

Managing National Assessment Report

Otago Girls' High School

September 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Otago 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.

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
- *Otago Girls' High School, Assessment for NCEA, Guidelines for Teachers 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *Otago Girls' High School, NCEA Assessment Information Booklet for Students 2019* (Student Handbook)
- Powerpoint presentations to students on *Understanding NCEA, University Entrance Literacy and Otago Girls' High School Senior Parallel Exams Instructions*.
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13
- *Curriculum and Assessment Policy*.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Assistant Principal (Curriculum and Assessment)
- Heads of Department for:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Social Sciences
- Co-Heads of Department for:
 - Languages
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Deputy Principal, Principal's Nominee, Assistant Principal (Curriculum and Assessment) and Assistant Principal (Data Management) 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

Otago Girls' High School

11 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 issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within four years.

What the school is doing well

Otago Girls' High School has an emphasis on student success through engaging them in future focused learning whilst considering their well-being. This aim is reflected in their effective self-review of their NZQA assessment practices and procedures. Review processes are led by the Senior Leadership Team, with input from all stakeholders, ensuring shared ownership of the process and outcomes. Self-review has led to improvements in assessment practice to better meet the needs of students. These include a renewed focus on mentoring, changes to processes to help with assessing students when they are ready and greater flexibility with subject choices.

The school ensures students can maximise their achievement by offering a range of opportunities and support to meet their needs. Opportunities are extended by sharing classes with a local school and using other external providers to offer courses and standards that the school would otherwise be unable to provide. Identified students receive approved special assessment conditions and are well supported. Practices are sound and consistently applied.

Robust internal and external moderation processes, including monitoring and follow up of any necessary actions, are embedded across the school ensuring that only credible results are reported to NZQA. Responses to external moderation do not just focus on the identified issue, but also on identifying if any underlying practice needs to be reviewed to minimise the chances of a similar issue being repeated. This effective practice is reflected in the high level of consistency between teacher and NZQA external moderator judgements.

Data management and use effectively supports student achievement outcomes. Assessment data is managed to ensure results reported to NZQA are accurate and timely. Achievement data is analysed to review department practice and course design, set strategic direction and evaluate the effectiveness of changes. The school has a strong mentoring programme with staff and students working together to monitor progress towards completing qualifications. Mentoring conversations and analysis of data contribute to identifying and intervening with students at risk of not reaching their achievement goals.

The school has a range of clear and effective targeted communications in place to ensure all staff, students and families have a common understanding of the NCEA qualification and the school's assessment policy and procedures. The effectiveness

of the school's communications is regularly reviewed, and the delivery of further information is targeted to groups and individuals who need it.

Areas for improvement

Next steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

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11 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 21 October 2015 Managing National Assessment report

There were no action items from the previous Managing National Assessment report.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has effective processes to respond to external moderation. These ensure senior management are aware of issues and also involved in the review of outcomes where required. Feedback from external moderation shows there is a high level of consistency between assessor and moderator judgements overall. The school actively manages any issues to resolve them. They look beyond the specific issue raised, to check if underlying practices need to change to better support staff to make accurate assessment judgements.

Heads of Department and/or Teachers in Charge of a Subject read the reports and are encouraged to seek clarifications and/or appeal a report if appropriate. They complete a response to external moderation for all standards giving them an opportunity to affirm their good practice or address issues raised. The Principal's Nominee discusses the responses with the Heads of Department, and they develop any required actions. Discussion is based around understanding the situation and will look at grade movements, the task and student work to confirm what is behind the issue. The completion of any agreed actions is checked by the Principal's Nominee. Where necessary the Principal will be involved in resolutions.

The school has the same process for responding to external moderation conducted by Industry Training Organisations.

Response to data issues 2017 and 2018 results data showed one subject as an outlier at Level 3, as there was a difference between the school's internal and external results in the subject area and the national pattern for schools of a similar decile band. The school readily identified possible reasons behind this and looked at other evidence to confirm there were no assessment quality issues.

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)

Otago Girls' High School has a strong focus on self-review. The school renewed its vision in 2018 and has a desire to inspire, empower, challenge and dream. The strategic plan concentrates on student success and a future focus. This vision and plan drive self-review which is considered through the lenses of engagement and well-being.

Review is coordinated and led by the Senior Leadership Team with the Principal's Nominee focusing on assessment processes. Heads of Department meetings are used to discuss change along with whole staff sessions to present ideas and discuss

what changes would look like in subject areas and how they would impact their teaching practice. Student voice is included through online surveys and discussions. A Friday forum and a suggestions box have been introduced for all staff to bring up ideas. The impacts of changes are evaluated with the stakeholders concerned. This approach provides assurance to senior management that concerns and potential improvements relating to assessment practices are effectively identified and appropriately addressed.

A change in 2018 to vertical mentoring groups led by Heads of House working with a team of mentor/whānau teachers and assistants has been central to the renewed vision. The impact of this change was reviewed at the end of last year, and refinements made, and a further review is currently being undertaken. The section in this report on the use of assessment-related data to support achievement discusses this in more detail.

Another area of change to support success and well-being has been a focus on greater flexibility. Extensions to assessment deadlines still go through the Assistant Principal to maintain consistency, but the system aims to be more understanding of individuals circumstances. The school has aligned its timetable with Otago Boys' High School to create more flexibility in subject choices, introducing extra subjects and reducing clashes and the need for multi-level classes. A new course has been introduced, Year 12 Launch, where students work on a project they are passionate about and link assessment from several curriculum areas to their project.

Other assessment related initiatives the school has introduced to improve current practice and enhance student achievement include:

- staff working in professional learning groups carrying out enquiry projects on the use of checkpoints to help students manage workload, and curriculum innovations to lay the foundation for future changes
- reviewing communications so there is a sustainable plan in place with a clear and consistent message, that is not reliant on a single individual such as the Assistant Principal or Principal's Nominee
- a homework support club created and run by the academic prefect and students, comprising an online questions forum and a tutorial appointment system
- offering students the opportunity to complete external assessments digitally

Individual teachers gather student voice on their teaching and the course. This feedback, along with teachers' thoughts, are discussed at a department level to inform possible improvements. Heads of Department prepare annual review reports for the Principal and discuss these in a triennial cycle with the Board of Trustees. The school brings in outside experts to review each department in a triennial cycle to give a fresh viewpoint on department processes.

The school's self-review is a continual process with the impact of changes systematically reviewed. Future developments are already being planned and investigated. The school is considering the assessment of NCEA Level 1 and has started this review process by surveying the Year 12 and Year 13 students to gain their perspective. They wish to explore using the school management system to give 'live' reporting to parents and students so that feedback is more timely, and are planning to trial this with Year 10 students in 2020. Alongside developing more timely reporting, the school also wishes to make individual education plans more responsive and more accessible to all staff through the student management system. The

Principal's Nominee also plans to work with Heads of Department to better share effective practice. She feels they all have robust systems in place that provide good quality assurance, but some could streamline their practice.

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)

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

- discussing subject choices with students with the aim of keeping multiple pathways open to them
- extending assessment opportunities through using a range of external providers to deliver:
 - courses the school is unable to offer
 - assessment against standards related to career pathways
- where possible assessing students when they are ready so students can succeed with minimal resubmission or further assessment opportunities
- offering tutorials and support outside class time throughout the year, and extra tutorials in term 4 that are timetabled to minimise clashes for students
- accessing the Dunedin-wide tutorials and providing school-based sessions for students planning to undertake New Zealand Scholarship examinations
- ensuring that students potentially entitled to special assessment conditions are identified, support trialled, and that data is gathered to support school-based evidence applications
- clearly informing staff of students' special assessment conditions and readily providing appropriate assistance
- providing targeted support to refugee students to help develop their language skills to an appropriate level for them to succeed with NCEA assessments
- preparing students at Year 9 and 10 to succeed with NCEA, with a focus on a deeper understanding of topics rather than acceleration.

Otago Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring the authenticity of student work during the assessment and marking process
- managing missed and late assessment, breaches of the assessment rules and appeals
- providing valid resubmission and further assessment opportunities
- collecting credible evidence of student achievement for derived grade applications
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Māori and Pacific student engagement and success Achieving equitable outcomes for Māori and Pacific students has been a school focus. Strategies include:

- providing more opportunities for cultural engagement to promote inclusivity and confirm that cultural heritage is valued
- a focus on building the literacy skills of Pacific students

- career sessions in term 1 for all Māori and Pacific students to ensure they have clear pathways to support their long-term career goals
- accessing opportunities from local groups such as the Mercy Homework Centre and Otago Universities Mana Wahine day
- establishing a Māori and a Pacific Dean to support 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)

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

- ensuring staff understand the need for all new or modified assessment materials to be critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists, from within and outside the school, to verify a sample of student work focused on grade boundaries to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- retaining and updating work to be used as exemplars for students and benchmarking for assessor judgements
- documenting the quality assurance process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- following appropriate processes for moderating Industry Training Organisation administered standards.

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

- teachers suggesting standards for external moderation to gain feedback on standards they feel need targeting
- negotiating appropriate changes to the moderation plan
- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- encouraging staff to submit moderation digitally when the student work is produced and stored digitally to streamline the submission process and receive timely feedback.

Monitoring of internal moderation Heads of Department actively monitor the completion of all aspects of internal moderation and use a variety of methods to record the completion of the process for each standard. The Principal's Nominee visits each department annually to discuss moderation processes, check the evidence of it being completed for each standard and to share good practice. Internal moderation is also part of the departmental three-year cycle review carried out by an external reviewer.

Adding an end-of-year attestation by the Head of Department that internal moderation has been completed for each standard would further strengthen monitoring. This would emphasise the importance of their role in the monitoring process and give greater assurance to senior management that all reported results are credible.

Develop a policy for the storage of digital assessment material As more assessments are being completed digitally the school should consider developing a policy for the storage of digital material. This will enable the school to ensure materials are secure, can continue to be easily accessed, shared with outside verifiers, and be available for external moderation.

Departments have processes to store digital materials, but a school wide approach could affirm current robust practice and offer guidance to departments who are considering if their storage processes are effective.

Consider further discussion with staff on verification requirements for sufficiency to potentially reduce workload The school should consider providing staff with further opportunities to discuss sufficient grade verification by the strategic selection of student work.

Strategic selection has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality assurance of grade decisions. The sample size for verification 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.

Departments' current focus with strategic selection is on verifying grades on a large enough sample to ensure consistency of assessment judgements by teachers who are unfamiliar with a standard.

For consideration

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

- adding an end of year attestation by Heads of Department that internal moderation has been completed for each standard
- developing a policy for the storage of digital assessment material
- providing staff with further opportunities to discuss sufficient grade verification.

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)

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

- departments analysing results with a focus on next steps, which informs the modification of courses and teaching practice
- analysing results comparatively and longitudinally to guide strategic direction
- tracking the progress of Year 12 students towards gaining the literacy requirements for University Entrance
- recording the use of extensions and further assessment opportunities in a shared spreadsheet so staff can identify any patterns of concern and support students as required
- submitting all entries in the first data file to NZQA ensuring a student's full assessment programme can be considered when tracking progress
- effectively encouraging students to register and use their NZQA Learner Login, and their portal to the student management system, to monitor their progress towards gaining qualifications.

Otago Girls' High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis, and including submission dates in the staff calendar so they can ensure markbooks are up to date
- recording Not Achieved results or withdrawing student entries, as appropriate
- having student, teacher, mentor, Head of Department and Principal's Nominee checks and sign off processes at key times during the year
- closely managing late entries
- the Principal's Nominee storing copies of all memoranda of understanding with outside providers so she can ensure they are current and cover the results reported using their provider code
- using the *Key Indicator Checklist* and *Data File Submission* reports to identify and resolve data issues, and then submitting a corrected file.

Student progress is effectively tracked and mentoring is in place to improve achievement outcomes The school effectively uses data to track student progress, with mentoring focused on enhancing the student/school/home relationship to improve achievement outcomes.

Heads of House, along with Māori, Pacific and International Deans, have an overview of student achievement based on credits gained and conversations with students and staff. Mentors/whānau teachers and their assistants meet three times a week with their vertical whānau group to support students' progress towards their academic goals. At the start of the year whānau teachers meet with their students to confirm they are choosing courses they can succeed with and that they support their future desired pathways. Later in term one and in term three, along with families, they are part of a student-led conference which focuses on exploring aspirations and goals,

their assessment outcomes and progress towards qualifications. Throughout the year whānau teachers discuss progress with a focus on well-being and academic success.

A central record is kept of students who do not achieve in the first internal assessment in a subject each year. This provides an initial indicator to highlight that support may be required. There are three further points in the year to flag students who need extending or are at risk of not achieving a qualification. Heads of House initiate any necessary interventions and they are recorded in the student management system, so all staff are aware of a support plan. Interventions include encouraging attendance at tutorials, changes of course or a change in the standards assessed, and Head of House follow up with families.

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))

Otago Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive clear and consistent outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to students and their families using a range of methods
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with the school's expectations for assessment and moderation processes.

Otago Girls' High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- discussing NCEA related processes in Heads of Department and staff meetings
- using assemblies throughout the year to brief students about assessment policy and procedures, with messages reinforced by class and whānau teachers
- presenting NZQA and school assessment related processes in a biennial parent information evening, timed to keep attendance numbers high, and through timely reminders in newsletters
- running multiple targeted information sessions with recent immigrant families to cover topics such as how NCEA works and accessing the parent portal to the student management system.

Students show a good understanding of how NCEA works and school assessment procedures Students could clearly articulate how NCEA works. They understood school processes such as extensions to assessment submission dates, moderation, dealing with authenticity, derived grades and appeals, and felt their teachers applied them consistently.

Staff and student handbooks convey clear practical messages Handbooks are set out in an easy to follow format, cover most important areas and are written in language targeted at their audience. The staff handbook starts with information on best practice and reflective questions on course design to help ensure staff are best meeting student need. It ends with a one-page summary checklist to ensure staff at each level in the school know what is required from them to effectively manage assessment. The student handbook includes practical tips on topics such as ensuring work is authentic, how to manage the use of technology so that work for internal assessment is not lost, tracking their progress to qualifications, and examination success.

Consider adding information to the student handbook Adding information to the student handbook on derived grades, and course and certificate endorsement would ensure students have access to this key information.

These areas are covered in the NZQA leaflets the school distributes and in presentations to students. Including it in the student handbook would reinforce the messages and ensure all students have easy access to all significant NZQA related information in one document.

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:

- adding information to the student handbook on the derived grade process and course and certificate endorsement.