

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

**Avonside Girls' High  
School**

**September 2023**

# FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

## Avonside Girls' High School

14 September 2023

### Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is effectively meeting the requirements of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022.

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.

As a school with effective assessment systems and practices for national qualifications, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three to five years.

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2021.

### Actions

#### Agreed actions

The school agreed that these two actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. They are:

Action	Timeframe
<b>External and internal review</b>	
In subject areas with a historic pattern of external moderation outcomes inconsistent with the standard, ensure actions resolve the identified issue	To support the 2024 round of external moderation, and ongoing.
<b>Credible assessment practice to meet student needs</b>	
Ensure an entry is withdrawn if a student does not have an adequate assessment opportunity.	To meet the end-of-year reporting deadlines

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22 November 2023

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## External and internal review

### External review

*Evidence of external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)*

#### **Action Items from 27 September 2017 Managing National Assessment Report**

For the selection of samples of student work for internal moderation teachers now strategically and purposefully verify samples of student work at grade boundaries, or those requiring review. As recommended in the last review, the school now uses a common template for senior course statements, to provide consistent course assessment information to students and their whānau.

**External moderation response to outcomes and processes** The school has clear processes led by the Principal's Nominee for addressing issues raised in moderation reports, supporting the credibility of results reported to NZQA.

The school's moderation history has shown that overall assessor judgements mostly align with the standard and the follow-up responses effectively resolve the majority of identified issues with a standard or in a subject area.

Where a report has inconsistent external moderation outcomes, the Head of Learning Area works with the teacher responsible for the standard to develop actions to address the issue. The Principal's Nominee and the Senior Leadership Team Line Manager discuss the planned actions with the Head of Learning Area, check on the completion of actions, and evaluate the impact of changes for expected improvement.

Follow-up actions need to be strengthened in a small number of subjects with an historical pattern of low rates of consistency with the standard to ensure the identified issues are effectively addressed. The Principal's Nominee and Line Manager are aware of where further support is required. They will continue to work alongside the Head of Learning to review the circumstances and alter strategies accordingly.

Staff see engaging in external moderation as a positive experience and a valuable opportunity to receive feedback and guidance, enabling them to refine their assessment judgments and materials as needed. Staff are also to be encouraged to use the function in the external moderation application to query external moderation reports where they need further clarification.

### Internal review

*Evidence of 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)*

Avonside Girls' High School's strong culture of self-review focuses on improvements that effectively meet the needs of students through engagement in personalised pathways and monitoring and support of student progress. This clear vision is grounded in a collaborative culture of high expectations. A recent focus to improve access to assessment-related data has enabled school-wide self-review to be driven by evidence. Data is available at all levels of the school's organisation, informing course design and adaptations and enabling comprehensive monitoring of student achievement. Staff, students, and whānau are actively involved through consultation

including surveys in shaping the whole school changes driven by the senior leadership team. Senior leadership indicated that staff are committed to the school's strategic goals and that feedback from the community is positive.

Internal review is inter-connected and occurs across all levels of the school. Individual teachers' reflection feeds into Heads of Learning review of teaching and learning programmes, assessment practices, and analysis of student results, including progress against school goals. The school's leadership strategically evaluates data to review student attainment, measure progress on school-wide goals, and the effectiveness of changes made. These evaluations are annually reported to the Senior Leader- Assessment, who provides a summary for the School Board, to inform strategic changes.

Senior Leader Line Managers, with the Principal's Nominee support Heads of Learning Areas to reflect on their assessment practices and continue to learn professionally, leading to the implementation of necessary improvements. Heads of Learning share the responsibility of assessment processes with teachers, helping them to build their capability for ongoing improvement. Changes to teaching and assessment practice including broader evidence-gathering methods and assessing students when ready, where manageable, have been retained from the Covid-19 period. These approaches have enabled the school to move beyond mere regulation and embrace innovation, gaining a deeper understanding of credible assessment and effective quality assurance.

The Principal's Nominee reviews NCEA-related processes. He is well-connected with his Senior Leadership Line Manager. He facilitates robust discussion of assessment practice and quality assurance systems and provides clear guidance, to groups and individual teachers and senior students. The Principal's Nominee's effective leadership of assessment processes provides school-wide consistency and ownership of NCEA practice.

**Programme pathway planning enhanced to meet student need** Avonside Girls' High School is committed to providing flexible and meaningful learning and assessment pathways for each student. The school has focused strategically on enhancing student access to learning and assessment pathways, thereby opening avenues to future opportunities. To this end, streaming has been removed in the junior school and was discontinued in the senior school in 2023. Differentiated learning within a class supports this change. Similarly, pre-requisite entry criteria have been removed from senior courses. Course selection is based on student choice with greater support provided to students and their whānau in selecting future pathways.

The removal of Year 11 and many Year 12 unit standard courses offered by the school was in response to concerns raised by senior leadership. These courses were not always linked to a coherent pathway of learning and assessment and made transition to a more academically-focused or University Entrance Year 13 course, where sought, difficult. The uptake for Secondary Tertiary Pathways (STP) courses has increased, allowing predominately Year 12 and 13 students an opportunity to explore career options through work-based learning and make informed decisions about their future schooling, work or study. Student engagement and progress in STP courses is closely monitored and supported, including through on-site visits.

The school will trial timetable adaptations to further support students pursuing dual pathways and achieving their educational goals. A next step is to design the timetable to block STP courses on a given day to minimise the impact on missed

school-based study for those students who undertake off-site learning. Year 13 students not involved in work-based learning will remain on-site for focussed timetable periods, including portfolio time, small group teaching and assessment support. Double periods in the upper senior school are also being reviewed for some subjects, to allow for shorter but more regular learning sessions.

The school is also targeting support for achievement in literacy and numeracy, including specialised literacy groups in 2023. Additional time will be timetabled from next year to accelerate skills and competencies to address the lower curriculum levels of students entering the school relative to previous levels. The support of the Literacy and Numeracy Co-ordinators is integral to improvements and identifying student readiness to engage in the co-requisite standards.

**Proactive response to missed learning and assessment** The school's 2022 data interrogation identified students who were at risk of not gaining a qualification or their achievement goals because of disruption to learning and assessment opportunities. To ensure students could progress to their intended next steps, the school offered a four-week teaching and assessment programme during the 2022 external examination period. All learning areas were involved, offering opportunities in literacy and numeracy, and completion of missed assessment and further assessment opportunities in accordance with NZQA rules. Many students engaged with the programme. The school will provide a similar though reduced support this year.

Underpinned by credit prediction and thorough academic tracking, a wide range of strategies are implemented as the year progresses to address concerns about student attainment. This includes regularly providing data to the Senior Leadership Team and Ako teachers so they can track priority groups and monitor individual student progress to enable support where needed.

The school is ensuring all Year 13 students who intend to be on a University Entrance pathway have the necessary components in their timetabled courses. As part of this planning, the focus is to target University Entrance literacy at Year 12 rather than Year 13 as had previously been the case.

The school has also proactively encouraged students to attend the school practice examinations, to ensure pre-existing quality assured evidence is available should a derived grade be needed.

Students interviewed acknowledged the support of their teacher to help them set goals, keep track of their progress and highlighting the next steps in their learning, alongside sharing the responsibility to progress and achieve with them.

**Planned engagement in digital external assessment** The school was an early adopter of external digital assessment. The number of students participating has steadily increased, driven by their involvement in digital practice, digital end-of-year examinations, and engagement in the literacy and numeracy co-requisites over the past two years. In 2022 one third of examination results were digital. This approach allows students to be assessed in a familiar way using digital tools they use throughout the year. The school has confidently positioned itself to deliver assessment in the digital first age of the NCEA Change Programme.

**Enhanced cultural responsiveness** Avonside Girls' High School is committed to strengthening Māori and Pacific students' access to more equitable achievement and future opportunities. The school has developed a range of different strategies to realise this goal. Whānau voice drives changes, including that gathered through hui and surveys. Students speak to staff groups to heightened awareness of their school

experiences and commitments outside of school. Māori and Pacific Engagement Teams use this qualitative information alongside quantitative data to lead school-wide culturally responsive practices, including providing professional learning and resources for Ako and classroom teachers. Teachers are more flexible with assessment deadlines, where feasible, when students have cultural responsibilities and whānau obligations. Learning areas also use evidence gathered from cultural activities such as kapa haka and Polyfest to assess standards.

Senior leaders and teachers' reflective practice focuses on continual improvement to enhance student engagement and achievement. Senior leaders can be confident that when assessment issues are identified, the school has the necessary people and processes in place to resolve these.

## **Credible assessment practice to meet student needs**

*Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023)*

**Special assessment provision is well supported** Avonside Girls' High School has an extensive school-wide approach to identify and assess students, supporting their applications for entitlement to special assessment conditions. This effectively removes barriers to fair assessment and achievement.

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 many applications. Staff are well informed of student entitlements and appropriate assistance is provided for internal assessment, and external exams. The school's responsive approach means provision of these entitlements requires innovative resourcing solutions.

### **Ensure internal entries reflect a student's intended assessment programme**

To ensure student assessment records are accurate, the school should report a result for all internal assessment entries by 1 December. Where there is no result because there has not been an adequate assessment opportunity, the entry should be withdrawn. An inaccurate view of possible student achievement may be provided if tracking of progress includes those entries for which no results are ultimately reported.

A number of entries were reported without a result over recent years across several subjects. The school identified that internal entries without a result were due to possible further assessment opportunities being offered over the examination period. The Principal's Nominee will use the *Counts by Subject or Course Report* on the NZQA website to identify and resolve entries without results before the 1 December deadline. This will ensure that student assessment records are accurate.

## **Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results**

*Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023)*

The school effectively quality assures assessment materials and assessor grade decisions. The Principal's Nominee thoroughly reviews the moderation processes of

each learning area, including reconciling internal moderation records with actual practice. His checks include the completion of each moderation step on the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* and the quality of verifier judgement statements. The appropriate storage of student work ensures it is available if required for external moderation. For consistency of practice, the school is streamlining the storage of assessment materials in an online digital storage system. Line Managers and the Principal's Nominee work collaboratively with learning areas, focusing on supporting teachers to confidently meet school internal moderation expectations.

Annual monitoring by the Principal's Nominee provides a transparent account of the comprehensiveness of moderation processes. Where identified, issues are resolved, thereby ensuring school-wide consistency. Senior leadership can be confident that internal moderation procedures carried out in all learning areas are complete and rigorous, and results reported are credible.

## **Appendix 1: Effective Practice**

### **Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students**

**Avonside Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its students by:**

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are appropriate focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations
- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers and extending the school's Consent to Assess if required
- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so students can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement
- assessing students when they are ready
- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet student needs
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support
- providing opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- engaging in Review of Achievement Standards pilots to prepare for future assessment
- identifying and providing targeted support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals
- implementing strategies to provide open opportunities to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

**Avonside Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- managing missed or late assessment
- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules
- monitoring the authenticity of student work using a range of strategies
- 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 is collected for derived and unexpected event grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.



## **Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality**

**Avonside Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment judgements
- using subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a strategic selection of a sufficient sample of student work
- using grade verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes
- monitoring and documenting completed internal moderation processes to ensure only quality assured results are reported to NZQA.

**Avonside Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- selecting sufficient samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- monitoring and documenting actions taken to address external moderation feedback
- using external moderation outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation processes.

## **Effective management and use of assessment-related data**

**Avonside Girls' High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- monitoring and tracking student progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure these allow students to meet their assessment goals, and inform changes to courses and standards offered
- gathering student voice to evaluate courses and assessment workloads to inform changes to programmes, contexts, and standards
- reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

**Avonside Girls' High School reports accurate achievement data by:**

- ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date data
- checking Key Indicators and NZQA reports to identify and resolve any errors

- conducting student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year
- ensuring low levels of late external entries
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding
- seeking NZQA approval through a subcontracting agreement to engage with a non-consented provider to deliver specific standards.

## **Effective communication to inform staff, and students and their families / whānau about assessment**

### **Avonside Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- keeping assessment-related communications current and accurate, and reviewing communications to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- ensuring students receive outlines for courses they undertake
- supporting students to monitor their achievement
- discussing assessment policy and procedure with staff, and providing updates of NCEA information throughout the year
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing opportunities for parents to discuss their children's NCEA goals, progress, and achievement
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction programme to understand school and NZQA assessment processes
- celebrating students' success, such as the holding of parent gatherings.

### **Avonside Girls' High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- communicating assessment information, such as holding NCEA information evenings for parents, whānau hui, and NCEA assemblies for students
- informing students about suitable learning pathways
- supporting students to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

## Appendix 2: Overview

### What this report is about

**This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Avonside Girls' 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 / whānau.

### 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 effectively meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022* (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 *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023*.

### What are possible outcomes

**Outcomes may include NZQA:**

- identifying the effectiveness of the school's review processes, assessment practice and quality assurance
- 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's consideration 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 five 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
- *various School Board policies*
- *Avonside Girls' High School 2023, New Zealand Qualifications Framework, Taumata Mataurangi a-Motu Kua Taea Assessment, Procedures Handbook for Staff NCEA Levels 1, 2, 3 and Scholarship 2023 (Staff Handbook)*
- *Avonside Girls' High School, Gaining Qualifications, A guide to assessment practices in the senior school, Years 11, 12 and 13 2023 (Student Handbook).*

### The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal
- Heads of Learning Area for:
  - Art
  - English (Acting)
  - Mathematics (Acting)
  - Physical Education and Health
  - Science
  - Social Sciences
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy 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.