

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Gisborne Girls' High School**

**March 2019**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Gisborne 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 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
- *Gisborne Girls' High School Assessment Policy*
- *Gisborne Girls' High School Staff Assessment Handbook 2019*
- *Gisborne Girls' High School Student Assessment Handbook 2019*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Faculty for:
  - English
  - Mathematics
  - Physical Education and Health
  - Social Sciences.
- Teachers in Charge of:
  - Accounting and Economics
  - Te Reo Māori.
- two students.

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

## Gisborne Girls' High School

28 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 issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

### What the school is doing well

Gisborne Girls' High School provides students with access to a wide range of academic and vocational assessment opportunities to help meet their academic needs and to prepare them to achieve their qualification goals. Heads of Faculty manage assessment and moderation processes effectively, supported by an experienced Principal's Nominee. Teachers understand and follow school requirements.

School review of assessment practice is embedded, strategic and data-based. It has led to improvement in assessment practice to better meet the needs of students, including the development of new courses and initiatives to reduce assessment workloads. Changes to assessment practice have also resulted in fewer authenticity breaches and improved access to special assessment conditions.

The school ensures that only credible results are reported to NZQA through robust internal and external moderation processes. This includes effective monitoring and follow up of any issues identified by external moderation reports. Staff strategically request external moderation to further their understanding of the standards they assess. The school has arranged professional development for teachers in two subject areas by organising and hosting Best Practice Workshop presentations.

The management of assessment data is efficient, ensuring results reported to NZQA are complete, timely and accurate. Student academic progress is effectively monitored by the Principal's Nominee and Deans, and interventions initiated where students are identified as being at risk of not meeting qualification requirements. Staff, students and parents kept well informed of individual progress towards qualifications.

The school annually reviews how it communicates assessment information to its community. While communication is increasingly digital, Senior Leaders still value and encourage face-to-face meetings. Staff are kept informed of changes to NZQA requirements and provided with opportunities to discuss best assessment practice.

Proactive communication with parents has increased the number of students accessing financial assistance, ensuring they are able to receive any qualifications they gain. The students interviewed for the review were well informed about the NCEA and felt well supported.

There are no agreed action items. Some next steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

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27 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 25 October 2016 Managing National Assessment Report** The school has effectively addressed the action item from the 2016 report. Staff purposefully select samples of student work around grade boundaries for verification.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** Robust internal moderation procedures and an effective external moderation response process are reflected in the school's consistently sound external moderation agreement rates. Heads of Faculty or Teachers in Charge of subjects are required to outline actions planned in response to any issues identified by external moderators. The actions taken are discussed with Senior Leaders during end-of-year faculty reviews.

One Head of Faculty noted that while evaluation of the actions taken is implied, it is not explicit. The school is considering revising its response form to include an evaluation section. Reviewing the effectiveness of any actions taken when the standard is assessed again is good practice, as it gives staff a chance to ensure all identified issues have been fully resolved.

*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)*

The school has a strategic focus on assessment practice and evaluation. Review is embedded within the school, from individual teacher enquiry, through faculty process reviews to school-wide evaluation lead by senior Leaders.

**Reducing workload** Staff have worked to reduce the number of standards assessed within subjects to lower credit counts, particularly for externally assessed standards. This was in response to students presenting with levels of anxiety, and links back to the school's focus on well-being. The school notes that anecdotal evidence shows this reduction is having a positive effect on the workload of staff and students.

**Minimising authenticity breaches** Noting an increase in the amount of reported plagiarism, the Principal's Nominee shared best practice strategies with Heads of Faculties. Staff have worked with students to help them understand what constitutes authentic work resulting in fewer authenticity issues.

**Analysing assessment data** To make its data easier to use and more accessible to staff, the school has introduced a data analysis tool linked to the school's student management system. Additionally, a cross-school advisor from within the school's Kāhui Ako is providing staff with expert guidance and support with analysing assessment data for goal setting, and course and programme planning.

**Special assessment condition processes** The school's review of its processes for special assessment conditions identified that it was only making applications for students with reports from independent registered professionals. By using its own diagnostic assessment data, the school has increased the use of school-based evidence to ensure all students who need special assessment conditions are identified and provided with appropriate support. The Board of Trustees has provided funding for extra guidance staffing, in order to support the Special Education Needs Coordinator.

Heads of Faculty managed review of assessment and moderation practices includes:

- using staff and student feedback to add and modify courses to increase engagement and better meet student needs, interests and potential achievement pathways
- analysing external assessment data to help decide which standards would no longer be offered, or become optional for students
- managing the increasing use of digital devices for assessment with the need to ensure material is stored appropriately for external moderation purposes.

The results of these reviews are shared during faculty quality assurance audits and ensures Senior Leaders are aware of changes being made to assessment practices.

The review found that the school-wide focus on the use of data informs effective change in assessment processes for the benefit of students.

#### **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 2019 5.5)*

### **Gisborne Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- extending the range of assessment opportunities available through the school's Star and Gateway programmes, Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, Trade Academies organised by local tertiary providers and an assessment Memorandum of Understanding with Gisborne Boys' High School
- providing unit standard numeracy assessment opportunities to assist those needing support to meet NCEA numeracy requirements
- collaboratively working with iwi to focus on those identified as likely to not meet qualification requirements because of behaviour or attendance issues
- ensuring staff are well informed about those with an entitlement to special assessment conditions and providing appropriate support.

### **Gisborne Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- managing consistent school-wide assessment practice on missed and late work, extensions, appeals and further assessment opportunities
- ensuring Not Achieved is reported where a student has presented evidence that is not at the standard, or has had an adequate assessment opportunity and submitted no work
- assisting students to present authentic work by using a range of suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process
- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules
- collecting credible evidence to support derived grade applications
- providing support to ensure the effective management of the exam centre
- complying with the requirements of the *Privacy Act, 1993* when handling students' assessment information and the *Copyright Act, 1994* when using their work as exemplars with other students.

**Clarifying resubmission processes recommended** A resubmission may be offered if a teacher, at their discretion, judges a student has made a minor error or omission that they can identify and correct on their own. It should not be student driven. The school should consider clarifying with staff the expectation that it is the teacher who decides when, how and to whom a resubmission is offered. Teachers interviewed showed a clear understanding of when a resubmission should be provided. However, one of the students interviewed discussed an example of teacher practice that did not meet NZQA requirements. NZQA's *NCEA Mythbuster #4 - Resubmission* publication and material from the 2018 Principal's Nominee seminar are useful references that could assist with this.



**Māori and Pasifika engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects** The school's strategic focus on raising Māori student achievement has resulted in the percentage of Māori students achieving NCEA now being higher than National and decile rates. However, Senior Leaders are aware their success in STEM subjects at Level 3 is lower than that of other ethnic groups within the school. STEM faculties are considering how to improve student engagement in their subjects. The Science Faculty has made changes to its junior curriculum so that it is more enquiry based and digitally focussed. It also now offers a Science for Life course using achievement standards that will allow more students to continue studying Science programmes beyond Year 11.

#### **For consideration**

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

- clarifying resubmission assessment opportunities with teachers.

## 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)*

### **Gisborne Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- critiquing all assessment materials prior to use to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and provide students with the opportunity to present evidence at all grade levels
- teachers using standard clarifications and exemplars to inform their grade judgements during marking
- purposefully selecting samples of student work around grade boundaries for verification
- using a digital *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to document the process including verification discussion and decisions
- using subject specialists from within, and outside of, the school to verify samples of student grades
- Heads of Faculty and the Principal's Nominee monitoring the completion of internal moderation processes to ensure all reported results are credible.

### **Gisborne Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples of student work for external moderation randomly to NZQA requirements
- staff strategically requesting specific standards be included on the school's external moderation plan
- providing staff with appropriate access to the NZQA External Moderation Application, enabling them to view reports and assist with the submission process
- encouraging digital submission of material for external moderation
- ensuring the adequate storage of samples of student work
- requiring all external moderation, regardless of the standard-setting body, to follow the same process.

**Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency** Staff assure the quality of grades awarded by including work at grade boundaries when verifying assessor judgements. However, some of those interviewed verify more samples of student work than this. The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on sufficient verification by the strategic selection of student work.

Strategic selection has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

**No action required**

No issues with the school's internal and external moderation were identified during this review.

## How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

*Evidence for data management and use supporting student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)*

### **Gisborne Girls' High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- faculties reporting annually to the Principal and Board of Trustees their analysis of NCEA data including trends in student achievement and variance between internal and external results
- setting academic goals based upon comparative analysis of achievement data
- surveying staff and students annually to check that they have the assessment information they require for their planning and progress checks.
- staff analysing achievement data to inform current year course or programme design
- encouraging students and whānau to use the school's student management system online portal and the NZQA Learner Login to check reported results for accuracy and to monitor their progress towards meeting qualification requirements.

### **Gisborne Girls' High School reports accurate achievement data by:**

- submitting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- checking for, and correcting where necessary, data submission errors shown up by the Key Indicators and data file submission reports from NZQA
- withdrawing, where appropriate, internal entries of students who have left or changed assessment programmes, to ensure all entries have a reported result
- confirming the accuracy of external entries prior to key dates to reduce late entries
- reporting results for standards the school has consent for, or against the correct provider codes of outside providers with whom the school holds current memoranda of understanding.

**Students access to financial assistance supported** Reducing the NCEA fee payable assists students have their achievements transferred to their Record of Achievement and qualifications awarded. The school ensures that information on financial assistance is widely, and repeatedly, distributed with school communications. In 2018, this resulted in whānau of forty per cent of its NCEA candidates applying for assistance with fees.

**Student academic progress effectively monitored** The school has effective monitoring and mentoring systems. Data from the student management system and a digital analysis tool provides real time, relevant information allowing Senior Leaders and Deans to monitor student progress towards NCEA achievement. The Principal's Nominee tracks overall student achievement and keeps staff informed using small photos of senior students, grouped according to their progress and level of support required, posted within the staffroom. Students reported being well supported by their form teachers and Deans, who also provide support with subject selection.

**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))*

### **Gisborne Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- providing students with course outlines containing detailed information on the standards they will be assessed against
- ensuring students receive appropriate information about the requirements of qualifications
- communicating information on assessment policies and procedures to the school community through a range of digital and physical formats, and face-to-face meetings
- annually reviewing communications to ensure that they are fit for purpose and current
- giving students and whānau access to achievement data held on the school's student management system through an online portal.

### **Gisborne Girls' High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- the Principal's Nominee explaining NCEA requirements and school assessment processes to students during year level assemblies
- providing teachers with information about assessment best practice and giving them opportunities to discuss changes in school or NZQA requirements at staff, faculty and Heads of Faculty meetings
- organising and hosting Best Practice Workshop presentations for local teachers of Visual Arts (2018) and Mathematics (2019)
- holding Year 10 and 11 Whānau Evenings to explain NCEA processes and achievement 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.