

Managing National Assessment Report

Aparima College

September 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Aparima 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 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
- *Aparima College, Managing National Assessment – 2019, Student Information* (Student Handbook)
- *Aparima College 0409, Managing National Assessment, Staff Information and Procedures* (Staff Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
 - English
 - Physical Education
 - Science
- Teachers in Charge of:
 - Agriculture
 - Business Studies
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the 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

Aparima College

25 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 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

Aparima College has a vision to be an innovative, aspirational and supportive learning environment for all, and this is reflected in their effective self-review of their NZQA assessment practices and procedures. The senior leadership team drives self-review, but it is collaborative, taking account of teacher, student and community voice. This leads to changes in assessment-related practice and review of the impacts to better meet the needs of students.

The school offers a broad range of opportunities to meet each cohort's achievement needs. The school extends the opportunities available to students by using external providers to offer courses and standards it does not have the capacity to deliver.

Internal moderation processes, responses to external moderation, monitoring by the Heads of Department and Principal's Nominee, and reviews by the senior leadership team ensure credible assessment outcomes.

Data management and use effectively support student achievement outcomes. Assessment data is managed to ensure results and entries reported to NZQA are accurate. Achievement data is analysed to review departmental practice and course design, and evaluate the effectiveness of changes. Students monitor their own progress towards completing qualifications through their NZQA Learner Login. Staff use data to identify students at risk of not achieving to their potential and make appropriate interventions.

The school communications allow staff, students and their families to gain a common understanding of NCEA and school assessment expectations.

Areas for improvement

The monitoring of the completion of internal moderation can be made more robust by introducing an annual attestation by Heads of Department. This will give the senior leadership team further assurance that internal moderation has been completed each year for every internal standard assessed.

Agreed action

The school agreed that that the following action will improve the quality of their assessment systems:

- adding an end of year attestation by Heads of Department that internal moderation has been completed for each standard.

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12 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 26 October 2016 Managing National Assessment report The review identified three agreed actions, and these have been resolved. The school has:

- updated staff and student handbooks and course outlines
- created a process to reduce the number of internal entries with no results
- developed a procedure to check and record that departments are undertaking internal moderation

An action to further strengthen the monitoring of internal moderation is covered in the relevant section of this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has effective processes for responding to external moderation. These ensure that the senior leadership team are fully informed of issues and involved in the review of outcomes where required. The school actively manages any ongoing issues until they are resolved.

When moderation reports are available, the Principal's Nominee ensures teachers know how they can access them online. Teachers understand the need to reflect on each report and request clarifications and/or appeals where required. After considering the report they explain to the Principal's Nominee the actions needed to resolve any concerns. He discusses these actions with the teacher to ensure next steps are in place to address the issues effectively, such as using professional development, including changes in department goals, and finding an alternative verifier to work with. He follows up to ensure completion and keeps a written summary of the outcomes.

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

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)

The school effectively reviews its assessment-related processes in response to identified issues and to explore potential improvements. Review ties into the school's vision of taumata; aspiring to reach your summit. The process is driven by the senior leadership team but is collaborative and can be initiated through ideas brought to the regular Heads of Department meetings, which are focused on big picture thinking rather than administrative tasks. Individual teacher and student voice also inform review, with student opinions regularly gathered through meetings between year groups and members of the senior leadership team.

Encouraging students to aspire to reach their peak is central to teacher/student learning conversations. As part of this the school has a focus to increase rates of course and certificate endorsement. The introduction of an endorsement gallery and recognition in assembly of students who have gained endorsements and/or Merit and Excellence assessment grades is used to affirm the value of achieving them. To help students plan for endorsement the school has started to send targeted letters to caregivers outlining achievement to date and what is still required for an endorsement.

New courses recognise the aspirational aim as well as student need. Agriculture and Physical Education courses have changed from being Unit Standard based to include Achievement Standards. The Head of English has created a transition to work course, following a review of student needs, local employer needs and the experience of previous students. This focuses on communication skills, financial literacy and Young Enterprise.

Another concept that is currently being trialled is integrated studies at Year 9 and 10, which may lead to a similar approach to some areas of NCEA assessment. This is part of a wider review of the curriculum structure, which includes investigating various models, such as semesters, to identify what could best work in Aparima College's particular context and give students greater flexibility with their studies.

Planned future inquiries include how to best engage with digital assessment and making greater use of the functionality in the new student management system to more effectively track and document the support of students.

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)

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

- offering tutorials and support outside class time to help students prepare for assessment
- the Deputy Principal monitoring progress towards, and coordinating support for, students to reach the literacy and numeracy requirements to gain qualifications
- gathering evidence in Years 8 to 10 to support future special assessment condition applications.

Aparima 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
- ensuring student evidence for derived grades is standard specific and verified
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Focus on providing assessment to meet student needs Students are offered a wide variety of courses to choose from to ensure suitable pathways are open to them. The school endeavours to find ways of accommodating their selections through school-based classes, which could be multi-level and/or mixed subjects, or through a wide range of external providers. These include a virtual learning network, the Southern Institute of Technology, Star and Gateway courses and Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu.

Due to the size of the school, the structure of courses offered is regularly altered according to cohort and individual need. Currently, Year 11 English, Mathematics and Science have two courses; one with a vocational focus and the other preparing for Tertiary study focus. Other subjects differentiate assessment through the standards offered and the contexts used.

Class sizes allow for a one on one focus, enabling individualised teacher feedback from formative assessment activities and milestone checks to effectively prepare students for assessment opportunities.

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)

Aparima College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- staff understanding the need for all new or modified assessment materials to be critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists, within and outside the school, to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- discussing the strategic selection of student work for verification in the school's context of small class sizes
- documenting the quality assurance process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- retaining and updating work to be used as exemplars for students and benchmarking for assessor judgements
- following appropriate processes for moderating Industry Training Organisation administered standards.

Aparima College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- teachers suggesting over a third of the standards selected for external moderation, and negotiating appropriate changes to the moderation plan, to gain feedback on standards they feel need targeting
- the Principal's Nominee knowing the location of student assessment materials to ensure they are available.

Monitoring of internal moderation Heads of Department actively monitor the completion of all aspects of internal moderation. The Principal's Nominee visits each department annually, recording the outcomes of his discussion of moderation processes, checking of evidence from the previous and current year and plans for the rest of the year. His annual visits are supplemented with regular informal, often targeted, discussions with Heads of Department and individual teachers.

Further strengthening the monitoring of internal moderation by attesting all standards have been internally moderated Adding an end-of-year attestation by Heads 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 leadership that all reported results are credible.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality. Senior management undertakes to:

- adding an end of year attestation by Heads of Department that internal moderation has been completed for each standard.

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)

Aparima College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- Heads of Department and teachers analysing results with a focus on cohort progression and considering if assessment supports students' future pathways, which then informs the modification of courses and teaching practice
- showing students how to register and use their NZQA Learner Login, in order to self-monitor their progress towards gaining qualifications.

Aparima College reports accurate achievement data by:

- having student and teacher checks of results and entries at key times during the year
- closely managing withdrawals from standards, and late entries
- only reporting results for standards for which the school holds consent, or against the correct code of outside providers with whom the school holds current memoranda of understanding
- reporting Not Achieved results as appropriate.

Student progress is effectively tracked and support is provided to improve achievement outcomes The school effectively uses data to monitor student progress, with a focus on improving student achievement outcomes. When results are recorded in the student management system, students and parents receive an email notification. This supports students in taking responsibility for tracking their own progress. Form tutors and the Deputy Principal discuss individual progress with students and coordinate support where required.

An at-risk list, based on whole staff discussion of existing data and the teacher's knowledge of each individual student, is created at the beginning of each year. This is focused on those at risk of not achieving a qualification and/or not achieving to their potential. The list is a shared working document prominently displayed in the staff room and includes support strategies. It is regularly referred to and updated by teachers and the Deputy Principal, as students gain credits, support strategies change, and new students are identified.

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))

Aparima College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive clear outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to teachers, and 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.

Aparima College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- encouraging open communication between the senior leadership team, staff, students and parents
- the Principal's Nominee using assemblies at key times in the year to brief students about assessment policy and procedures, with consistent reinforcement from class teachers
- presenting NZQA and school assessment expectations at the parent and student subject option evening
- providing timely reminders of processes and deadlines through newsletters and social media.

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.

The staff handbook starts with key dates that staff need to work to, followed by a two-page checklist of the processes they need to complete during the year. The handbook is emailed to all staff each year.

Students annually receive a physical handbook. The Principal's Nominee has reviewed the handbook and reduced it to a concise document covering the key points which does not repeat material already shared in the options information. The school should consider adding some further explanation to the resubmission section to make it clear that it is a teacher, not student, driven process.

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 further explanation of the resubmission process in the student handbook.