

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Collingwood Area School**

**September 2018**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Collingwood Area 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 2018* (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
- *Years 11, 12 and 13 National Qualifications (including NCEA), Collingwood Area School (Student Handbook)*
- *Staff Guidelines for Assessment Policy and Practices for National Qualifications, Collingwood Area School 2018 (Staff Handbook)*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the:

- Principal's Nominee
- Teacher(s) in Charge of:
  - English/Drama
  - Technology
  - 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

## Collingwood Area School 2018

### 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

Collingwood Area School has robust assessment processes to ensure credible results. Self-review processes identify areas that will improve the assessment outcomes of students and link to the strategic goals of the school and their community of learning.

Assessment programmes are student centred. Academic and vocational pathways are offered through the school and good use is made of external providers to extend these. Teachers design courses to match student interests and strengths, where possible. The introduction of Working Walls, as part of assessment practice, has helped to improve assessment outcomes through students gaining a better understanding of success criteria.

A robust internal moderation system is well embedded. Due to its small size and isolation, the school effectively uses subject specialists from outside the school to verify purposefully selected samples of student work. This helps to ensure that assessment judgements are consistent with the standard. The school is pro-active in suggesting standards for external moderation to provide feedback and confirm the robustness of their internal moderation.

The monitoring of student progress is a strength of the school. The Principal's Nominee has developed an effective tracking system that is shared digitally with all staff. Teachers use this information to help inform their course design, so that students can meet their assessment goals and to identify students who may be at risk of not achieving them.

The school effectively informs staff and students about NCEA through a range of methods. Those interviewed for this review demonstrated a good understanding of school policy and procedures and the requirements to gain a qualification.

### Areas for improvement

Documenting and monitoring action plans in response to external moderation outcomes will strengthen the school's quality assurance process. Outcomes are currently discussed between the Principal's Nominee and teacher. Documenting these and monitoring action plans will ensure that they are completed and then evaluated for their effectiveness.

The staff handbook requires updating. The procedures for the justification process for derived grades and the investigation and appeal process for breaches of the rules

of assessment, do not reflect current practice. To maintain the currency of its practice the school should review and update its documentation regularly.

### **Agreed action**

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

- document and monitor action plans in response to external moderation outcomes
- update school documentation to reflect its current practice and ensure regular review of documentation.

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26 October 2018

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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 26 August 2015 Managing National Assessment Report

There were no action items from the 2015 report.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** External moderation outcomes are discussed between the Principal's Nominee and the subject teacher with action plans created where appropriate. However, action plans are not formally documented. Documenting these would allow the Principal's Nominee to monitor that action plans have been completed and, with the subject teacher, evaluate the effectiveness of any changes when the standard is next offered.

To date, the school has maintained a good agreement rate between assessor and moderator judgements, reflecting a robust internal moderation process.

### 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)*

Collingwood Area School is using its self-review processes to identify areas that will improve the assessment outcomes of its students. Improving the literacy levels and critical thinking ability of their students has been identified as a current school goal. This also links to the long-term goal with their community of learning, Kāhui Ako ki Mohua, to increase the number of NCEA course endorsements. The school is working on improving the writing and thinking skills of students to achieve this.

The school links three processes together to review their systems and effect change. These are:

- an annual department review by the subject teacher to review assessment processes and outcomes
- a once a term meeting between the Principal's Nominee and the subject teacher to:
  - address issues identified in the department annual review and create plans for improvement
  - provide professional learning and development using NZQA updates, key dates and mythbusters to maintain currency of practice
  - discuss responses to external moderation outcomes
- weekly Senior Syndicate meetings where NZQA assessment processes are discussed.

The school should consider further developing the annual department reviews. At present, each review is conducted by the subject teacher and then discussed with

the Principal's Nominee. However, these reviews could be expanded to become a peer-review. A school-wide approach that involves the whole Senior Syndicate will strengthen the school's ability to identify any assessment issues and review the progress towards school-wide goals.

To address writing and thinking skills, 'Working walls' have been introduced into all senior subjects to assist student understanding of the success criteria for standards-based assessments and help them to achieve higher results. This is discussed further in the assessment section of this report. The review of course outlines by the Senior Syndicate resulted in the school adopting a standardised template for all courses, so that students can readily identify key information for all their courses.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice. Senior management undertakes to:

- document and monitor action plans in response to external moderation outcomes.

### **For consideration**

To extend good practice in external review and self-review of assessment, the school is encouraged to consider:

- expanding the annual department reviews to become a school-wide review process.

## 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 2018 5.5)*

### **Collingwood Area School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- using formative assessments, student feedback and feedforward to help determine their readiness for assessment
- making portfolio and research-based assessments more manageable using milestone checks and templates
- using local contexts to adapt assessments and engage student interests
- ensuring that staff are well informed about students with approved special assessment conditions, that appropriate assistance is readily available when required, and reviewing if the assistance is effective.

### **Collingwood Area School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- complying with the requirements of the Privacy Act, 1993 when handling students' assessment information
- using a range of strategies to ensure that student work is authentic
- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on late and missed work, extensions, resubmissions, and further assessment opportunities
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have not submitted work
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence for derived and emergency grades.

**Student-centred assessment practice** Student needs are well catered for through well designed academic and vocational courses. The school endeavours to design assessment programmes to meet individual needs based on student interests and strengths. Smaller class sizes allow them to do this. Where the school cannot provide a course the use of external providers allows it to extend the programmes on offer. By placing the needs of students at the centre of their assessment programmes, the school has reduced barriers to assessment opportunities for them.

**“Working Walls” help to improve assessment outcomes** Better understanding of success criteria for assessments has improved student achievement outcomes. Students learn to rewrite the achievement criteria in their own words with examples, which are then displayed on a “Working Wall”. Working Walls also link to the school's literacy focus and endorsement goal, as students learn the vocabulary descriptors required to achieve at Merit and Excellence level for each standard.

They are also used in teacher inquiries. For example, one teacher is investigating their use to improve the outcomes for dyslexic students.

Students who were interviewed attested that the Working Walls helped to improve their understanding of achievement standard assessment outcomes.



**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 2018 6.4b)*

### **Collingwood Area School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- documenting the internal moderation process by using a standard *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- requiring teachers to ensure internal moderation is completed and documented for all standards that are assessed, prior to reporting results to NZQA
- the Principal's Nominee monitoring that all standards have been subject to the internal moderation process before reporting results.

### **Collingwood Area 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
- encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan.

**External verification helps to ensure consistent assessor judgements** The school's high use of external verifiers provides robustness to its internal moderation process. Many results must be verified externally as the small size of the school means they lack suitable subject specialists within the school. Teachers have established good networks with schools within the region to ensure that assessments can be quality assured. External verification provides senior leadership with assurance that the results reported to NZQA are valid. An historically high agreement rate between assessors and external moderators attests to the robustness of their process.

### **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)*

### Collingwood Area School 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
  - using school evidence to support applications for special assessment conditions
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - reconciling results from external providers with which it holds current Memoranda of Understanding, to ensure results are reported with the correct provider codes
  - ensuring all students attest that their entries and results have been entered correctly and actively encouraging them to monitor their progress using 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
  - ensuring a low number of late entries for external examinations.

**Student progress effectively monitored** The process for monitoring student progress is a strength of the school. The Principal's Nominee uses Google Sheets to track student assessment results. Progress is monitored towards gaining an NCEA qualification including literacy, numeracy, University Entrance and endorsements. The process also identifies students who are at risk of not gaining a qualification. The data is shared digitally with the senior syndicate, so that all teachers know how each student is progressing. Student progress is discussed at the syndicate meetings so that action plans are developed where appropriate and ensure student needs are being met.

### 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))*

### **Collingwood Area School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive outlines for all course they undertake
- communicating consistent NCEA information, assessment policy and procedures through:
  - student handbooks
  - the school website
- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year via emails and staff meetings
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications
- an induction programme to support new teachers to the school understand school assessment policy and procedures.

### **Collingwood Area School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- holding student assemblies to inform them of school assessment policies and procedures
- having a standardised template for course outlines across subject areas which is reviewed and updated annually, ensuring consistent assessment information
- pro-actively informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- providing an information evening to parents and Year 10 students on NZQA and school assessment-related processes before they commence a full NCEA programme.

**Documentation requires updating** School documentation does not reflect current assessment practice. Some aspects of the staff handbook are out of date and needs to be updated. Assessment policy and procedures in the staff handbook that need updating are:

- the justification process for derived grades, and
- the investigation and appeal process for breaches of the rules of assessment.

The justification process should give the school confidence that the assessment tool used was fit for purpose and assure NZQA that the reported grade is based on pre-existing, valid, standard-specific evidence which meets the requirements of the standard.

The investigation and appeal process should be transparent and follow the principles of natural justice. It must allow the candidate to respond to the alleged breach and it

needs to be clear that a person not involved in the investigation should make the final decision for an appeal.

### **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 its current practice and ensure regular review of documentation.