

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Francis Douglas Memorial College**

**October 2017**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Francis Douglas Memorial 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 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
- *Francis Douglas Memorial College – 2017 NCEA Assessment – Student and Parent Handbook*
- *NZQF – Assessment Goals and Procedures – 2017 NCEA Staff Handbook*
- *Board of Trustees – Curriculum Policy*
- *Board of Trustees Procedures for:*
  - *Teaching and Learning Programmes*
  - *Student Assessment*
  - *Identifying and addressing student learning needs*
  - *Maori Student Achievement*
  - *Career Education and Guidance*
  - *Pacific (Pasifika) Student Achievement*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, three students, and Heads of Department for English, Health and Physical Education, Mathematics, Science, Social Science, and Technology.

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

## Francis Douglas Memorial College

19 October 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 three years.

### What the school is doing well

Francis Douglas Memorial College has addressed the significant issues identified in the 2015 Managing National Assessment review. The Principal's Nominee, who is new to the school, has reviewed assessment processes and implemented changes that support the development of consistent assessment practice and provide assurance to senior management that credible results are reported.

Clarification of internal moderation process expectations and the implementation of a monitoring system, confirms all standards assessed have been subject to a quality assurance process. A robust process to follow-up on external moderation is in place to help ensure feedback is used to improve assessment decisions and that on-going issues are addressed.

The Principal's Nominee facilitates ongoing staff professional learning and discussion to clarify understanding and support the development of consistent assessment practice. An updated staff handbook underpins the development of teachers understanding of the school's assessment expectations.

Students are supported to achieve their goals. Teachers use assessment data to provide support and modify assessment programmes to better meet student needs. Deans monitor student progress, identify those at risk, and convene regular meetings with teachers to discuss students of concern and strategies to support them.

A wide range of assessment programmes are offered using the school farm and outside providers to support students' interests and career aspirations. Differentiation of assessment programmes and assessing students when ready is developing in a number of subject areas. Student agency is being encouraged in some assessment programmes.

Assessment information is made available to students and parents through a variety of media and formats. The development in 2017 of the school website and school App provides parents with real time information. Team Drive is used within the school to facilitate sharing of school assessment information and centralise documentation.

Heads of Department interviewed described valuing the Principal's Nominee's clarity of assessment expectations, the provision of advice and guidance, and the monitoring visits to their department for the opportunity to ask questions and have good practice affirmed. They exhibited confidence in their understanding of

assessment processes. This confidence comes from the effective communication by the Principal's Nominee of the school's requirements and expectations.

### **Areas for improvement**

The selection of work for verification by some teachers is limited to a set number of samples. The school plans to clarify with staff that student work for verification should be sufficient to confirm assessment decisions are consistent with the standard and across classes.

The school agreed to remind staff, when they use a class list from the student management systems they need to ensure student privacy is protected during the grade checking process.

A record of memoranda of understanding held is not currently available to reconcile with the provider codes the school reports grades against. The school plans to develop a process to enable the annual reconciliation of results against provider codes.

### **Agreed action**

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

- clarify sufficiency when making a purposeful selection for internal moderation
- ensure privacy is protected when students check grades
- ensure a memorandum of understanding is held for all outside providers against whose codes grades are reported.

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5 December 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 25 June 2015 Managing National Assessment Report

The 2015 review identified four significant issues that meant the school was not meeting the requirements of its *Consent to Assess Against the Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rule 2011*. Under the leadership of the new Principal's Nominee the school has addressed all of these by:

- completing the three outstanding agreed actions from the 2013 review
- clarifying internal moderation expectations and processes with staff including making Heads of Departments responsible for ensuring that moderation occurs and is documented for all standards assessed in their area. Teachers interviewed acknowledged the clarity of expectations and follow-up by the Principal's Nominee to ensure internal moderation was completed and appropriately documented.
- developing a robust internal moderation monitoring system that includes visiting each department to check that the school's expectations are being met and providing advice and guidance, as appropriate.
- implementing an effective and robust process for following-up on external moderation. The Principal's Nominee follows-up with Heads of Faculty to discuss the feedback, agree on actions and identify support. The agreed actions are documented and monitored by the Principal's Nominee for completion.

There were five agreed actions in the 2015 review report. These have been addressed with the following actions.

- A checking process was introduced at the end of 2016 to reduce the number of internal entries without a result reported. The Principal's Nominee plans to refine the process to further reduce this number.
- Course outline information has been standardised using a template from the student management system. The Principal's Nominee monitored compliance with this new expectation and has followed up with additional support as needed.
- Staff and student handbooks have been developed to ensure current, relevant and appropriate assessment information is provided. These are provided on the school website and Team-Drive to facilitate ready access for all.
- Students with an entitlement to special assessment conditions are identified on the student management system. A clear process is in place to ensure they have access to their entitlement for internal assessment. Students and staff interviewed confirmed their understanding of this process.

- A requirement for all memoranda of understanding to be filed on Team Drive was introduced in 2017. Further refinements and clarifications are required as detailed in the communication section.

The school's response to the 2015 report demonstrates its capacity to effectively address external review findings.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** Evidence of responses to the 2017 external moderation feedback, including actions to address moderator concerns were sighted. This includes identifying subjects with a low agreement rate over two years. A review of the verification process has led to changes in verifiers in these subjects. This is good practice.

### **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 Principal's Nominee, who is new to the school, has undertaken a number of assessment and quality assurance reviews prioritising the need to immediately address the significant issues identified in the 2015 review.

Working collaboratively with Heads of Department and staff, she has undertaken internal review to confirm teacher good assessment practice, identify areas of inconsistent practice, potential risk and possible changes. Examples of some of the changes made follow.

- The collection of school based evidence in Years 9 and 10 is now used to support the identification of students and applications for special assessment conditions. Students with learning difficulties and entitlement to special assessment conditions are identified on the student management system, along with appropriate learning strategies to support them and documentation of trials of entitlements to inform future applications.
- Introduction of a 'withdraw from a standard' process and form enables students to modify their assessment programme in consultation with teachers and parents. The introduction, in some subjects, of a menu of standards allows students to design their own assessment programme. This reflects a shift to students' decision-making responsibility for assessment programme design.
- Changes to the preliminary examination processes align them with NZQA expectations. These changes were made to enable the smooth running of the November NCEA examinations and ensure students understand expectations.
- A review of the University Entrance literacy standards offered in Level 2 assessment programmes ensures sufficient internal assessment opportunities are available.
- The development of on-line communications using the school website and the school App enables parents, students and staff to have ready access to assessment information, forms and be notified of alerts.

- Refinements to the school's process for supporting students 'at risk of not achieving' (ARONA) have been made using a range data to ensure appropriate students are identified. Deans closely monitor the on-going progress of ARONA students and meet regularly with teachers to review the support provided, including changes to assessment programmes and arranging additional support.
- In 2017, some learning areas have reduced the number of credits offered and reviewed the balance of those assessed internally versus externally. This initiative arose from a discussion with Heads of Departments at the end of 2016, led by the Principal's Nominee. The school is encouraged, to continue this discussion, to assist with:
  - managing student and teacher assessment workload
  - enabling deeper student learning
  - increasing the number of merit and excellence grades identified by the school as a focus area.

### **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)*

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

- developing Individual Assessment Plans for students at risk of not achieving a qualification or with identified health concerns, as appropriate
- using the school farm and outside providers to offer vocational and trade based assessment opportunities to meet students' career aspirations including transitioning to work or other qualifications
- collecting evidence of student achievement in a variety of ways including portfolio, digital and verbal
- monitoring and supporting Level 1 literacy and numeracy achievement.

### **Francis Douglas Memorial College has effective processes and procedures for collecting credible evidence by:**

- offering resubmission and further assessment opportunities to meet NZQA requirements
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- clarifying authenticity expectations and strategies with staff and students
- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted.

**Digital tools are used to support student achievement** The school is proactive in encouraging engagement with digital tools in teaching and assessment practice. Digital tools are effectively used in a range of subjects. Examples include:

- providing on-line resources and tutorials to support student achievement and assist the development of independent learning skills
- providing assessment feedback and feedforward using google documents to support students to present their best evidence
- using video evidence collection to support students for whom written literacy is a potential barrier to achievement.

The use of digital evidence collection alongside the storage protocols the school is developing for moderation, positions them well for future digital assessment development.

**Privacy Act (1993) reminder is required** Descriptions by Heads of Department and students of the process used to confirm the accuracy of reported grades indicates student privacy is not always protected. The school agreed to remind staff of the need to ensure student privacy is protected during this checking process.

**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 student privacy is protected when students check grades.

## **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)*

**Francis Douglas Memorial College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation.**

### **Teachers:**

- are clear in their understanding of the school's internal moderation requirements and expectations
- document the internal moderation process before results are reported to NZQA
- select borderline samples of student work for verification, documenting discussion on grade judgements
- use subject specialists from within and outside of the school to verify assessor judgements.

### **The Principal's Nominee:**

- requires Heads of Department to ensure internal moderation is completed and documented for all standards assessed in their area prior to reporting results to NZQA
- annually visits departments to monitor documentation and completion of the internal moderation process and to confirm that the evidence reflects practice.

**Francis Douglas Memorial College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- generating the random selection using a 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
- ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being adequately stored
- using moderation feedback to inform future assessment decisions and advance the understanding of the standard
- monitoring subjects where a trend of low agreement rate occurs to identify the need for additional checking.

**Clarification of internal moderation verification process is required** Heads of Department described an embedded internal moderation process. However, it was identified that in some areas, while the selection of work for verification is purposeful the sample size is limited to either eight or four pieces of student work.

There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces that must be verified. NZQA recommends that there be a sufficient number selected for verification to ensure the assessor is confident that the grades awarded are consistent with the standard and across classes. This will depend on factors such as how many samples are at grade

boundaries, the experience of the teacher, previous external moderation history and the nature of the student cohort. The school agrees to clarify and reinforce this with staff.

**Suggested next steps for the school's external moderation processes** The Principal's Nominee took responsibility for nearly all aspects of external moderation submission with the introduction of the new online process this year. Folders have now been set up in Team Drive to facilitate effective storage of evidence and digital external moderation submission in the future. This will help material to be readily available and support the Principal's Nominee's goal of increasing the amount of work for external moderation submitted digitally.

### **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:

- clarify sufficiency when making a purposeful selection for internal moderation.

## 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)*

### Francis Douglas Memorial 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
  - evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure they allow students to meet their achievement goals and keep pathways open
  - supporting teacher inquiries which focus on the school's strategic achievement goals for students.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - using a "sign-off process" with students to confirm the accuracy of the internally assessed grades reported
  - using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data errors.

**Analysis of NCEA data supports qualifications achievement** A new report template for Heads of Department to report NCEA achievement to the Principal and Board of Trustees has been implemented this year. Heads of Department are required to review and compare their internal results to external results in addition to national and decile comparisons. This change was initiated by the Board of Trustees review of the report template and should help Heads of Department to better identify areas of concern and where improvement can be made.

**Improve internal entry accuracy** In 2016, the number of internal entries without a grade reported was reduced. To refine data checking processes, the school is considering using the NZQA report "Counts by Subjects" to ensure student entries reflect assessment programmes and further reduce instances where an internal entry is made and no result reported.

### **Ensure a memorandum of understanding is held for all outsiders providers**

The review identified that the school does not hold a current memorandum of understanding for all provider codes against which results are reported this year. The school plans to implement a tracking and reconciliation process to ensure a memorandum is held for all outside providers used.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management and use of assessment-related data. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure a memorandum of understanding is held for all outside providers whose codes grades are reported against.

## 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)*

### **Francis Douglas Memorial College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and parents using written, digital and face-to-face methods
- ensuring students receive standardised assessment information for all courses they undertake
- supporting new Heads of Department to understand the school's assessment and moderation procedures and expectations
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

### **Francis Douglas Memorial College monitors a common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- using Heads of Department and staff meetings to clarify assessment procedures, and facilitating discussion on assessment good practice
- checking that Heads of Department and teachers are following processes through discussion and visits to departments
- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve a qualification.

**Effective use of digital tools to support communication** The school website and App is used effectively to provide ready access to assessment and achievement information for students and parents. Examples include:

- using the school App to notify students and parents of key dates, for example NZQA's fees payment deadline and the daily timetable for the school's preliminary examinations
- publishing copies of the staff and student handbooks with links to extension and appeal forms and NZQA website for additional information
- providing on-line access to a 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** Staff and students described a consistent understanding of the school's assessment procedures and where to go to have NCEA questions answered. The school's proactive approach to developing consistent understanding of assessment expectations is based on relevant up-to-date handbooks, effective communication and regular professional learning.

### **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.