

Managing National Assessment Report

Mairehau High School

June 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Mairehau High 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 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
- *Senior Assessment Guidelines for Students 2019, Mairehau High School*
- *Senior Assessment Guidelines for Staff 2019, Mairehau High School*
- *Assessment Policy, Mairehau High School*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the:

- Principal's Nominee
- Learning Team Leaders for:
 - Arts and Music
 - Home Economics
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Education and Health
 - Science
 - Social Science.
- 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

Mairehau High School

27 June 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

'The Mairehau Way' values of CARE: challenge, achievement, responsibility and empathy, promote student learning and well-being through a shared culture. An important component contributing to meeting student need and supporting achievement is the development of positive relationships across the school community, where students are well known to their teachers.

Self-review is embedded practice and occurs at all levels of the school. This ongoing inquiry coupled with a commitment to improving outcomes for students are particular strengths of the school. Data analysis, including student voice, informs self-review, allowing teachers to reflect on course and programme design. Effective leadership and a shared culture of meeting student needs has built staff capacity and school-wide collaborative ownership of effective NCEA assessment practice.

Robust internal moderation is embedded practice. An annual audit of learning areas confirms that documentation reflects actual practice and ensures that only credible results are reported to NZQA. Senior leadership ensure that Learning Team Leaders address any issues identified in external moderation.

Data analysis and tracking processes are comprehensive and effective, with academic mentoring and early interventions supporting the improvement of student achievement outcomes. Individual student progress is closely monitored. Literacy and numeracy are actively targeted to support the attainment of qualifications. The management of assessment data ensures results reported to NZQA are complete, timely and accurate.

Effective leadership of assessment practice is evident. Working collaboratively with the senior leadership team and staff, the experienced Principal's Nominee leads quality assurance improvements and resolves issues to ensure consistency for teachers and students. Staff acknowledged their professional respect for the Principal's Nominee and her approachability and support.

School documentation of NCEA practices and national qualifications is reviewed and updated annually and provide clear direction for expected practice. Sharing best assessment practice within and across learning areas is used to further professional

learning, promoting school-wide consistency. The students interviewed for the review considered teachers positively support them to achieve.

Areas for improvement

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

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5 August 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 June 2015 Managing National Assessment Report The two agreed items from the previous Managing National Assessment review have been actioned. The student management system is used to randomly select work for external moderation, and documentation has been updated to reflect current assessment practice.

Response to external moderation outcomes Historically the school has had very high agreement rates between teachers and NZQA moderators. External moderation results reflect the effectiveness of the school's internal moderation quality assurance practices.

Response where an issue is identified through external moderation outcomes is comprehensive with support initiated, as needed. The Principal's Nominee informs the relevant Learning Team Leader of the issue and an action plan is developed. Resulting changes are evaluated for their completion and effectiveness by senior leaders, through the school's Quality Assurance document and review meeting with Learning Team Leaders.

Response to process audits The *Managing of Special Assessment Conditions* review undertaken by NZQA in late 2018 found that the school has effective systems to appropriately identify eligible students, gather evidence, make applications on students' behalf, and manage entitlements for internal and external assessment. Special assessment conditions provision is discussed further in the assessment practice section of this report.

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)

A strong and effective culture of self-review is integral to ongoing teaching and assessment programmes and to support improved student achievement outcomes. Self-review is informed by the analysis of students' achievement results and student voice. Effective review occurs at all levels of the school and is evident in teacher reflection, learning area reporting and inquiries initiated by senior leadership. Review information is collected and analysed by senior leaders to ensure assessment programmes continue to meet student changing needs.

Developments resulting from self-review include:

- changing course design by listening to student voice about assessment experiences through discussions between students, subject teachers and mentors

- strengthening literacy and numeracy strategies through targeted support and interventions to assist students to meet qualification requirements
- using digital tools to:
 - engage students in learning and assessment opportunities
 - increase digital submissions of external moderation material reflecting the increase in student achievement evidence captured digitally
 - preparing students for future assessment developments through involvement in digital examinations
- strengthening school processes for special assessment provision
- supporting teachers to undertake reflective analysis of achievement as part of teacher as inquiry projects, to enhance their teaching and learning practice
- Learning Team Leaders completing a Quality Assurance document to ensure that required procedures are being followed according to school and NZQA requirements. This is also a self-review tool to support assurance processes of assessment procedures
- improving communication of NCEA progress, practices and processes to students, whānau and teachers using a range of media.

Effective self-review, professional collaboration and the leadership underpinning it illustrate the school's capacity to respond to student need and to evaluate practices accordingly. The school values the integrity of its assurance processes to confirm the credibility and quality of assessment, and adherence to NZQA requirements. Senior leaders can be confident that any concerns relating to assessment practices will be identified and addressed as a result of these thorough processes. These developments highlight the school's strategic focus to enhance opportunities for student success.

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)

Mairehau High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- increasing the number of options available to students by engaging with external providers to offer vocational and trade-based courses
- providing differentiated learning and assessment opportunities within the same class and across classes in the same subject, including offering optional standards
- providing learning and assessment opportunities to support the attainment of qualifications at the end of the year
- designing courses with learning contexts that are genuine and authentic, engage student interests, and reflect students' cultural backgrounds
- using formative assessments, milestone checks, student feedback and feedforward to assist students to present their best evidence of achievement
- broadening the ways evidence of student achievement is collected, including via portfolios, oral presentations and digital tools, to reflect student strengths
- extending the practice of collecting evidence to assess more than one standard, including across courses
- assessing students when they are ready through flexible timeframes, as appropriate
- promoting equity of achievement outcomes for Māori and Pacific students through:
 - encouraging students to access Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. Māori students have a similar rate of participation and success in Level 3 STEM subjects as 'Other Students'
 - coaching and mentoring programmes with external providers
 - targeting actions in annual departmental and school plans

underpinned by strong staff-student relationships, high expectations and engagement with whānau.

Mairehau High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring consistent school-wide assessment practice on missed and late work, extensions, appeals, resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- using a range of strategies to assist students to present authentic work , including student sign-off of an authenticity statement on assessment cover sheets
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have submitted no work
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence for derived grades

- motivating students by celebrating academic achievement through merit cards, letters sent to whanau, and certificates and awards at assembly
- effectively managing NZQA external examinations and reviewing practice to identify improvements
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993* in the issuing of student results and using student work as exemplars.

Individualised support fosters student achievement Deans and subject teachers provide ongoing support through regular conversations tailored to the student's need. They discuss progress towards personal goals and completing qualifications, preparedness for upcoming assessment and how to manage assessment workloads.

'At risk' students and those with additional learning needs are catered for through individualised learning and assessment opportunities.

The development of literacy and numeracy skills are targeted, including for Year 9 and 10 students to assist their readiness for NCEA assessment. Students are assisted to gain the requirements of NCEA and University Entrance through specifically designed courses and interventions, such as the resourcing of specialist support. Strategies to support literacy development are a focus of staff professional learning.

Parents are involved in decisions about changes to students' assessment plans, which further helps them to understand the NCEA assessment model.

Strengthened special assessment provision As part of its self-review process, the school identified barriers to students accessing special assessment conditions. As a consequence, since the last Managing National Assessment review an extensive school-wide approach has been implemented to identify and assess students to support applications for entitlement to special assessment conditions.

The effectiveness of the school's approach is evident in the high proportion of students using entitlements in comparison to similar schools. Financial barriers are removed by using school-based evidence to support most applications. Staff are well informed of student entitlements and appropriate assistance is provided for internal assessment. The next planned step is for students to sign off on any entitlement decisions and to use feedback from trialling special assessment conditions as evidence for an application, as appropriate.

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)

Mairehau High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring assessment tasks reflect the standard by having amended or new tasks critiqued prior to use
- using clarification documents, bench mark exemplars, documented discussions on grade judgements and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment decisions
- using marking processes and appropriate subject specialists from within or outside of the school to verify assessor grade judgements
- documenting internal moderation processes for each standard before results are reported to NZQA.

Mairehau High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- storing samples of student work ensuring they are available to be submitted for external moderation
- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- encouraging teachers to recommend standards to be included for external moderation
- actively encouraging digital submission of student work
- responding effectively to moderators' feedback to inform changes to assessment tasks and grade decisions.

Effective internal moderation processes Internal moderation practices are effectively quality assured. The Senior Leadership Team audits the moderation processes of each learning area, including reconciling actual samples of student work with documentation and checking storage arrangements. A checklist records the outcomes of the spot-checked sample of standards. Where issues are identified, they are resolved. The audit has strengthened the consistency of moderation processes across all learning areas.

The audit is complemented by senior leadership review meetings of learning area processes. Senior leadership are confident that internal moderation procedures carried out in all learning areas departments are complete and robust, and results reported are credible.

Strategic selection of student work for internal moderation Teachers interviewed choose to verify grades for more samples of student work than required by NZQA. Teachers select a wider sample to provide confidence in their grade verification decisions, replacement benchmark exemplars and informs review of the tasks and the standards offered.

The school should consider encouraging staff to undertake sufficient verification through the strategic selection of student work at grade boundaries. Strategic

selection has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

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)

Mairehau High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- regularly reporting achievement outcomes to whānau and holding parent evenings to discuss student progress towards assessment goals and qualification attainment.

Mairehau High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- supporting students and whānau to use the student management system portal to monitor NCEA progress
- effective administering by the Data Manager through:
 - timely reporting of results to NZQA that have been checked for accuracy
 - using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data issues
- ensuring entries submitted to NZQA have a reported result or are withdrawn as appropriate
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of external providers with which the school holds a current Memoranda of Understanding.

Effective use of data to inform change Data analysis and use is a strength of the school, informing effective practice and self-review for teachers, Learning Team Leaders, senior leadership and the Board of Trustees. Data is used to inform and reflect on student engagement and achievement, strategic goals and the effectiveness of changes made.

Learning Team Leaders develop action plans to address student achievement priorities. These leaders meet regularly with the Principal and a designated senior leader to review prior year's outcomes, effectiveness of action plans and progress towards current achievement goals. The discussion of achievement information also evaluates the effectiveness of learning and assessment programmes, including using student voice to inform course design, teaching strategies and professional learning. Student achievement progress underpinned by evidence-based review of data is an integral discussion at every Board of Trustees meeting.

Robust monitoring and academic mentoring to support achievement outcomes

The school has a very effective monitoring and tracking systems for student achievement. The Academic Dean Data regularly provides real time, relevant information including credit summaries from the student management system to teachers, Deans and senior leaders. This approach allows class profiling to develop the most appropriate learning and assessment programme. Students at risk of not achieving their chosen assessment pathway or qualification goals are identified early and timely responses are offered when needed. The school involves parents in this process, which further helps them support their child's progress and to understand the NCEA assessment model.

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))

Mairehau High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive course outlines for all subjects they undertake.

Mairehau High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- supporting professional learning opportunities, including collaborating with external subject specialist and attendance at NZQA Best Practice Workshops, when available
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction programme on the school's assessment and moderation processes
- encouraging teachers to use their Education Sector Logon.

Clear communication of assessment practice Strong leadership and effective sharing of best practice at all levels of the school's operation has promoted collective ownership and responsibility for credible and consistent assessment practice. Pro-active use of digital, face-to-face, and written communication opportunities ensure assessment information is accessible to all stakeholders and understood.

Communication is annually reviewed and is digitalised to ensure documentation is current. The staff and student handbooks are user-friendly, concise, plain English documents, covering key information. Clear direction of best practice, such as authenticity strategies and moderation processes in the staff handbook, supports consistent application of assessment policies and NZQA requirements.

The students interviewed clearly articulated the school assessment practices and what is needed to gain a qualification. They indicated ready access to NCEA information via the Principal's Nominee, teachers and documentation. They considered the staff knew them as individuals and acknowledged the support given to assist them to demonstrate their best achievement.

Further support student access to functions provided through NZQA Learner Login The percentage of students registered on their Learner Login has dropped in 2018 to 60 percent because they are monitoring their progress through the student management system portal. The school should consider how they can further support students to register their NZQA Learner Login and access the functions it provides. When students register, they can apply for reconsiderations and/or reviews for external assessments, order certificates and their New Zealand Record of Achievement or check their personal details and the reporting of results to NZQA.

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:

- how they can further support students to register their NZQA Learner Login.