

Managing National Assessment Report

Marlborough Girls' College

September 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Marlborough Girls' 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
- *Board of Trustees Policies and Guidelines, Procedural Policy: Assessment, Marlborough Girls' College 2019*
- *NZQA Managing National Assessments, Marlborough Girls' College 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *NZQA 2019 Student Information, Marlborough Girls' College* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum
- Curriculum Leaders for:
 - English
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
- Assistant Curriculum Leader of:
 - Technology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal and Deputy 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

Marlborough Girls' College

5 September 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

Marlborough Girls' College has sound assessment practices ensuring that results reported to NZQA for national qualifications are credible.

The school has effective self-review processes that identify areas of improvement, which are then actioned. The Senior Leadership Team has a shared vision of improving student achievement. This vision is being implemented in subject areas by developing student-centred courses.

Some subject areas are now offering students greater flexibility and opportunity to be assessed with the removal of pre-requisites and co-constructing assessment programmes with students. Teachers use data analysis and student voice to inform course design. The monitoring of student progress towards gaining a qualification has been improved to ensure interventions and support have time to take effect.

Teacher understanding of the school's assessment practice has been strengthened. The internal assessment checklist for teachers is effective in ensuring the school's expectations are being met and provides assurance that all assessment results are valid, authentic and verifiable.

The school has an effective process to respond to external moderation outcomes. Curriculum Leaders are required to report on the outcome for every standard and action plans are developed to address those with identified issues. These are discussed between Curriculum Leaders and their senior line manager.

Internal moderation is effectively managed school-wide. Staff interviewed demonstrated a clear understanding of the school's process and could readily provide documented evidence of internal moderation. The Principal's Nominee monitors the process to ensure that all results reported to NZQA have been subject to internal moderation.

The school uses a range of methods to inform students and the community about NCEA related matters. Students who participated in the review were knowledgeable about how to achieve an NCEA qualification and school assessment policy and processes.

Areas for improvement

The school's process for the random selection of student material for external moderation does not meet NZQA's guidelines. The selection should be done by someone other than the assessor. This helps to ensure that the process is not manipulated.

The school's documented process for breaches of the rules of assessment and students' right to appeal should reflect its actual practice of natural justice. The school documentation requires updating to reflect this.

Agreed action

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

- ensure the selection of student material for external moderation meets NZQA guidelines
- update school documentation to reflect current practice.

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29 November 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 24 August 2016 Managing National Assessment Report The five action items from this report have been effectively addressed. The school has clarified with staff the resubmission and verification processes and staff interviewed for this review demonstrated a thorough understanding of them. Staff have established and maintained connections with subject experts from outside the school to use as verifiers. A review of course outlines has ensured that they are consistent with school expectations.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has an effective process to address issues identified from external moderation. Curriculum Leaders are required to report on the outcome for every moderated standard. This ensures that all moderator comments are reviewed, including those where agreement between assessor and moderator judgements are consistent. The Principal's Nominee records the completion of each report and creates a summary report for the Senior Leadership Team. Curriculum Leaders develop action plans to address identified issues and discuss the progress, completion, and effectiveness of them with their Senior Leader line manager.

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)

Marlborough Girls' College is using its self-review to improve assessment practices and outcomes. The school has a shared vision with staff for assessment to become more student centred and flexible to better meet student needs. The Senior Leadership Team is driving this vision and Curriculum Leaders support it within their departments.

Pre-requisites are being removed from courses in some subject areas ensuring open pathways for students. A review determined that pre-requisites created barriers to future pathways for students, as they were unable to enter the course.

Some subject areas have begun modifying courses so that they are student centred. Teachers are collecting student voice to contextualise assessment programmes. Flexible practices are developing within some courses, providing opportunities for students to choose the standards they wish to attempt. Some subject areas are trialling the collection of evidence for standards from across different subjects.

The school is reviewing the junior curriculum to help address the gradual decline in NCEA achievement rates. The school will use the review to inform modifications to its junior programmes aiming to have students become more engaged and motivated in their learning. It is envisaged that this along with developments in the senior programmes will improve achievement outcomes for 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)

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

- using school-based testing to identify students requiring Special Assessment Conditions and making applications appropriately
- scaffolding and contextualising assessment tasks so that they are relevant and engaging to students
- making portfolio and research-based assessments manageable, using milestone checks and templates
- extending assessment opportunities by using external providers, such as the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology, to deliver:
 - courses the school is unable to offer
 - assessment against individual standards related to vocational pathways
- assessing when ready, where appropriate.

Marlborough Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring derived grades and unexpected event grades are based on valid, authentic and standard specific evidence.
- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on late and missed work, extensions, resubmissions, and further assessment opportunities
- complying with the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*, when handling students' assessment information
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have not submitted work.

Teacher understanding of school assessment practices and processes strengthened In 2018 the school became aware of some assessments that had not followed correct procedures and were at risk of being invalid. The school had assumed that teachers were trained within departments and were conversant with them. This resulted in a review of teacher understanding of assessment requirements that identified that this was not the case. The introduction of an internal assessment checklist has strengthened the school's assessment practice and quality assurance processes.

A checklist for every standard now assists in assuring senior leaders that all assessments are valid, authentic and verifiable. Each step that teachers follow is clear and sequential and all teachers have been provided with training to ensure understanding. It covers all aspects of the assessment process including checking for updates and clarifications, moderation requirements and result reporting. Curriculum Leaders are required to sign each completed checklist and internal moderation coversheet and submit them to the Principal's Nominee. Curriculum

Leaders interviewed in this review confirmed that the introduction of the checklist has helped to improve their understanding of assessment practice and procedures and ensure that they are being followed.

Equity including in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for Māori and Pacific Students in Year 13 The school is supporting Māori and Pacific students to improve achievement outcomes in STEM subjects. In addition to Deans monitoring progress, a mentoring team helps these students towards reaching their goals. Mentors work closely with students and are aware of their future aspirations. Advice about course selection is provided to ensure courses undertaken provide the correct pathway to achieve their goals. Families are included in these discussions and further support, such as tutoring, can be arranged. A homework club that is attended by teachers and Pasifika Power-up, where students can access further academic mentoring, provides further subject support for the 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)

Marlborough Girls' 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
- staff reviewing standard clarifications and using NZQA and their own school exemplars to improve assessor judgements
- using subject specialists, within and outside the school, to verify the grades awarded on a purposefully selected sample of student work
- requiring Curriculum Leaders to ensure internal moderation is completed and documented for all standards assessed in their department prior to reporting results to NZQA
- Senior Leadership monitoring that internal moderation occurs and reviewing departmental moderation processes during the faculty review cycle at the end of each year.

Marlborough Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- annually checking that assessment materials and student work are stored and readily available if selected for external moderation
- valuing external moderation feedback for the clarification of grade boundaries, assistance with understanding of the standard and to confirm the robustness of the school's internal moderation
- encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan.

Selection process does not meet NZQA guidelines The selection of samples of student work for external moderation should be done by a person other than the assessor. The school's process currently does not meet this guideline, as some teachers are carrying out the selection for work that they have assessed. The school must create a process to meet the guideline. This will make the school's moderation system more robust, as it will help to ensure that the selection of student work is not manipulated.

Recording the monitoring of internal moderation Recording the actions taken to monitor internal moderation will strengthen the school's process. All completed internal moderation coversheets are passed to the Principal's Nominee for checking. Departments are then visited to follow-up any that are incomplete and to reconcile the coversheets against student work. This is good practice and teachers interviewed at this review commented that this practice is embedded.

However, this action is not recorded. Documenting this action will strengthen this process as it will provide further assurance to Senior Leadership that all results reported to NZQA are credible.

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 the selection of student material meets NZQA guidelines.

For consideration

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

- documenting the actions taken to monitor 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)

Marlborough Girls' College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- informing assessment programme design so that the standards offered match student strengths and interests
- annually reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA achievement, to inform strategic goals and actions.

Marlborough Girls' College reports accurate achievement data by:

- reconciling results from external providers with which they hold a current memorandum of understanding, to ensure results are reported with the correct provider codes
- reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- ensuring all students confirm that their entries and results have been entered correctly
- actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the student portal on the student management system and the NZQA Learner Login
- using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data errors
- ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn, as appropriate.

Improved monitoring of student progress The school's review of its tracking process found that it was ineffective for identifying students early enough for a support plan to make a difference and that some students were not entered in enough credits to achieve a qualification. The monitoring of student progress towards qualifications has been improved allowing earlier intervention and provision of support for students. The identification of students at risk now begins in Term 2 and they are provided with mentoring support from their Deans including individual assessment plans as required. This allows time for these provisions to take effect. Students, Whānau teachers and Deans have learning conversations and check student entries in Terms 2 and 3 to ensure that each student has an appropriate assessment programme that will lead to a qualification.

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))

Marlborough Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all of their courses
- communicating consistent NCEA information, assessment policy and procedures
- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year via emails and staff meetings
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing online access for parents and students to the information held on the school's student management system.

Marlborough Girls' College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- providing professional development for staff, to inform and remind them about school policies, procedures and updates
- holding student assemblies to inform them of school assessment policies and procedures
- improving parental understanding of NCEA and the school's assessment procedures through an information evening.

School documentation requires updating The school's documentation requires updating to reflect actual practice and maintain currency. The process for breaches of the rules of assessment should reflect the school's practice, which follows the principles of natural justice by allowing the student to explain their actions. The process for students to appeal assessment decisions also requires updating. So that the principles of fairness apply, students should be aware of their right to appeal any assessment decision, not just grades awarded, under the school's assessment policy and procedures.

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 school documentation to reflect current practice.