

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Napier Boys' High School

August 2019

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Napier Boys' 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
- *Napier Boys High School Senior Course Booklet 2019*
- *Napier Boys High School NQF Quality Assurance Guidelines* (for staff)
- *Napier Boys High School NQF Quality Assurance Guidelines 2019* (for students)
- *Napier Boys High School Board of Trustees Curriculum Policy*
- a sample of assessment statements for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee/Senior Master (Curriculum)
- the Senior Master (Pastoral)
- Heads of Department for:
  - Art
  - Chemistry
  - Commerce
  - Geography
  - Music
  - Technology
- three students.

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

## Napier Boys High School

21 August 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.

At the request of NZQA, and with the school's agreement, this review was rescheduled from 2018.

### What the school is doing well

Napier Boys' High School has a strong culture of self-review. The school has maintained levels of attainment above national levels and those of similar schools, at all levels. In response to its strategic goal of enhancing student wellbeing and academic excellence, the school has restructured its pastoral care model and introduced vertically structured Tutor Classes. This has strengthened both student hauora and academic counselling. A schoolwide focus on academic writing aims to increase numbers gaining Level 2, or higher qualifications and improve examination outcomes.

Assessment practice is effective in supporting achievement outcomes for all students. The school delivers programmes and courses that meet the learning needs of a diverse range of students from those seeking evermore relevant vocational pathways to students in pursuit of academic excellence. Departments achieve this through student-centred course content, offering fewer credits to manage student workload, and offering optional standards to extend others. Additional support through tutorials is available for students attempting Scholarship and for those identified as being at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy. A digital tool assists with managing and monitoring academic integrity.

Senior management monitors the completion of internal moderation through a sign off process in a centrally held *Completion Folder*. This provides an attestation to management that all standards have been through a robust process of moderation. The school has effective systems in place for following up on consistency issues identified through external moderation.

Data management and analysis effectively supports student achievement outcomes. Student entries and the reporting of results are timely, complete and accurate.

The school utilises a range of communication channels that allow staff, students and their families to gain a common understanding of NCEA and school assessment procedures.

## **Areas for improvement**

Although the staff handbook mentions the practice of 'strategic selection' for the purpose of grade verification, this is not followed consistently by all departments. The number of samples sent for verification should 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. This has the potential to reduce workload for verifiers.

This review identified that some staff still lack an understanding of the need to verify purposefully selected student work around grade boundaries for internal moderation. Discussions around grade boundaries should be recorded on the internal moderation cover sheet to improve teacher understanding of the standards they assess and help inform future judgements.

To ensure that assessment practice is current and up to date, it is recommended that the staff handbook is updated annually to reflect NZQA requirements.

## **Agreed action**

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

- focus on reducing workload by considering NZQA's verification requirements for sufficiency
- ensure all staff follow the process involved in verifying student work around grade boundaries
- record verification discussions to inform future assessor decisions
- consider using external verifiers where internal verification produces a pattern of inconsistency
- update the staff and student handbooks annually to ensure the information they contain is current and consistent.

Kay Wilson  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

16 October, 2019

**NZQA**

**0800 697 296**

**[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)**

# 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 18 August 2015 Managing National Assessment Report

There were three agreed items following the 2015 review.

- ensure there are staff available to provide support to clear student calculators prior to NZQA external examinations
- clarify with staff the processes involved in verifying student work around grade boundaries
- update the staff and student handbooks to ensure the information they contain is current and consistent.

The school has addressed the first action sufficiently. However, more action is needed to strengthen the other two, namely:

- ensure all staff follow the process involved in verifying student work around grade boundaries
- update the staff and student handbooks annually to ensure the information they contain is current and consistent.

**Extend good practice across all departments** It was evident in this visit that some departments have very effective systems and select grade boundary samples for verification as suggested by NZQA. All staff are encouraged to follow this good practice.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school responds effectively to any issues identified through external moderation feedback and ensures they are effectively addressed. The Principal's Nominee shares reports with Heads of Department and follows this with a discussion for those with an identified issue. An action plan to address the issue is then required and the Principal's Nominee ensures completion by an agreed date.

Since the last review, the school's assessment decisions have been mostly consistent with NZQA moderators' judgements. However, the Principal's Nominee has identified two departments where internal grade verification has produced a pattern of inconsistent assessor judgements. He is working with staff in those departments to resolve the issues identified in their external moderation reports. In addition, the school is encouraged to use external verifiers where internal grade verification produces a pattern of inconsistency.

## 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)*

Napier Boys' High School's self-review processes are effective in identifying areas to improve students' achievement outcomes. The school's internal review processes address a key strategic goal in the school's Charter, namely to:

- promote and support personal excellence for boys through a broad curriculum which allows for a full range of academic, sporting, cultural, leadership and service opportunities

**Vertical Tutor Classes enhance academic progress** In 2017, in order to provide better pastoral care and academic counselling for all students, the traditional horizontal form structure was replaced by smaller vertical Tutor Classes of 18-20 students assigned to a Tutor Teacher. This frees the Deans to focus on students most at risk of not meeting their qualifications goals, whereas Tutor Teachers play an enhanced role as coach, mentor and advocate of students in their Tutor Class. Students retain the same Tutor Teacher each year, so relationships with the teacher, students and their whānau are strengthened. Students report feeling more supported to extend themselves under their Tutor Teacher's guidance and care.

The school's review processes affirm the vertical Tutor Class structure better supports students to pursue course or certificate endorsements. Since the last review, the school has maintained levels of attainment above national levels and those of similar schools, at all levels

**Writing literacy in focus across all subjects and levels** The school both individually, and as part of its membership of the Napier City Kāhui Ako (COL), has targeted writing literacy to improve NCEA attainment and raise outcomes from examinations by implementing:

- diagnostic writing profiles to inform placement in Year 9 classes and to identify interventions necessary to raise literacy levels so target students can achieve NCEA Level 1
- literacy-related Professional Learning and Development (PLD) for all staff through the *Write that Essay* programme. *Sustained Silent Writing* operates throughout the year on a rotational basis, so that all subjects are part of the literacy improvement strategy.

## Removing barriers for students who miss assessments on medical grounds

Where a student requests an extension for an assessment deadline owing to a short period of illness, the school will accept a note from a caregiver validating the request to prevent whānau from incurring the cost of obtaining a medical certificate. The Principal's Nominee monitors the integrity of the process.

## 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)*

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

- using data from baseline assessment to assign students to accelerate or mixed ability classes
- providing a specialist teacher, and peer support, for students at risk of not meeting their NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements
- differentiating and individualising assessment programmes and offering multi-level study to meet students' abilities and interests
- offering a range of vocational and academic programmes through STAR, Gateway, Trades Academy and NetNZ
- identifying students eligible for special assessment conditions using school evidence and supporting them to access entitlements
- focusing on the quality of achievement rather than the quantity of credits students can potentially gain and mentoring students working towards course and certificate endorsements.

### **Napier Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- managing and monitoring academic integrity through the application of a digital tool designed to detect inauthentic content
- managing missed and late assessment, appeals and breaches of the assessment rules
- providing resubmission opportunities which meet NZQA's requirements
- ensuring evidence for derived grades from standard specific and quality assured assessment
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Improved tracking and support for student progress** Students meet with their Tutor Teacher and whānau on Goalsetting Day in Term One to set academic and vocational goals for the year. This has strengthened the connection between home and school and helps students and their whānau better navigate progress towards qualifications goals. The Tutor Teacher monitors academic progress; tracking each student's credit count, pass rates and progress towards endorsements. Tutor Teachers monitor attendance and help the boys manage and prioritise their assignments and assessments.



**Equity for Māori and Pacific students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects** The Senior Management team has noted the disparity in engagement in STEM subjects at Year 13 between Māori and Pacific students and students of other ethnicities. The school maintains Science as a compulsory subject at Year 11 and numbers of Māori and Pacific students achieving success in one to three Level 3 STEM subjects have gradually increased over the last five years, however there are no specific actions for equity in STEM for the target group currently.

**No action required**

No issues with the school's management of assessment for national qualifications were identified during this review.

## 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)*

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

- critiquing all assessment materials prior to use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- using subject-specialists from within or outside the school to verify assessor judgements for a sample of student work
- requiring teachers in charge of subjects to record the completion of internal moderation for every standard assessed each year for reconciliation by senior management
- having the Principal's Nominee visit all subject areas at least once a year to check internal moderation processes meet NZQA requirements.

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

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored
- monitoring patterns of low agreement between assessors and NZQA moderators in order to provide support and additional monitoring where appropriate.

**Clarify verification processes with all staff** This review identified inconsistencies with internal moderation processes. Some staff still lack an understanding of the need to verify purposefully selected student work around grade boundaries for internal moderation, whereas in other departments this is an embedded practice. Similarly, discussions around grade boundaries were not routinely recorded for all standards checked during the review. Verification discussions should be recorded, or attached, to the internal moderation cover sheet, to improve teacher understanding of the standards they assess and help inform future judgements

**Focus on reducing workload by considering grade verification requirements for sufficiency** Staff require further clarification on NZQA's guidelines for sufficiency. There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size is best determined using a process called 'strategic selection,' where the number of pieces selected will vary according to the depth of assessor experience, feedback from previous external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and the number of students assessed. This review found some departments routinely sending eight or more samples of marked work for verification and two mentioned selecting random samples. Where over-verification occurs, it should be done knowingly and willingly for professional learning. However, if strategic selection is used, it can reduce the workload of verifiers.

**Development of digital storage protocols is encouraged** The school is encouraged to develop digital storage protocols to enable assessment evidence to be readily and reliably accessed for external moderation. Digital evidence is collected in many subjects and cloud-based storage has the dual benefit of reducing the risk of materials being unavailable for external moderation and reducing the workload of staff tasked with sending materials physically. Some departments have already developed protocols with appropriate permissions and file names for evidence stored and sent digitally. It would be beneficial to extend the use of this good practice.

### **Agreed action**

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

- ensure all staff follow the process involved in verifying student work around grade boundaries
- focus on reducing workload by considering NZQA's grade verification requirements for sufficiency
- record verification discussions to inform future assessor decisions
- consider using external verifiers where internal verification produces a pattern of inconsistency.

### **For consideration**

To extend good practice in assurance of assessment quality, the school is encouraged to consider:

- how it can best assist teachers to store and submit materials digitally for external moderation.

## 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)*

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

- requiring Heads of Department to report to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions
- using NZQA statistical reports and analysing results comparatively and longitudinally to inform decisions about future course content and design.

### **Napier Boys' High School reports accurate achievement data by:**

- submitting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- ensuring all internal entries are reported with a result or are withdrawn, as appropriate
- ensuring all students attest that their entries and results have been entered correctly
- using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
- reconciling results from external providers with which they hold a current Memorandum of Understanding, to ensure results are reported with the correct provider codes
- checking entries in externally assessed standards to limit late entries.

**Encourage students to use their NZQA Learner Login** The percentage of students who registered to use their Learner Logins in 2018 has dropped notably from previous years. Students need to be able use their learner Login to check that entries and results have been reported accurately to NZQA, make requests for review and reconsideration of external examinations, and order certificates and a Record of Achievement. The school is encouraged to support all senior students to register and use their Learner Login.

### **For consideration**

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

- supporting all senior students to register and use their Learner Login.

## 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))*

### **Napier Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- providing all students with a hard copy of the student handbook at the start of each year
- providing course assessment statements and an overview of all courses in the *Senior Course Booklet*
- informing all parents and caregivers about NCEA matters and assessment policy and procedures through a variety of channels:
  - the school website, Facebook and a parent portal to the student management system
  - newsletters with a "What's Due this Term?" section showing due dates for every assessment across each level
  - text alerts for assessment related matters
  - an NCEA information evening
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff in print, in person and digitally
- supporting teachers new to the school to develop a clear understanding of assessment practice in relation to NCEA through the staff handbook and departmental assessment policy documentation and mentoring.

### **Napier Boys' High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- providing opportunities for staff to discuss changes in assessment best practice and recommendations arising from external review
- ensuring students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification through assemblies, Tutor Teachers and Deans
- emailing whānau with monthly updates on senior student progress.

**Ensure handbooks are updated annually** It is recommended that the staff and student handbooks are updated annually to ensure practice is not at variance to the documentation and to ensure assessment information is current and consistent. This review found that the change in policy regarding the waiver of medical certificates for short periods of illness had not been updated in the staff or student handbooks. The school's usual practice is to update the staff and student handbooks following the Managing National Assessment reviews. However, annual updates will ensure greater currency and consistency.

**Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, students and families. Senior management undertakes to:

- update the staff and student handbooks annually to ensure the information they contain is current and consistent.