessment programme to reflect future pathways
  - offering multilevel classes, extension opportunities and NCEA over two years, where appropriate
  - offering work and study skills numeracy standards for students identified as requiring additional numeracy support
- using the GEMS programme to customise assessment programmes to support those at risk of not achieving a qualification and monitor progress toward qualification goals and planned career pathways
- extending assessment opportunities for students by engaging with external providers and extending the school's consent to assess to provide vocational and trade-based courses, including the New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills
- proactively working with students and parents to support students wanting to transition to work or further study during the year
- using Auckland University BEAMS (Business, Engineering, Architecture, Medicine and Science) and Taranaki Hospital *WhyOra* programmes to provide authentic learning experiences that support Māori students to explore science and health related career pathways
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlement and providing these resources, where appropriate.

### **Sacred Heart Girls' College (New Plymouth) has effective processes and procedures for:**

- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted by using suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process
- consistent school-wide assessment practice for further assessment opportunities, resubmission and missed and late assessment
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- managing NZQA external examinations
- operating an appeals process based on the principles of natural justice
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Pathways Programme meets individual students needs and interests** The school has a vision to support individual aspirations. The Pathways Programme, introduced in 2017, provides students with authentic learning contexts linked to their interests and career aspirations. The programme has resulted in the development of personalised timetables for many Year 12 and 13 students and supports the school's vision. Opportunities available to students include a Trades Academy, 3+2 Programmes, vocational and academic courses. Teachers modify assessment programmes so students are not disadvantaged when attending off-site day courses and work experience.

**Strategies to ensure digital evidence submitted is authentic** The school is proactive in engaging with the use of technology in teaching, learning and assessment practice in most subjects. With the increase in digital evidence collection it is suggested the school consider developing and sharing with teachers' strategies to use to ensure digital evidence submitted is authentic.

### **For consideration**

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

- clarifying with staff how to manage authenticity when collecting digital evidence.

## 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)*

### **Sacred Heart Girls' College (New Plymouth) has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring teachers are provided with clear expectations on internal moderation requirements
- using appropriate subject-specialists from within and outside of the school to verify assessor judgements for a purposefully selected sample of student work, including noting discussions on grade judgements for future reference
- documenting the internal moderation process for each standard assessed before results are reported to NZQA
- requiring teachers to save a completed *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* on-line to enable monitoring and to confirm internal moderation has occurred prior to the Office Administrator generating a random selection for external moderation
- conducting random audits twice a year to check internal moderation processes are being followed and the documented moderation process reflects actual practice.

### **Sacred Heart Girls' College (New Plymouth) has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- storing assessed work securely so that it is available, if requested, for external moderation
- using a random selection method that meets NZQA requirements
- following-up on external moderation feedback, including documenting actions, monitoring that actions are completed and arranging teacher support as appropriate
- encouraging teachers to appeal moderation decisions when they do not agree
- reflecting on external moderation feedback to inform future assessment decisions
- reporting external moderation feedback and actions planned in response to the Principal and Board of Trustees.

**Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency** Learning Areas assure the quality of grades awarded by selecting work at grade boundaries when verifying assessor judgements. However, some Leaders of Learning described verifying samples additional to grade boundaries, including a random selection or other samples to make eight pieces of work. The school should consider providing further guidance on verification by the strategic selection of student work.

Strategic selection of a sufficient number of samples 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)*

### **Sacred Heart Girls' College (New Plymouth) effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- twice each term, providing grade summaries to students to assist them to monitor NCEA progress and facilitate discussion with their GEMS teacher
- enabling GEMS teachers to track and monitor student progress toward achieving an NCEA qualification
- identifying students at risk and to negotiate programme changes and provide support as appropriate
- informing changes to standards offered or new programmes to be offered to meet student needs and aspirations
- submitting fees paid and financial assistance applications on time, so that all achievement can be transferred to a student's Record of Achievement and qualifications can be awarded.

### **Sacred Heart Girls' College (New Plymouth) reports accurate achievement data by:**

- using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
- using robust checking processes to confirm the accuracy of the internally assessed grades reported and to ensure minimal late entries
- reporting results and entries to NZQA in a timely manner
- ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
- annually reconciling reported results from external providers with a Memorandum of Understanding
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of outside providers with which the school holds current memoranda of understanding.

**Effective data analysis informs strategic and annual changes** The school's data analysis is used to evaluate outcomes against goals and identify students' changing needs. The Principal's Nominee and teachers described using assessment data to:

- report to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA achievement results, against set goals, evaluating unexpected results, identifying trends and determining next steps
- evaluate the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure they allow students to meet their achievement goals
- evaluate Māori student achievement in STEM subjects to inform next steps in students learning plans.

### **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))*

### **Sacred Heart Girls' College (New Plymouth) has effective processes and procedures for:**

- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and whānau using written, digital and face-to-face methods
- reviewing the staff and student handbooks annually
- providing students with consistent assessment programme information digitally and in hard copy, using a common template.

### **Sacred Heart Girls' College (New Plymouth) assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- using Leaders of Learning and staff meetings to clarify changes of assessment procedures and expectations
- providing Parent-Student-Teacher conferences and a Pathways Evening to assist parents to:
  - discuss their daughter's achievement and qualifications progress
  - understand NCEA and Vocational Pathways
  - assist in making valid and relevant course selection choices for the following year
- inducting and supporting new staff so they understand the school's NCEA processes and procedures
- checking whether teachers and students are following school assessment processes
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- providing students with information so they understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

**Digital tools support effective communication** The school website and App provide easy access to assessment and achievement information to students and parents including:

- publishing on the school website:
  - all course outlines
  - student and staff handbooks, along with extension and appeal application forms
- providing NCEA and Vocational pathway information
- using the school App and Facebook page to notify students and parents of key dates, for example NZQA's fees payment deadline

- providing on-line access to the student management parent portal to support students and parents to monitor NCEA progress and access up-to-date assessment results.

**Consistent practice described by staff and students** Relevant up-to-date handbooks, effective communication and regular professional learning discussion support a consistent understanding and application of the school's assessment procedures.

Students interviewed acknowledge the support and assistance of their GEMS teacher in assisting them to understand NCEA and the school's assessment processes in addition to tracking their progress.

**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.