

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Southland Girls' High School**

**June 2017**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Southland 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 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, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report 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 2017* (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
- *The Assessment Book, Policies and Procedures Manual for Staff 2017* (Staff Handbook)
- *2017 Achievement @ SGHS, Assessment Guidelines* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, Assistant Principal, three students and Heads of Faculty for Commerce, Performing Arts, Science and Visual Arts.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Assistant 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

## Southland Girls' High School

7 June 2017

### 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

Southland Girls' High School has the capacity to effectively undertake its own review and evaluation of the effectiveness of a variety of NZQA assessment practices and procedures. Self-review has led to initiatives that help meet the needs of students and enhance assessment practices and communications.

Assessment processes are managed to meet the qualification needs of students. The school provides differentiated assessment through multiple course choices in core subject areas. Students can study mixed-level programmes and some courses are individualised for identified students. Assessment opportunities are extended by using external providers to offer courses the school does not have the capacity to deliver. The school financially supports students to obtain independent assessor reports to provide evidence for special assessment conditions applications. These contribute to assisting students to improve their assessment outcomes.

Embedded internal moderation processes, action plans in response to external moderation, and monitoring by the Principal's Nominee assure assessment quality and ensure that only credible results are reported to NZQA. The recording and sharing of outcomes fully informs senior management of any issues and the progress made with resolving them.

Data management and use effectively support student achievement outcomes. Assessment data is managed through checks to ensure results reported to NZQA are timely and accurate. Achievement data is analysed to review school courses, set strategic direction, monitor student progress to complete qualifications, and to identify and support students at risk of not achieving to their potential.

A range of effective communication systems is in place to ensure staff, students and parents have a common understanding of the NCEA qualification and the school's assessment policy and procedures.

### Areas for improvement

Supported Learning standards are designed for students who need specific support in their learning. The school needs to consider their appropriate use with each individual student rather than offer them to all students in a course, to ensure they are being used in accordance with their stated purpose.

Processes are in place so that students and staff check the accuracy of results reported to NZQA, but the checks also need to cover withdrawing internal entries. The school needs to ensure that all internal entries to NZQA have a result reported or

are withdrawn if the student has not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed. This would mean that data sent reflects the assessment undertaken and ensures that students have an accurate assessment programme recorded to assist them with tracking their progress.

### **Agreed action**

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

- ensure Supported Learning standards are being used in accordance with their stated purpose
- ensure that all internal entries made to NZQA have a corresponding result attached or are withdrawn if there has not been an adequate opportunity for students to be assessed.

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28 July 2017

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# FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

## How effectively has the school responded to external and internal review?

### External review

*Evidence found that external review actions have been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3v)*

**Action Items from 9 April 2013 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 feedback. Departments discuss moderation reports, use student work to update exemplars and submit a response for every report to the Principal's Nominee. If the report raises concerns, the Principal's Nominee discusses the issues with the Head of Department. Information from the last five years, such as previous moderation and internal-external outliers, is reviewed to identify patterns and, if there are ongoing issues, to assist in creating a recorded action plan. The Principal's Nominee checks on progress and completion of these plans. The Assistant Principal is involved in providing support where required and the Principal is informed of any issues and the progress made.

Assessor judgement agreement rates between teachers and external moderators have remained high for the last four years.

### Internal review

*Evidence found that the school is effectively 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)*

The Principal's Nominee and Assistant Principal drive the review of NZQA assessment related processes, effectively responding to identified issues and exploring potential improvements. This ensures credible assessment and utilises the flexibility of the NCEA model to meet the needs of students. Several assessment related initiatives have been introduced to improve current practice and enhance student achievement.

**Review of assessment practice** The school annually surveys students on different aspects of assessment practice to reflect, explore improvements and reaffirm current practice remains effective. This year, departments have surveyed a sample of students on gathering evidence to see if the style of assessments used in the department suits the students.

Discussions at Heads of Department meetings on what resubmission and further assessment opportunities look like in their learning areas, has led to the sharing of good practice and a clarity of understanding of these processes.

The school has a focus on increased levels of endorsements and has reviewed the credits offered in a course, the individual standards assessed and the balance of internal and external assessments. They are currently monitoring if this has a successful impact on the student outcomes.

To increase the effectiveness of the school examinations in supporting student achievement, the timing of them has been reviewed. This year their position in the school year has been altered with the aim of giving students a more accurate

indication of their likely level of performance in their NCEA external assessments and providing more representative data for derived grade applications.

**Data and communication** As well as considering variance reports and comparing outcomes with national subject data, this year departments were required to look outside their own area and compare their results with what they perceived as a similar subject within the school. This offered a wider opportunity to reflect on student outcomes. Departments found the process varied in its degree of usefulness.

The school's reporting committee reviews the student handbook annually. This year the review was based on student voice and questions that Heads of Department regularly receive from students. It has resulted in the layout of the handbook being based around frequently asked questions. Scannable QR codes to link to further details on websites, and information on NZQA emergency procedures have also been added.

### **No action required**

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews 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 found that assessment practice is meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6 I & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 5.5)*

### **Southland Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the needs of their students by:**

- providing differentiated assessment through multiple courses in core subjects, encouraging students to follow mixed-level programmes where appropriate, and personalising entries where possible within courses
- ensuring that students who need special assessment conditions are identified, staff are well informed of student entitlements and appropriate assistance is readily available
- extending assessment opportunities by using external providers to deliver:
  - courses the school is unable to offer
  - assessment against individual standards related to career pathways.

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

- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted during the assessment and marking process
- managing missed and late assessment, appeals and breaches of the assessment rules
- 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.

**Ensuring appropriate evidence is available for special assessment conditions applications** The school submits very few school-based evidence special assessment conditions applications. They alleviate the financial barrier of using independent assessor reports to substantiate need by subsidising the cost of the assessment. The independent reports also give the student and school in-depth understanding of issues and ideas for possible effective support.

**Review the use of Supported Learning standards** The school must review the use of Supported Learning standards to ensure they are being used in accordance with their stated purpose. The standards are designed for learners who require some form of support with their learning either through additional resources, specialised equipment or adapted teaching programmes. They are intended for people with learning disabilities including those with intellectual disability. Results submitted to NZQA suggest they may be being used with some students whose assessment programmes indicate they might not meet this criteria. Inappropriate use can result in invalid assessment results. Their use should be considered on an individual student basis.



**Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure Supported Learning standards are being used in accordance with their stated purpose.

## How effectively does the school's internal and external moderation assure assessment quality?

*Evidence found that internal and external moderation are ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 6.4b)*

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists both within and outside the school to verify assessment judgements for a targeted sample of student work
- allowing staff release time to meet with external assessors if required
- documenting the process on an *internal moderation cover sheet*
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions.

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

- encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan
- ensuring samples of student work are readily available for external moderation by being adequately stored and informing the Principal's Nominee where the materials are stored
- randomly selecting samples of student work for external moderation to meet current NZQA requirements
- using a response form to provide senior management with staff feedback and actions to address identified issues.

**Monitoring completion of internal moderation** The school has an effective process for monitoring internal moderation, recording the process to inform self-review and apprise senior management. The Principal's Nominee visits departments during the year to reconcile processes and check on the storage of work.

The Assistant Principal and the Principal's Nominee annually produce a department review tool covering all aspects of NCEA practice. This always forms part of the monitoring of completion of internal moderation. The tool is used in Term 4 and is in a different format each year to encourage genuine reflection. In recent years, it has taken the form of a check by the Principal's Nominee, self-audits and Heads of Department peer checks. The outcomes are followed up on as required and the information recorded centrally.

### **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 found that data management and use supports student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)*

### Southland Girls' High School effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - tracking student progress towards completing numeracy, literacy and qualification requirements
  - actively encouraging use of the NZQA Learner login and the student management system portal for students and parents to monitor progress
  - evaluating the outcomes of each course and planning how to improve
  - reporting to the Board of Trustees and Principal an analysis of NCEA student achievement, including against school goals.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - departments confirming the accuracy of the NZQA administrator's initial course entries
  - timely and regular reporting of results to NZQA
  - using the NZQA key indicators to identify and resolve data errors
  - having repeated student and teacher checks to ensure reported results are accurate
  - reporting Not Achieved results, as appropriate
  - holding current memoranda of understanding with external providers.

### **Student progress is effectively tracked to improve achievement outcomes**

Students who are at risk of not achieving to their potential are identified and have interventions put in place as necessary to improve their assessment outcomes.

Each term subject teachers identify if students are not performing at the necessary curriculum level or not likely to make a year's worth of progress. The information is analysed to produce "at risk" lists. To help identified students progress towards agreed targets, support structures such as additional mentoring by subject teachers or Year Level Coordinators are put in place, depending upon the individual and how many subject areas are of concern.

All students have their results tracked by their Academic Tutors and progress is discussed with students and caregivers in personal learning conferences.

**Ensure all internal entries have a result recorded or are withdrawn** The school needs to ensure that all internal entries to NZQA have a result reported, or are withdrawn if the student has not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed, so that data sent reflects the assessment undertaken. This will strengthen the checking of the accuracy of entries and results and ensure that students have an accurate assessment programme recorded to assist them with tracking their progress. In 2016, three percent of Unit Standard entries and five percent of internally assessed Achievement Standard entries were reported to NZQA without a corresponding result attached. In 2015 there were similar proportions of internal assessment entries

without results. This means there is the potential for some student achievement to have gone unreported, which could have an impact on their qualifications achievement.

**Ensure late external assessment entries are valid** The school should develop a process to check that late external assessment entries are valid so that data sent reflects the intended assessment programme. Students only attempted 22 per cent of the 109 late external entries in 2016.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management and use of assessment-related data. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure that all internal entries made to NZQA have a corresponding result attached or are withdrawn if there has not been an adequate opportunity for students to be assessed.

### **For consideration**

To extend good practice in managing and making use of assessment-related data, the school is encouraged to consider:

- developing a checking process to ensure late external entries are valid entries.

## How effectively does the school's communication inform staff, and students and their families about assessment?

*Evidence found that school communication ensures understanding about assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7iib)*

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

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and their families using a range of methods
- publicising information on NZQA fees and financial assistance
- annually reviewing staff and student handbooks to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

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

- annually briefing students in tailored year level meetings and academic tutor time about assessment policy and procedures
- mailing the student handbook to caregivers and running an information evening on NZQA and school assessment related processes
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction process involving Heads of Department and the Assistant Principal
- having assessment policy and procedures available in both physical and digital formats.

**Common course information** Creating a checklist of the NZQA-related information needed in course outlines or available through the student and parent portal will ensure that all students and parents have access to consistent information across all subject areas. A useful starting point could be reviewing the current documentation and sharing the effective practice seen in some departments of presenting full information on the standards covered, whether they contribute to literacy and numeracy and links to vocational pathways.

### **For consideration**

To ensure that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- producing a checklist of the content required in course information.