

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Verdon College

June 2018

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Verdon College:

- has addressed issues identified through NZQA's Managing National Assessment review and through the school's own internal review
- manages assessment practice for national qualifications
- manages internal and external moderation
- makes use of and manages assessment-related data
- maintains the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicates them to staff, students and families.

The summary section evaluates the school's overall effectiveness and provides a broad overview of the review's key findings for all readers. The remaining sections provide detail of these findings for school managers.

## Why we review how schools are managing national assessment

The purpose of a Managing National Assessment review is:

- to confirm, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report, that schools are meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011* (CAAS) and its *Guidelines* (CAAS Guidelines) in order to maintain their consent to assess; and
- to help schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment according to the requirements of the *Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2018* (Assessment Rules).

## What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- requiring action from the school where an issue is identified that significantly impacts on the school meeting the requirements of their *Consent to Assess*
- agreeing action with the school where an issue has been identified that could become significant if not addressed
- making suggestions for the school to consider to enhance good assessment practice.

## What this review includes

The review has three components:

- The annual external moderation of the school's internal assessment.
- A check on specific aspects of assessment systems on an annual basis.
- A check on the school's assessment systems at least once every four years.

## How we conducted this review

The review includes examination of documentation from a range of sources and interviewing key stakeholders.

Prior to the visit the school provided the following documents:

- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *Verdon College 2018 Staff Handbook, Assessment Rules and Procedures for Managing National Assessment*
- *Verdon College Student Handbook: Assessment Rules and Procedures 2018*
- *Verdon College Assessment Policy*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, three students, and Heads of Learning Area for Mathematics, Physical Education, Science and Social Science.

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.

# SUMMARY

## Verdon College

7 June 2018

### **Consent to assess confirmed**

This review found that the school is meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*. No significant issues with the school's management of national assessment were found. The school's own review mechanisms allow them to identify and respond to issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

### **What the school is doing well**

Verdon College is responsive to external review and has implemented all the required action items from the 2015 Managing National Assessment report. Learning Areas review external moderation reports and develop action plans to address issues, and senior management checks that any concerns have been resolved. The school encourages the staff to reflect on their assessment practice with a focus on ensuring that they are supporting the achievement of their students in the best way possible.

Assessment processes are effectively managed to meet the qualifications needs of students. The school provides differentiation of assessment through multiple course choices in certain subject areas and some variation within courses for identified students. The courses offered are annually reviewed and altered to meet the changing needs of the students. Assessment opportunities are extended by using external providers to offer courses and assessment against standards that the school would otherwise be unable to provide. These all contribute to assisting students to attain their best possible assessment outcomes.

Internal moderation is an embedded process with all staff. Proactive monitoring by the Learning Area Leaders and Principal's Nominee ensures that only credible assessment results are reported to NZQA.

Data management, analysis and review effectively supports student achievement outcomes. Assessment data is managed to ensure results reported to NZQA are timely and accurate. Students are encouraged to use their NZQA Learner login and their portal to the student management system to monitor, and then discuss, their progress with mentors. Achievement data is analysed promptly to review school courses, monitor student progress, and to identify and support students at risk of not achieving to their potential.

The school has a range of communications systems that enable staff, students and caregivers to gain a common understanding of NCEA and school assessment procedures.

### **Areas for improvement**

Although the school has processes in place to identify students who may need special assessment conditions, relatively few applications are submitted. Courses and assessment are adapted to cater to the individual's needs. However the school should consider submitting applications in case the student's assessment circumstances change.

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10 September 2018

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# FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

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

### External review

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

#### **Action Items from 28 May 2015 Managing National Assessment Report**

Although the review found no significant issues, it identified three required actions that were checked after 18 months to review the progress made.

The school now has a robust documented process in place managed by the Principal's Nominee to ensure the work chosen for external moderation is through a random selection process that meets NZQA's requirements and ensures samples cannot be predicted prior to selection.

Internal entries reported to NZQA without a corresponding result were reduced to negligible amounts in 2015 and 2016, but increased again slightly in 2017. This increase was mainly due to the way in which leavers entries are processed in the school's new student management system. For 2018, the leavers form has been updated to help better manage the withdrawal of their entries without results. Some other entries without results reported were made in courses with external providers. The school will replicate the departmental checking processes with the person responsible for these courses to resolve this issue.

To ensure that information in course outlines is adequate and appropriate, the content required is outlined in the staff handbook and a school wide template is available. The template can be adjusted to suit each subject's needs. Including the version number of standards is listed in the staff handbook but is not in the template, so some course outlines omit version numbers. Updating the template to match the staff handbook will resolve this minor issue.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has effective processes to respond to external moderation. These ensure Senior Management are fully informed of issues and involved in the review of outcomes where required. Recorded actions by the school and feedback from external moderation show that the school has resolved issues in any learning areas which had widespread or ongoing concerns.

Staff reflect on each moderation report and are encouraged to use clarifications and/or appeals where appropriate. They submit to their Head of Learning Area and the Principal's Nominee a written response to each report with an action plan where required. The Principal's Nominee checks on the completion of any actions.

### 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)*

Senior management encourages reflective practice, informed by the teacher's own ideas, student voice and results data, with a focus on what works, what does not and what changes can be made. This drives the review of NZQA assessment-related processes to evaluate the effectiveness of current systems in response to identified

issues, and to explore potential improvements. Several assessment-related initiatives have been introduced to improve current practice and enhance student achievement. These include:

- creating a *Awhi Roopu* programme to improve student learning practices such as study skills and time management
- involvement in the Science trial assessments to assess the school's readiness to engage in digital assessment and consider possible next steps
- starting to link the assessment of standards in Physics and Chemistry to reduce assessment workload and better highlight cross curricular connections to students
- reviewing the use of resubmissions for internal assessments, resulting in students feeling practice is consistent across all Learning Areas
- a continued focus on student performance in externals and improving levels of endorsement by:
  - encouraging the reduction of internal credits in courses to focus on deeper learning
  - explaining to students the benefits of success in external assessment and the importance of endorsements, reinforcing this through talks by ex-students.

The effectiveness of these initiatives is reviewed through both staff and student feedback, and some are ongoing. As well as responding to issues as they arise the school's self-review also involves forward planning. Areas of future development include:

- exploring how the new student management system can possibly streamline the analysis of assessment results to better support staff with their self-reflection
- considering if providing parental access to the student management system could improve communication with parents about student assessment programmes and progress.

### **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 for assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2018 5.5)*

### **Verdon College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- providing differentiated assessment through offering multiple courses within some core subjects, and when appropriate, tailoring assessment opportunities to individuals within a course
- extending assessment opportunities by using a range of external providers to deliver:
  - courses the school is unable to offer
  - assessment against standards related to career pathways
- counselling students to consider if distance learning courses are appropriate for their learning style
- ensuring that staff are well informed of students with approved special assessment conditions, that appropriate assistance is readily available when required, and reviewing if the assistance is effective
- the Exam Centre Manager running some of the school exams to help students effectively prepare for the end of year external examinations
- encouraging staff to meet a two-week turnaround to return assessment results to students to encourage their engagement in the assessment process.

### **Verdon College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- monitoring the authenticity of student work 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*.

**Altering courses offered in response to student assessment need** The school annually reviews the courses they offer in response to student voice, cohort needs and timetabling considerations. Recent changes include:

- the creation of a Finance course combining Accounting, Economics and Business Studies whilst maintaining student choice within the course, so they can focus on their main areas of interest
- offering English courses in different perspectives such as sport, media and business to better engage students in meaningful contexts
- modifying the standards offered in Agriculture courses to broaden potential career pathways



- the addition of an Outdoor Education course
- proposing altering Spanish courses from distance learning to school-based to support a growing interest within the school community.

**Submitting special assessment conditions applications for all students who need support** The school applies for special assessment conditions for relatively few students. Most eligible candidates are supported by having courses and assessments in a style that cater to their needs, such as non-time bound internals. The school should consider submitting applications to ensure support is available if a student has a change in their individual circumstances, for example an alteration to their planned assessment programme or if they move school.

The school has clear identification processes. Students who possibly require support are identified by school staff, parents, medical information and anecdotal comments. The Guidance Counsellor and Assistant Principal – Curriculum investigate each individual case.

### **For consideration**

To extend good practice in meeting student needs and supporting assessment practice, the school is encouraged to consider:

- submitting special assessment conditions applications so that all eligible students have and NZQA approved entitlement to access to the necessary support in all assessment situations.

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

*Evidence for internal and external moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2018 6.4b)*

### **Verdon College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring all new or modified assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists both within and outside the school, to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- retaining work to be used as exemplars for students and benchmarking for assessor judgements
- documenting the quality assurance process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*.

### **Verdon College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- ensuring student work is readily available for external moderation by being adequately stored and the Principal's Nominee knowing the location of the materials
- encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan and negotiating appropriate changes.

**Effective monitoring of internal moderation** Heads of Learning Area proactively monitor the completion of all aspects of internal moderation. They complete a detailed annual managing national assessment self-review during Term 1 and in Term 2 they attest to the processes that they are following in the current year. These documents are shared with the Principal's Nominee, so he can review their practice and later in the year he visits Learning Areas to check that practice matches the information recorded. This ensures the school's senior management can be confident in their quality assurance process.

### **No action required**

No issues with the school's internal and external moderation were identified during this review.

## How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

*Evidence for data management and use supporting student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)*

### Verdon College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - encouraging students to track their own progress using their NZQA Learner login and their portal to the student management system
  - analysing results comparatively and longitudinally to inform course design and set strategic direction
  - tracking progress to literacy and numeracy requirements to gain NCEA certificates and University Entrance
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
  - reporting Not Achieved results as appropriate
  - having multiple signed off student, teacher and Principal's Nominee checks of recorded results
  - checking the accuracy of external entries to ensure minimal late entries
  - only reporting results for standards the school has consent for, or against the correct code of outside providers with whom the school holds current memoranda of understanding.

**Student progress is effectively tracked to improve assessment outcomes** The school effectively uses current and previous year's achievement data, fortnightly attitude to learning reports, and teacher comments, to track student progress. Mentors both formally and informally discuss with students their progress, and how they can be best supported. These discussions feed into both the Dean's monitoring and the pastoral committee so that early individualised interventions can be put in place where necessary.

### **Assessment data is used in a timely manner to support student achievement**

Every subject area reviews student results after each unit of work so immediate changes can be made to support student success in subsequent assessments. Possible changes to the course for the following year are also considered.

### **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))*

### **Verdon College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to staff, students and their families using a range of methods
- widely publicising NZQA fees and financial assistance information and following up with identified families
- inducting new teachers and Heads of Learning Area to familiarise them with assessment and moderation processes.

### **Verdon College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- briefing students in term one about assessment policy and procedures but also highlighting their rights and who they can refer to for help and extra guidance
- sending an email notification to students and parents to encourage them to access a comprehensive online student handbook, written in appropriate language
- providing physical copies of the student handbook for those who do not wish to, or are unable to easily access it online
- presenting NZQA and school assessment related processes at a parent and student meeting in term one
- publishing to staff a timeline of, and also including in an online calendar, key NZQA and school assessment related dates
- Heads of Learning Area and Teachers in Charge of a Subject meeting regularly at appropriate times in the year to discuss assessment related issues.

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

### **No action required**

No issues with the way in which the school maintained the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicated them to staff, students and families were identified during this review.