

Managing National Assessment Report

Palmerston North Girls' High School

June 2023

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Palmerston North Girls' High School

13 June 2023

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is effectively meeting the requirements of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022.

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.

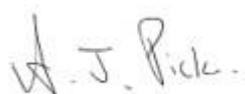
As a school with highly effective assessment systems and practices for national qualifications, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three to five years.

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2022.

Actions

No action required

The school has no action items relating to the quality of its assessment systems.



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26 July 2023

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External and internal review

External review

Evidence of external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Items from 11 April 2018 Managing National Assessment Report

The item identified for action to improve the quality of assessment systems for national qualifications has been addressed.

The school has updated the handbooks on assessment procedures by clarifying assessment modes and strategies, outlining authenticity requirements, and providing detailed information regarding the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020*. This documentation helps support school-wide understanding and consistent assessment practice.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes

Palmerston North Girls' High School has effective systems to respond to external moderation outcomes and processes. In cases where issues raised in external moderation outcomes persist, the school has supported staff to access professional development opportunities, including through subject associations and colleagues at other schools.

Implementing a digital process to track moderation steps has strengthened the school's effectiveness in responding to outcomes. The digital process allows the Principal's Nominee to monitor staff progress on meeting agreed timeframes for completion, supporting the credibility of results reported to NZQA.

External moderation feedback indicates that the school has high accuracy of assessor judgements consistent with the standards. This reflects the effectiveness of their processes for internal moderation and responses to external moderation.

Internal review

Evidence of 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)

Palmerston North Girls' High School has robust internal review processes, based on its Curriculum Review which began in 2016 that led to enhanced assessment practices meeting student needs. Effective leadership from the Principal's Nominee and Senior Leadership Team give staff and students confidence that any concerns relating to assessment practices and quality assurance will be identified and addressed, leading to ongoing improvement.

The Principal's Nominee effectively leads NCEA assessment practice and promotes school-wide consistency and ownership. This occurs collectively through Whiria te tāngata, the Heads of Department meeting and individually, through discussion about assessment matters. She reviews school assessment procedures for improvement and supports staff to make the required changes. Consequently, the Heads of Department take responsibility for ensuring that procedures are being followed according to NZQA and school requirements.

Staff are encouraged to be collaborative and to share best practice. These actions have made many staff familiar with a range of assessment methods, providing them with informed choices when developing assessment tasks. An example of the collaborative school-wide approach is an NCEA team formed by the Principal's Nominee to support the Examination Centre Manager's work by providing suitable examination rooms and organising students on examination days for entry into these rooms. This helps establish an atmosphere conducive to good exam performance, which is replicated in the school's own examinations.

Removing barriers to achievement The school has implemented a range of initiatives across the school to raise student achievement, based upon its internal review processes.

A guidance counsellor has been attached to each Year 9 core class in a Mauri Ora programme which was developed to uphold the school's strategic goal to develop resilient learners and tikanga. Year 9 students responded positively to Mauri Ora and have asked for it to be extended into Year 10 on a weekly basis. The removal of streaming in Year 9 and the Mauri Ora programme have combined to provide more equitable access to learning pathways as students progress to their senior studies, helping student engagement and allowing them to achieve to their potential.

Providing a greater number of courses is allowing students to make better informed decisions when choosing courses to study in consequent years. In response to student requests for more subject choice, in Year 9 students can now choose five subjects from the Technology, Arts and Languages curriculum areas along with additional English and Mathematics classes as trimester courses. Te Ao Māori has also become a compulsory trimester course, leading to further optional Te Reo Māori courses in Year 9. This diversity of courses for selection recognises the relationship between engagement and academic achievement.

The school has strengthened the planning and delivery of student pathway programmes. Since the disruptions of COVID, a new Pathways course has been developed where students can create an individual learning programme to foster engagement and meet their academic needs. A Pathways Head of Department has been appointed who visits Year 10 and 11 form classes, assisting students with their course planning. Staff work together to create relevant pathways for students to NCEA Level 3 and University Entrance.

To reduce assessment workload and to provide further learning opportunities for students prior to fully engaging in NCEA, the school is not offering the Level 1 NCEA qualification in 2023. As part of a school-wide curriculum review, this decision was reached after conducting interviews with senior NCEA students and consulting with the community. Interviewed staff discussed how they are enjoying the deeper teaching and learning opportunities available at Year 11 alongside the reduced assessment load. They feel that both staff and students are becoming better prepared for the upcoming changes to NCEA.

Palmerston North Girls' High School is providing additional support for its students to achieve academic success. All of the 2022 applications for Special Assessment Conditions were based upon school evidence. This indicates the school is identifying and resourcing students who need support and are removing potential barriers to fair assessment by testing them at school.

Academic progress of students is tracked and supported Comprehensive achievement monitoring by both pastoral care and academic learning staff identify barriers to learning and enable strategies to be developed, to engage students in learning and assessment. Teachers meet student needs by evaluating their specific learning and assessment needs, leading to the adjustment of courses, standards, assessment tasks, and contexts.

Senior deans track the academic progress of all Year 12 and 13 students. There is a Māori mentor who works to support Māori students. In 2023, a Pasifika mentor has been appointed, in response to a declining rate of NCEA success in recent years. The school has also joined the Tui Tuia Professional Development for Schools programme and is working with two advisors who will assist with strengthening the school's Pasifika Cultural Competencies framework.

The school has secured funding through the Ministry of Education's Loss of Learning initiative to provide academic support for students. Experienced teachers who previously worked at the school have been re-employed to provide regular academic support after school hours. Initially, identified at-risk students were invited to participate. However, due to its increasing popularity a greater number of students have elected to attend voluntarily.

Strengthened strategies for managing authenticity of student work The school has adjusted its procedures to monitor and manage the authenticity of student work, enabling fair assessment for students. Recognising the digital software the school previously utilised was only checking authenticity once work was submitted for assessment, the school has adopted new software that provides transparency to both students and staff throughout the collection of evidence for assessment. Earlier this year, the Mathematics Head of Department gave a presentation to all staff about the latest artificial intelligence developments and together they discussed ways of managing authenticity, including continuing with current embedded practices like checkpoints and feedback. The importance of authenticity is explained to students in Year 10 to 13 at assemblies. These good practices help to maintain the credibility of student results.

Credible assessment practice to meet student needs

Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023.

Effective data management practices Achievement data is well managed and transferred to NZQA in a timely manner. Where issues have arisen with results reported to NZQA, the Principal's Nominee has taken responsibility, reviewing what happened and planning how similar circumstances can be avoided in future.

The identification of incorrect results is assisted by students receiving printed copies of their entries to check in Term 3 and logging onto NZQA to check their results. Before November last year, over 75 per cent of the students had logged into their NZQA accounts to check their entries, results and progress towards qualifications. The school also consistently reports 100 per cent of its internal results, indicative of the accuracy of student assessment records,

Providing opportunities for digital engagement Palmerston North Girls' High School is a digital first school. Digital opportunities for students include the use of software and digital platforms to provide teaching and learning resources, enabling learning to take place remotely if required. Many assessment opportunities are offered digitally, and the school has offered digital NCEA exams since 2019. In 2022, nearly one-half of students had digital examinations for external standards. The school's existing practices gives the staff confidence that they are preparing students well for the upcoming NCEA Change Programme.

Clear communication available The school's focus on effective communication of assessment information has ensured consistency and understanding of assessment practices. Staff and students are well informed about NCEA. The staff and student NCEA handbooks are revised each year and contain the most up-to-date information from NZQA and about school assessment policies and procedures. The student handbook is stored on the Student Google Site for ease of access. The Principal's Nominee also attends student assemblies to share information about NCEA. NCEA Whānau Information Evenings are held annually to inform the wider community. Interviewed students talked confidently about NCEA and school procedures, indicating the efficacy of the school's range of communication channels.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023.

Effective processes to monitor internal moderation Robust internal moderation monitoring processes help to ensure all results reported to NZQA are quality assured. Each standard is reviewed alongside clarifications, moderator reports, conditions of assessment and exemplars. Heads of Faculty and then the Principal's Nominee monitor internal moderation processes for completion and effectiveness. Monitoring includes checks of the internal moderation coversheet and teachers' strategic selection of student work for grade verification, to review assessor grades and the quality of verifier judgement statements. Where identified, issues are resolved, thereby ensuring school-wide consistency. Senior leadership can be confident that internal moderation procedures carried out in all departments are complete and rigorous, and results reported are credible.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Palmerston North Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its students by:

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are culturally appropriate focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations
- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers to offer courses the school is unable to offer
- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so students can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement
- assessing students when they are ready
- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet student needs
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support
- providing opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- identifying and providing support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals
- implementing strategies to provide opportunities to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Palmerston North Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed or late assessment
- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules
- monitoring the authenticity of student work using a range of strategies
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have submitted no work
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived and unexpected event grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Palmerston North Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment judgements
- using subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a strategic selection of a sufficient sample of student work
- using grade verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes
- monitoring and documenting completed internal moderation processes to ensure only quality assured results are reported to NZQA.

Palmerston North Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- selecting sufficient samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes and providing support for assessors where appropriate
- monitoring and documenting actions taken to address external moderation feedback
- using external moderation outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation processes.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

Palmerston North Girls' High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- monitoring and tracking student progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure these allow students to meet their assessment goals, and inform changes to courses and standards offered
- reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Palmerston North Girls' High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date data
- checking Key Indicators and NZQA reports to identify and resolve any errors
- conducting student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year
- ensuring low levels of late external entries, and internal entries with no results
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding.

Effective communication to inform staff, and students and their whānau about assessment

Palmerston North Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- keeping assessment-related communications current and accurate, and reviewing communications to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- ensuring students receive outlines for courses they undertake
- supporting students to monitor their achievement
- discussing assessment policy and procedure with staff, and providing updates of NCEA information throughout the year
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing opportunities for parents to discuss their children's NCEA goals, progress, and achievement
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction programme to understand school and NZQA assessment processes.

Palmerston North Girls' High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- communicating assessment information, such as holding NCEA information evenings for parents and NCEA assemblies for students
- informing students about suitable learning pathways
- supporting students to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Palmerston North Girls' High School:

- has addressed issues identified through NZQA's Managing National Assessment review and through the school's own internal review
- manages assessment practice for national qualifications
- manages internal and external moderation
- makes use of and manages assessment-related data
- maintains the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicates them to staff, students and whānau.

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 effectively meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022* (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 *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023*.

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- identifying the effectiveness of the school's review processes, assessment practice and quality assurance
- 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's consideration 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 five 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
- *NCEA Assessment Procedures for Staff 2023* (Staff Handbook)
- *Palmerston North Student Handbook 2023* (Student Handbook).

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
 - Applied Consumer Technology
 - Commerce
 - Dance
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Education and Health

There was a report-back session with the Senior Leadership Team, including the 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.