

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Sacred Heart College (Lower Hutt)

May 2021

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Sacred Heart College (Lower Hutt):

- 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 2021* (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
- *Sacred Heart College Lower Hutt – NCEA for Students*
- *NZQA Assessment and Reporting Handbook (Staff Handbook)*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Acting Deputy Principal
- Acting Assistant Principal – Moderation
- Head(s) of Faculty/Department for:
  - English and Languages
  - Learning Support
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - Social Sciences
  - Technology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Senior Leaders 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

## Sacred Heart College (Lower Hutt)

04 May 2021

### **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.

At the request of NZQA, and with the school's agreement, this review was rescheduled firstly from 2019, and then again from 2020 due to COVID-19.

### **What the school is doing well**

The values system embedded into practice at Sacred Heart College sets a positive tone to school activity. Mana Atua, Mana Tipuna, Mana Matauranga, Mana Whenua and Mana Tangata (a heart for God, ancestors, knowledge, land and people) are a set of Relational Practice values underpinning relationships including for teaching, learning and assessment. These are implemented effectively through academic mentoring classes where kaiarahi are resourced to support student wellbeing and academic progress throughout the year.

**School-wide review systems are well embedded** Review is integral to all assessment systems at Sacred Heart College. Senior leaders have developed systems of review, which staff, students and whānau contribute to effectively. Review of the senior curriculum, and extensive inquiry informed by student and whānau voice, have led to the development of a significant number of new courses and to professional learning focused on developing and implementing culturally responsive pedagogies.

Teachers at the school actively review systems and outcomes to ensure courses are meeting student need. Review practices are well-embedded into cycles of teaching and assessment. Teachers monitor their programmes as a matter of routine for the value this provides in designing effective courses and subject pathways.

The school has developed excellent processes for managing and reviewing the quality of its assessment systems.

**Information about classes and students is collated online** This ensures that pathway information used to support students in their learning and assessment is current and shared. Teachers create, share and regularly update class profiles to document their knowledge of student interests and pathways alongside their next learning and assessment steps. These are discussed in department meetings to problem solve and develop strategies for supporting students.

**Senior managers work closely as a team and with subject leaders** They mentor and support middle leaders with reviewing processes and student outcomes. They ensure that quality management occurs from the setting of assessment tasks through

to the analysis of class results and review of moderation information. Senior leaders follow up with any areas of concern as they arise.

**The Principal's Nominee has processes to ensure robust and thorough communication** Staff, students and family communications about assessment is effective and up to date. Students understand the importance of submitting authentic work for assessments, and assessment data is checked regularly for completeness and accuracy.

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

Kay Wilson  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

06 July 2021

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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 02 September 2016 Managing National Assessment Report

There were no action items in the previous MNA review.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** There is a high level of agreement between assessor and NZQA moderator judgements, and the school's processes for following up concerns are effective and well managed. Moderation reports are distributed to curriculum leaders for follow up. Where concerns need to be addressed these are done formally between teachers, Heads of Department and verifiers. Outcomes are discussed in review meetings with the Senior Leader responsible for the department. Standards are selected by the school in future moderation to check for the effectiveness of actions taken.

### 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)*

Regular and on-going review is well established at the school. Teachers reflect on units of work by analysing results and student feedback to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching programme and consider change. They also review curriculum programmes each year to plan for the incoming cohort and then summatively to assess how well it met students' needs.

Regular classroom review feeds data into targeted school review. Senior curriculum review conducted over the last two years has identified the need to improve student engagement by strengthening systems of academic mentoring towards appropriate pathways, course design and assessment planning. The school recognises the importance of student and whānau voice in this work. The curriculum review has led to the development of a wide range of new courses in 2021 designed to address interests students have identified, while maintaining effective assessment processes.

It has also resulted in Korero ā whānau; a new initiative connecting kaiarahi teachers (ako/form time guides) with families in 3-way conferencing. To support this, students are using resources such as MyMahi to create learning goals and record their personal profile. These are updated regularly and recorded in the school Student Management System. Korero ā whānau conferences held biannually have replaced parent-teacher interviews.

The school is responding actively to address concerns it has identified around equity (including in Level 3 STEM subjects). Through Rongohia Te Hau the school is widely accessing evidence from stakeholder voice and classroom observations to engage widely with its community and inform and develop culturally responsive teaching and leadership.

**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 2021 5.1 – 5.7)*

### **Sacred Heart College (Lower Hutt) has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- supporting students to make course decisions based on pathway aspirations
- identifying students eligible for special assessment conditions, making applications, and supporting access
- designing courses which reflect student interests and abilities
- making appropriate use of Supported Learning standards
- providing opportunities through external providers for students to access learning which appropriately broadens the available curriculum
- using checkpoints to track student progress towards completion of assessment tasks and provide formative feedback
- assessing when ready.

### **Sacred Heart College (Lower Hutt) has effective processes and procedures for:**

- grading student work consistently by teachers in departments
- supporting students to self-manage missed and late assessment
- ensuring resubmissions are managed consistently by teachers
- identifying and investigating authenticity concerns
- developing teachers' assessment practice through interactions with colleagues from other schools
- managing and maintaining a record of Memoranda of Understanding with external providers
- ensuring evidence for derived grades meets NZQA requirements.

**Addressing issues of inequity of achievement in STEM** Senior leaders have identified that working towards greater equity at all levels is a desirable goal. Recent data shows that Māori and Pacific students are not attaining success in Level 3 STEM subjects at the same proportion as other students. The initiatives referred to in the review section of this report to address student engagement are positive steps the school is taking to address the issues.

**Tracking school leavers** The 2020 Year 13 Dean is tracking leavers over the next 3-4 years to help the school better understand the connection between assessment and real student pathways. This interesting inquiry could provide fresh insight into the outcomes achieved by students relative to learning and pathway planning, academic goal setting, and qualifications gained.

**Students appreciate assessment feedback** The students interviewed for the review appreciated being given feedback following assessments and wanted to have that included following summative internal assessment. They were very positive and



optimistic about the way the school assessed them for qualifications and supported them in planning for their learning pathways.

**For consideration**

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

- ensuring that all teachers provide feedback to students following summative internal assessment.

## 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 2021 6.4b)*

### **Sacred Heart College (Lower Hutt) has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- documenting steps online to ensure that all assessment tasks are critiqued and have a sample of student work verified prior to results being reported
- using subject specialists (including from other schools for smaller subjects) to verify samples of student work at grade boundaries
- retaining benchmarked samples of student work for referring to when making future assessment judgments.

### **Sacred Heart College (Lower Hutt) has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- self-selecting standards for inclusion in annual external moderation to check internal processes and contribute to the professional development of teachers
- storing, selecting and submitting samples of student work to NZQA requirements.

**Focus on the purpose of internal moderation processes** Teacher workload could be reduced by strategically managing the sample size submitted for internal verification. In the process of internal moderation staff provide verifiers with samples of student work at grade boundaries. However, most teachers are verifying larger samples than is necessary to provide assurance that the grades awarded are at the standard. Factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed can be considered when determining the number of samples of student work to verify. Strategic decisions about the quantity verified would not impact on the quality of internal moderation and would further focus teachers' attention on the professional learning gained from useful grade boundary verification discussions.

### **For consideration**

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

- having subject leaders use strategic selection of student samples at grade boundaries to better manage workload in the verification process.

## **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)*

### **Sacred Heart College (Lower Hutt) effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- reporting results and “Attitude to Learning” via an online portal to students and parents so that they have regular updates on attainment, self-management of learning and progress
- analysing data to create class profiles which are used to develop and review learning programmes designed to meet students’ abilities and interest
- developing a departmental action plan to connect and review subject goals and outcomes to the school’s strategic plan for the year
- monitoring the progress of students towards meeting the literacy and numeracy requirements and supporting learners where needed
- reflecting on results following each unit of learning to review the effectiveness of programmes and assessment tasks.

### **Sacred Heart College (Lower Hutt) reports accurate achievement data by:**

- submitting regular datafiles and managing all issues or errors until they are resolved
- checking that all entries have had a result reported or been withdrawn in a timely manner
- encouraging students to use their NZQA login to check final results and entries.

### **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))*

### **Sacred Heart College (Lower Hutt) has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive consistent outlines for all courses they undertake
- providing NCEA information for students through multiple channels including a student handbook, a comprehensive website, and information given by kaiarahi
- reviewing communications to staff, such as the staff handbook, to ensure they are fit for purpose, give clear, plain-English explanations, and are up to date.

### **Sacred Heart College (Lower Hutt) assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- supporting parental understanding through regular Fono, Hui, Korero ā Whānau conferencing and online resources
- having an induction process for new staff
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to access professional development and to discuss NCEA changes
- actively supporting Heads of Department by senior leaders.

**Cross-curricula timetable of assessment dates and deadlines** School leaders and teachers help students to manage their assessment workload. They clearly communicate assessment dates and deadlines, and the required procedures for students to follow when circumstances mean they need additional time. Students interviewed for the review suggested that a shared calendar across subjects would mean teachers were more aware of competing deadlines and could reduce bottlenecks.

### **For consideration**

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

- using the overview of assessment due dates to help staff spread these out and further support student well-being.