

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **St John's College (Hastings)**

**May 2019**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively St John's College:

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

The summary section evaluates the school's overall effectiveness and provides a broad overview of the review's key findings for all readers. The remaining sections provide detail of these findings for school managers.

## Why we review how schools are managing national assessment

The purpose of a Managing National Assessment review is:

- to confirm, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report, that schools are meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011* (CAAS) and its *Guidelines* (CAAS Guidelines) in order to maintain their consent to assess; and
- to help schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment according to the requirements of the *Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019* (Assessment Rules).

## What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- requiring action from the school where an issue is identified that significantly impacts on the school meeting the requirements of their *Consent to Assess*
- agreeing action with the school where an issue has been identified that could become significant if not addressed
- making suggestions for the school to consider to enhance good assessment practice.

## What this review includes

The review has three components:

- The annual external moderation of the school's internal assessment.
- A check on specific aspects of assessment systems on an annual basis.
- A check on the school's assessment systems at least once every four years.

## How we conducted this review

The review includes examination of documentation from a range of sources and interviewing key stakeholders.

Prior to the visit the school provided the following documents:

- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *St John's College Assessment Policy (2019)*
- *St John's College Staff Handbook 2019*
- *St John's College Curriculum: Strategic Plan 2019-2021*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee/Deputy Principal – Curriculum
- the Academic Dean
- Head of Department for:
  - English
  - Music
  - Religious Education
  - Science
  - Te Reo Maori
  - Visual Arts
- three students.

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

## St John's College (Hastings)

22 May 2019

### Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*. No significant issues with the school's management of national assessment were found. The school's own review mechanisms allow them to identify and respond to most issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

### What the school is doing well

St John's College is a special character school committed to a continuous process of self-review in the pursuit of excellence in academic achievement. In the past five years, the school has raised its attainment above that of comparable schools and the national average. The school has high expectations of its staff and students, and a vision of the 'St John's Man' as a person of character who can transfer and adapt his knowledge and skills for use in the 21st century global environment.

The Senior Management Team leads change to assessment-related practice to better meet the needs of students. Student support has improved through wider analysis of data and tracking by the Academic Dean. Mentoring by a supportive network of homeclass teachers, deans and pastoral care specialists has produced improved outcomes for students.

The school provides a broad range of programmes to cater for the varied pathways its students wish to follow. Assessment is differentiated in some subjects and includes individualisation in others to meet student need. In order to extend assessment opportunities, external providers offer courses and standards the school does not have the capacity to deliver. School based evidence is increasingly used in applications for Special Assessment Conditions to enhance equitable access to qualifications.

Robust internal moderation processes and a thorough review of responses to external moderation by Heads of Department and the Principal's Nominee ensure that only credible assessment results are reported to NZQA. This is reflected in the overall high level of agreement between teacher and NZQA external moderator judgements.

Data management and use effectively supports student achievement outcomes and ensures the timely reporting of results to NZQA. Achievement data is analysed to review department practice and courses, set strategic direction and evaluate the effectiveness of changes to assessment for qualifications. Staff use data to identify and intervene with students at risk of not achieving a qualification.

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

### **Areas for improvement**

The school's assessment policy documents differ in content in the section relating to Further Assessment Opportunities. All documentation should be aligned to avoid ambiguity and to ensure assessment is credible.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to ensure the consistency of assessment policy and procedures across the school. Senior management undertakes to:

- check that all school documentation regarding assessment policy is consistent to avoid ambiguity or misunderstanding.

Kay Wilson  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

27 June 2019

**NZQA**

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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 27-28 July 2016 Managing National Assessment Report** The school has addressed the agreed action from the 2016 review by ensuring that all staff understand that the grade verification process involves checking a sufficient, purposefully selected sample of student work at grade boundaries.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has a recent moderation history with high levels of agreement between teachers' and NZQA moderators' judgements. Heads of Department record feedback from external moderation and develop action plans for any issues identified by NZQA moderators and completion is monitored by the Senior Management Team. A next step is to evaluate the effectiveness of the completed action.

### 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)*

The college effectively reviews its assessment-related processes in response to identified issues and to explore potential improvements. This is driven by the Senior Management Team and the Academic Director, with input from other staff, students and parents. The school's self-review also includes strategic planning and recently, a focus on building digital fluency capability.

In order to achieve its strategic goal of maintaining high rates of NCEA attainment, the school uses comparisons with higher decile schools to drive the change necessary to pedagogy, curriculum delivery and student engagement to effect continued improvement. The college has also raised its expectations for Merit and Excellence endorsements. In order to motivate and engage students to pursue academic excellence, certificates and academic House points are awarded at weekly assemblies to celebrate individual student's achievement of Merit and Excellence grades. As a result, the school has raised its levels of attainment in Levels 1 to 3 and University Entrance to that of higher decile schools.

To ensure credible practice school-wide, the Principal's Nominee reviews and monitors each department's assessment practice. His findings are well-documented and form part of the school's appraisal process for Middle Management.

The college has committed to an extensive programme of professional development to improve staff digital fluency to enhance teaching and learning for the improvement of assessment outcomes. In 2018, most teachers uploaded their external moderation digitally and the school is building capacity with staff to make wider use of its cloud-based applications for digital storage. A digital application for students is under review and the school intends to extend its use and encourage students to monitor their own progress in a more independent manner.

A mentoring programme has been introduced in partnership with a business organisation to inspire and encourage a targeted group of students to pursue business-related career goals they may not have considered were possible, or even desirable. Young, high achieving Maori and Pasifika employees from the firm have been chosen to mentor students from similar socio-economic backgrounds. This has had a tangible impact on the students' self-belief and motivation to succeed at higher levels. Flow on effects can be seen in the high rate of retention in Year 13 and less disparity for Maori and Pasifika in the school's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) data than for schools of a similar decile.

**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)*

### **St John's College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- identifying and supporting students at risk of not achieving or meeting their qualifications and personal goals
- providing targeted support for at risk students to meet the literacy or numeracy requirements of NCEA and University Entrance
- providing differentiated assessment programmes within courses and across classes in the same subject, and delivering multi-level programmes for classes with small numbers
- offering optional standards in some subjects
- supporting New Zealand Scholarship candidates, as appropriate, and providing extra tuition for any student seeking assistance outside class time through subject or class tutorials
- reducing the number of credits offered in courses to focus on the quality rather than the quantity of credits achieved
- extending teaching and learning time before starting to assess in some subject areas to build capacity for study at higher levels
- extending the use of external providers to deliver courses the school does not have the capacity to offer and to expand the range of career-related courses and pathways in response to student demand
- providing targeted support to maintain equality of access in STEM subjects for Māori and Pasifika students.

### **St John's College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- monitoring the authenticity of student work
- managing missed and late assessment, appeals and breaches of the assessment rules
- ensuring resubmission practice meets NZQA requirements
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Staff support underpins successful outcomes for students** Teachers support their students to succeed by offering tutorials in their own time and tailoring programmes to meet individual student's needs and qualifications goals.

**Increasing use of school-based evidence to support Special Assessment Conditions applications** The school's Special Assessment Conditions co-ordinator has identified a greater number of students who can benefit from special assessment conditions by using school-based evidence. This action has enhanced equity of access to qualifications for St John's College students.



**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)*

### **St John's College 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 and where possible, using external critiquers for new standards and tasks
- using subject-specialists from within or outside the school to verify assessor judgements for a sample of student work
- recording all steps of the verification process on an Internal Moderation Cover Sheet
- visiting all Heads of Department twice yearly to check internal moderation processes meet NZQA requirements and auditing two departments each year in a more thorough and robust process
- requiring all Heads of Department to store internal assessment evidence in a consistent digital or physical format.

### **St John's College 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
- sending most of the external moderation digitally.

**Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency** Some departments interviewed continue to verify judgements for all samples at a particular grade for their own professional development and reassurance. All Heads of Department are regularly reminded that strategic selection of purposefully selected samples at grade boundaries is a useful strategy to avoid over-verifying and reduce workload pressure. The Heads of Department interviewed are all aware of NZQA's sufficiency requirements and where over-verification occurs, it is done knowingly and willingly.

**Further strengthen internal moderation verification** Where verification results differ between assessor and verifier, a note should be recorded on the internal moderation cover sheet to justify the final grade awarded. Documenting discussions around grade boundaries for future benchmarking is part of good professional practice.

### **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)*

### **St John's College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- providing the Board of Trustees with comparisons of similar and higher decile schools to ensure the college is on track to maintain its high NCEA attainment rates
- requiring Heads of Department to analyse NCEA achievement data against school goals and report their findings to the Principal and Board of Trustees
- using achievement data to inform future teaching and assessment programmes and processes
- identifying students in Year 9 at risk of not meeting NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements in Year 11 and providing appropriate support.

### **St John's College reports accurate achievement data by:**

- ensuring all internal entries are reported with a result or are withdrawn, as appropriate
- using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
- submitting results to NZQA on a regular basis, to provide more timely progress reports for deans and students
- checking entries in externally assessed standards to limit late entries.

**Key determiner of student success** More effective monitoring has contributed to improvements in student achievement. Over the past five years, the number of students gaining University Entrance has almost doubled and currently exceeds the National mean. The Academic Dean monitors each student's progress throughout the year and shares assessment information with deans, teachers and parents to ensure students at risk of not meeting their qualifications or personal goals receive appropriate support

### **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))*

### **St John's College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- providing students with a revised and updated Term Planner at the start of each term
- using assemblies, as well as twice weekly "ranks" (House assemblies) to inform and update students about matters relating to their courses and qualifications
- supporting teachers new to the school with a comprehensive two-year induction programme
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff and students in print, in person and digitally through the Student/Parent Portal of the college website
- informing parents and students of upcoming assessment related matters through the college Facebook page, regular newsletters and emails
- informing students and parents new to assessment about a wide range of matters.

### **St John's College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- providing opportunities for staff to discuss changes in assessment best practice, including findings from external review
- ensuring students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification through the school support network
- reporting student progress to parents four times during the year.

### **Review communications annually to ensure information is consistent**

Documentation relating to assessment requirements needs to be updated to reflect current practice and NZQA requirements. This review found inconsistencies in the documentation relating to Further Assessment Opportunities. Discussions with students and staff indicated the required assessment practice is adhered to, however all documentation should align with practice to provide clarity and ensure credibility.

**Consistent assessment information required in course outlines** Information in subject course outlines varies widely in its description or presentation. Requiring a succinct and consistent format such as, the course outline generated automatically by the student management system, would enable students and parents to access the necessary course-related information more easily.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to ensure the consistency of assessment policy and procedures across the school. Senior management undertakes to:

- check that all school documentation regarding assessment policy is consistent to avoid ambiguity or misunderstanding.

**For consideration**

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is clear and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- standardising the course outline template so it consistently and clearly shows how standards contribute to qualifications.