

Managing National Assessment Report

Rathkeale College

July 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Rathkeale 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
- *Rathkeale College and Rathkeale / St Matthew's Senior College Academic Procedures and Processes 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *Rathkeale College and Rathkeale / St Matthew's Senior College NCEA Student Handbook 2019*
- *Rathkeale College and Rathkeale / St Matthew's Senior College Information 2019*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
 - Agriculture
 - Chemistry
 - Technology – Hard Materials
 - Visual Art.
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Principal's Nominee and Deputy Principal – Director of Teaching and Learning 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.

Background

Rathkeale College is a Year 9 – 13 boys' school. Boys up to Year 11 are taught exclusively on the Rathkeale campus.

There is a combined senior school known as St Matthew's/Rathkeale Senior College. This includes Year 12 and 13 girls from St Matthew's Collegiate. All students in the Senior College are enrolled with NZQA through Rathkeale College who reports the results. The two schools share an examination centre for Year 12 and 13 candidates.

SUMMARY

Rathkeale College

26 July 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

Rathkeale College has processes in place which ensure credible assessment for national qualifications. The school focuses on supporting students in meeting their academic and vocational needs. The school's NCEA qualifications, University Entrance and literacy and numeracy achievement rates, are consistently higher than national and decile attainment rates.

Teachers know their students well and this assists in tracking progress and offering assessment opportunities to match the students' interests and abilities. There is a consistent understanding and application of assessment processes. This includes ensuring there is a coherent process for students from St Mathews who transition to the St Matthew's/Rathkeale Senior College for Year 12 and 13. Data submission to NZQA is timely and accurate.

Assessment opportunities are extended by using external providers to offer courses and standards the school does not have the capacity to deliver. Identified students are provided with approved special assessment conditions and appropriately supported. These all contribute towards assisting students to improve their assessment outcomes.

Moderation is embedded. The Principal's Nominee and Heads of Department monitor internal moderation to assure senior management that the correct processes are followed to report credible results.

The school uses data to track student progress. A detailed annual report reviews achievement data to identify trends, outcomes for targeted groups and success at meeting department and school goals.

School assessment documentation of NCEA practices and national qualifications is reviewed and updated annually. This enables staff, students and caregivers to gain a common understanding of NCEA and school assessment procedures.

Areas for improvement

Expectations for the selection of samples of students work for internal moderation need to be clarified and reinforced with teachers. Student work for moderation should

be strategically selected. This means each piece of work is chosen for a reason and the number of pieces selected are relevant to the needs of the assessors for that standard.

School documentation provided to staff should explain the difference between internal and external moderation processes. Effective internal moderation involves strategic selection through the purposeful and sufficient selection of student material for verification.

Agreed action

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

- ensure all staff understand and practice strategic selection of samples of students work for internal moderation
- update information on moderation in the staff handbook.

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School Quality Assurance and Liaison

27 September 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 11-12 March 2015 Managing National Assessment Report

The three agreed items from the previous review have been addressed. The school:

- requires Heads of Department and Teachers in Charge to sign a declaration form attesting that moderation has been completed for all internal standards where results have been reported to NZQA
- ensures all teachers have an Education Sector Login
- uses a common template for course outlines developed from a facility available through the school's student management system.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school responds effectively to external moderation feedback with a response sheet completed for every externally moderated standard. The outcomes of external moderation are reported to the Board of Trustees. Where issues are identified, the Principal's Nominee meets with subject teachers to discuss and develop an action plan in response and to address moderator concerns.

The school's moderation history shows a high level of moderator agreement with teacher judgements with the few issues identified and resolved.

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)

Since the previous Managing National Assessment review there have been changes in the senior management team including a new Principal and Principal's Nominee. Senior Management have undertaken review of internal processes that is likely to result in a number of significant initiatives that will impact on the delivery and management of national assessments including:

- revising middle management structures to streamline lines of communication
- amending day to day timetable structures
- moving towards more dynamic and real time reporting to parents through portal access into the student management system.

The goal of these initiatives is to improve the effectiveness of assessment programmes, to promote student achievement.

The Principal's Nominee coordinates a department review cycle. A biennial meeting is held with subject teachers to discuss aspects of managing national assessment. In the subsequent year teachers complete the *Rathkeale College Quality Assurance Department Self-review Checklist* on key aspects and forward this to the Principal's

Nominee. The current format of this self-review checklist involves teachers ticking a confidence rating against aspects of managing national assessment. In light of some teachers' misconceptions around internal moderation practice, the school is encouraged to review this format. It could consider incorporating open ended questions to ascertain the extent of knowledge and understanding of teachers in key areas. This would identify areas where further professional learning is needed to clarify expectations.

The school is well placed to continue developing its own capacity to identify issues and respond appropriately. Continuing to develop a proactive review culture will ensure effective assessment practice and procedures that meet student assessment needs.

No action required

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews 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)

Rathkeale College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice including managing:
 - missed and late work
 - extensions
 - appeals
 - resubmissions, and further assessment opportunities
- supporting the efficient management of NZQA external examinations and reviewing practice to identify improvements
- identifying those eligible for special assessment conditions using school-based evidence and supporting these students to access entitlements
- providing students with the opportunity in some subject areas to undertake an individual assessment programme by allowing them to:
 - select from a menu of standards
 - negotiating the context for assessments
- assessing students when ready by offering flexible timeframes for assessment submission, where manageable and appropriate
- engaging students through the use of localised and relevant learning contexts.

Rathkeale College has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted for assessment by using suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process including the use of an online plagiarism tool
- reporting Not Achieved where a student has presented evidence that is not at the standard, or has had an adequate assessment opportunity and submitted no work
- ensuring derived grades come from on authentic standard-specific evidence from the schools derived grade examinations or other appropriate assessment.

Review student programmes Assessing students against a large number of credits impacts the workload for teachers and students. Learning can take place and a student can demonstrate understanding without the need for confirmation through a formal NCEA assessment process. This was noted by one of the students interviewed, who commented on, and questioned, the difference he experienced between the number of credits assessed and what was actually required to achieve an NCEA.

Over the last few years the school has encouraged teachers to reduce the numbers of credits offered and assessed in courses. There has been reduction in some areas, however, others are still unsure on how they might reduce their assessment

programme. Students, therefore, continue to be assessed for a high number of credits overall compared with students in similar schools. In 2018, 81 percent of Year 11 Rathkeale College students gained over 100 credits compared to 66 percent of students in similar schools. Similarly, in Year 12, 84 percent of Rathkeale College students gained over 90 credits at Level 2 or above compared to 61 percent of students in similar schools.

For students, more assessment can be at the expense of the deeper learning needed for merit and excellence results. While the proportion of Year 11 students achieving Level 1 merit and excellence over the past few years is comparable, or slightly above, those in similar schools, the proportion of excellence endorsements at Level 2 and Level 3 is lower. The school is encouraged to continue the discussion on the relationship between learning and assessment and review the number of credits in courses, and for individual students. The school acknowledges that reducing the credit number could improve the manageability of assessment programmes for both students and teachers. A strategic assessment programme may also give students a better chance of achieving merit and excellence results.

Māori and Pacific engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects The school has small numbers of Māori and Pacific students. The results over the past five years show little difference between the success rate of Year 13 students of different ethnicities achieving three or more STEM subjects. The school is continuing to work at maintaining equity through focused identification and monitoring of students. Information on all Māori and Pacific students is shared with staff through profiles containing data on Literacy and Numeracy along with student career aspirations. Achievement by Māori and non-Māori are identified in the schools NCEA analysis produced in February. This helps identify trends and areas for future focus. A compulsory STEM semester course has been introduced in Year 9. Opportunities are encouraged throughout the school for students to engage with, and be successful in, STEM subjects.

For consideration

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

- reviewing the number of credits assessed in courses and in individual students' programmes.

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)

Rathkeale College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists to verify a sample of student work
- documenting the process using an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- monitoring completion of the process by
 - Heads of Department and Teachers in Charge signing a declaration to confirm completion of internal moderation
 - the Principal's Nominee undertaking quality assurance audit visits with departments.

Rathkeale College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan
- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored
- digitally submitting around half of the selected samples of student work for external moderation
- responding effectively to the moderator's findings.

Clarify and reinforce strategic selection for internal moderation Strategic selection involves teachers purposefully selecting a sufficient sample of student work for internal moderation. This will make the quality assurance process more meaningful and effective. A number of teachers interviewed during this review randomly select a set number of pieces of student work for internal moderation.

Purposeful selection of student material by the assessor will include work at grade boundaries or where the teacher is uncertain of the result. It may also be used to confirm grades that may be retained for benchmark exemplars. In every case, the selected samples of work for internal moderation should be chosen by the assessor for a reason. The assessor should note the reason for selection as it will assist the verifier in understanding why the assessor awarded the grade and support professional dialogue. Documenting this discussion will provide a valuable record for future reference. An updated *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* which makes this more explicit has been shared with the school as a way to help promote this effective practice with staff.

A sufficient sample of student work should be selected for verification. This sample size will vary between standards and teachers as it will be determined by factors such as the assessor's experience of the standard, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, the number of

students assessed, and the range of results awarded. There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified.

The quality assurance audit of departments led by the Principal's Nominee should include a focus on strategic selection to support, encourage and affirm good practice.

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:

- ensure all staff understand and practice strategic selection of samples of students work for internal 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)

Rathkeale College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- Heads of Department and Teachers in Charge completing an annual analysis of results to inform future teaching and assessment through:
 - comparing subject results against national results for each standard offered in a course
 - reviewing the outcomes for targeted groups such as boys/girls, Māori and Pacific students
 - reflecting on success towards meeting the goals for the current year
 - reviewing and discussing barriers to success along with evaluating strategies that led to success from the previous year
 - listing actions to improve results in the future and provide targets for the subsequent year
- staff and Deans using an online data analysis tool and the student management system to track student progress towards completing qualifications, identifying those on alternative pathways and supporting students to meet personal goals.

Rathkeale College reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
- supporting students to use their Learner Login to track their NCEA progress and identify errors
- having students and Heads of Departments confirm the accuracy of all entries reported to NZQA
- using the correct provider code for assessment undertaken by external providers
- ensuring all internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate.

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))

Rathkeale College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive standardised outlines for all course they undertake
- publishing assessment documentation online in addition to issuing hard copies to ensure information is readily accessible
- communicating assessment policy and procedure supported with regular reminders about deadlines and expectations
- ensuring a memorandum of understanding is held for all outside providers against whose codes results are reported.

Rathkeale College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- issuing a student NCEA handbook annually to every student which outlines assessment expectations and processes
- holding an NCEA information evening at the beginning of every year
- reviewing and updating the student NCEA handbook and the staff academic procedures and processes document annually, and as needed throughout the year, to ensure relevant and up to date information is available
- ensuring processes, such as requests for extension, are aligned with those operating at St Matthew's Collegiate to ensure an easy transition for Year 12 and 13 girls joining the St Matthew's/Rathkeale Senior College.
- developing an assessment calendar each term to track assessment deadlines and identify pressure periods for teachers and students
- supporting and encouraging teachers to undertake professional development in managing national assessment through becoming an NCEA examination developer or marker.

Update documentation Information on moderation should clearly differentiate the purpose of, and the specific expectations required for, internal and external moderation. The section on internal moderation should clarify and reinforce the strategic selection of student work in line with the earlier discussion in this report. Clear guidelines will ensure information provided to teachers reflects NZQA requirements, communicates the school's expectations and supports effective practice.

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 information on moderation in the staff handbook.