

Managing National Assessment Report

Michael Park School

May 2017

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Michael Park 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
- *Michael Park School High School Assessment Procedures Information for Teachers revised February 2017*
- *Michael Park School High School Assessment Procedures Information for Students revised February 2017*
- *Course Assessment Outlines and Assessment Due Dates for Years 12 and 13.* (assessment planning document)

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, High School Assessment Coordinator, three students and Heads of Department for English, Mathematics, Physical Education, Science, Te Reo Māori and Visual Art.

There was a report-back session with the 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.

Background

Michael Park School is a co-educational state integrated school that caters for students in Years 1 to 13. The school offers a curriculum that is based on the Steiner Waldorf philosophy and offers NCEA courses to Year 12 and 13 students. These students aim to complete NCEA Levels 2 and 3 and, where appropriate for their future plans, be awarded University Entrance.

SUMMARY

Michael Park School

31 May 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

Michael Park School offers a range of pathways within a Steiner-Waldorf inspired curriculum to meet students' needs. The students value their learning and are supported to achieve their goals by empathetic teachers who know them really well. Teachers are developing a variety of ways of collecting evidence of achievement. The school is engaging in ongoing review and the Principal's Nominee is leading teachers to inquire into their practice with the aim of improving outcomes for students.

Internal moderation is becoming embedded in the school culture. Teachers demonstrate a range of good assessment practices to ensure that credible results are reported. Issues raised in external moderation are effectively followed up.

The school has addressed the issues raised in the previous Managing National Assessment review. At that time, the school had used the external moderation reports to identify that in one teaching area there were ongoing significant issues. The school followed up the concerns with a robust action plan and is expecting that the improved processes will be reflected in more favourable external moderation outcomes.

NCEA data is used to track individual progress towards Level 2 and 3 NCEA qualifications. Analysis informs changes in assessment programmes and enables the school to monitor achievement against school goals. The data is carefully checked for accuracy.

A range of communication systems ensure staff, students and parents have access to information about NCEA qualifications and the school's policy and procedures. The staff and student handbooks have been recently reviewed to provide clear and up-to-date information.

The Principal's Nominee is new to the role in 2107. He works with the High School Assessment Coordinator to oversee the school's credible assessment practice. The teachers appreciate the strong partnership and clear direction.

Areas for improvement

The school has identified that while it has revised the staff handbook, the next step is to ensure that teachers understand both the requirements and the reasons for each expectation. The teachers commented that the High School Assessment Coordinator

takes a key part in devising systems and in checking that all everyone is compliant. If the teachers are encouraged to take ownership, it is likely that they will be able to identify where efficiencies can be made without compromising the outcomes. For example, the Assessment Coordinator carries out the data checks for all standards in every class. If the teachers take this responsibility, they are more likely to identify anomalies and will be able to have a better overview of achievement.

In some teaching areas, it takes a long time for students to receive a confirmed grade. This makes it difficult to students to track their own progress towards a qualification. Much of the delay can be managed by planning who will do the verification well in advance of the assessments being carried out.

Agreed action

The school agreed on actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems. These are:

- involve the teaching staff in checking the accuracy of the data submitted to NZQA.
- check that all teachers share a common understanding of assessment practice expectations.

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14 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 23 April 2015 Managing National Assessment Report The previous Managing National Assessment review identified significant issues related to internal moderation. The school was required to:

- develop robust internal moderation processes in all departments
- only report results that have undergone internal moderation
- ensure that the school's senior management monitor internal moderation.

The school's response has been effective. An experienced Head of Department was appointed as the High School Assessment Coordinator and immediately implemented a clear and well documented system that ensures the school's expectations for internal moderation are completed before results are reported to NZQA. All teachers provided evidence of internal moderation explaining that they used colleagues from within the school and in other schools as subject experts to verify a purposeful selected sample of student work. The school's processes now meet NZQA's requirements.

Agreed action items from the 2015 report All the agreed actions in the previous report have been addressed.

- The department self-review was completed. The requirements around quality assurance were clarified and detailed in the staff handbook.
- Teachers and students now understand that a "Not Achieved" will be reported for any student who has had an adequate opportunity to be assessed but has not completed sufficient work.
- Teachers are encouraged to consider different ways of gathering evidence of achievement. Teachers reported using blogs, portfolios, practical tasks and digital tools and sharing practice with their colleagues.
- The processes for managing missed and late assessments has been reviewed and expectations clarified. Students explained that their teachers know them very well and are empathetic but if they have not met a deadline and there is no reasonable explanation a Not Achieved grade will be reported. This meets NZQA's expectations.
- The High School Assessment Coordinator implemented careful checks prior to the key dates to ensure that results data held on the NZQA website is accurate and matches each student's assessment programme. It is suggested that now that systems are well embedded, the responsibility for checking that entries and grades are accurate is passed to the Heads of Department or teachers involved.
- The school's documentation for staff and students has been reviewed and updated.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has effective processes to respond to external moderation outcomes. Where there is a low agreement rate the High School Assessment Coordinator ensures that there is an action plan and monitors that this is completed before the standard is used again. As well, she produces an executive report for the principal that summarises the outcomes and consequential actions. To further improve this process, it should be noted that the agreement rate is only one indicator of the quality of assessment decisions and the external moderator's written report might also identify issues that should be addressed. To actively involve teachers in planning the solutions to issues, it is suggested that they take the responsibility for reflecting on the report findings and planning the follow up.

Response to significant issue At the time of the previous Managing National Assessment visit, the school had used external moderation reports to identify an ongoing issue in one subject area. The low agreement rate and the external moderator's lack of confidence in the assessor's judgments over several years resulted in NZQA not accepting results in this subject without additional evidence that the grades were consistent with the standard. To address this, the school implemented a number of measures to remedy the situation and arranged for all results to be verified by a subject expert from another school. The additional steps provided NZQA with the confidence to accept the grades in 2015 and 2016. A decision on whether NZQA will accept results in 2017 in this subject will be made after work has been externally moderated and the effectiveness of the school's quality assurance processes in this subject evaluated.

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 school is developing a collaborative culture of internal review to improve student outcomes. The Qualifications Committee has been set up to share good assessment practice. Examples of changes to support school's achievement goals include:

- the development of better systems to track student progress towards qualifications. The school's analysis of the 2016 achievement data indicates that this has resulted in some improvements but they are planning to enhance the effectiveness by starting monitoring earlier in the year and develop ways to identify and support students at risk of not competing a portfolio-based assessment.
- teachers have started to engage in *Spirals of Inquiry* to enable them to better meet the needs of a student or group of students by evaluating the effectiveness of different teaching approaches
- teachers are being encouraged to seek naturally occurring evidence and differentiate learning and assessment. The school reports that some teachers are leading the way and good practice is shared in the high school section meetings.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review. Senior management undertakes to:

- provide information to NZQA about the quality assurance processes in the subject where there has been ongoing poor agreement rate in external moderation.

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)

Michael Park School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the needs of their students by:

- ensuring students set learning goals and individualise their own assessment pathway
- mentoring students so they have the best chance to meet their goals
- applying for special assessment conditions and providing appropriate resources for entitled students.

Michael Park School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment to be fair to students
- managing resubmissions and further assessment opportunities in line with NZQA's requirements
- investigating appeals of assessment decisions
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Assessment programmes closely monitored to reduce over assessing The school aims to provide students with the opportunity to gain sufficient credits to achieve a qualification while avoiding over assessing. Individual achievement is tracked very closely. Students may be offered the opportunity to be assessed against additional standards or may negotiate a reduced or different programme. The students are very aware of what they needed to achieve their goals and expressed an interest in learning rather than simply collecting credits.

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 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)

Michael Park School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work
- documenting the completion of a robust internal moderation process
- monitoring that the school's expectations for internal moderation are completed and only reporting results where there is evidence that all the steps have been completed.

Michael Park School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- randomly selecting samples of student work for external moderation to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being adequately stored
- engaging with NZQA's digital moderation application by submitting student work and assessment tasks online.

Internal Moderation Cover Sheets used to record the completion of quality assurance processes Staff use an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to document the process undertaken for verification of student work. Examples were sighted of purposeful selection of student work at grade boundaries along with reasons for a verification decision. Noting the discussion points helps to clarify teacher understanding and provides a reference point if external moderation outcomes differ from the reported grade. The Assessment Coordinator ensures that the Principal's Nominee is informed of the level of compliance of each teacher in following the school's internal moderation procedures.

Delay in providing confirmed grades and feedback to students Teachers are expected to have marked work back to the student within three weeks of completing an assessment, however this expectation is not consistently met. The school's managers are aware of the tension in ensuring that the students receive their final grade within a reasonable time and the need for many teachers to use networks outside the school to verify grades. Suggestions to resolve this include planning well in advance, reciprocating by verifying for another school and letting students know the provisional result after the initial marking. This allows the student to track their progress more effectively.

For consideration

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

- reviewing how to consistently complete the marking and verification process in a more timely manner.

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)

Michael Park School effectively:

- uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:
 - monitoring student progress, identifying students at risk of not achieving a qualification and providing appropriate support
 - setting school achievement goals, and monitoring progress towards these goals
 - providing teachers with data to evaluate the effectiveness of their *Spirals of Inquiry* if appropriate.
- reports accurate achievement data by:
 - ensuring that datafiles are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner
 - using reports such as the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data errors
 - supporting students to use their Learner login to track their NCEA progress
 - the Assessment Coordinator checking to confirm the accuracy of the internally assessed grades reported.

Share responsibility for checking entry and result data Teachers have access to the NZQA website and it is suggested they take the responsibility for checking that data accurately reflects their assessment programme. This would enable them to identify any anomalies, inform future course design and free up the Assessment Coordinator to identify where improvements or efficiencies could be made. Requiring teachers to check their own entries and results will help develop a culture of ownership of the assessment processes.

For consideration

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

- involve the teaching staff in checking the accuracy of the data submitted to NZQA.

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)

Michael Park School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure
- supporting teachers new to the school
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

Michael Park School assists a common understanding of assessment practice by:

- checking whether teachers, students and parents are following processes
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss improvements
- organising meetings with parents and caregivers to give them information about NCEA
- giving parents information about their child's progress towards their goals at a parent/teacher conference
- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Communication reviewed The school has reviewed communications between stakeholders. They identified that there was a lack of clear and consistent communication and teachers were not clear about the expectations. As a consequence, the High School Qualifications Committee was established to coordinate communications. Action points are minuted and followed up. The school considers that, as a consequence, teachers are better informed.

The teacher handbook has been revised with the aim of providing clear and current information. The Principal's Nominee and the Assessment Coordinator note that there are fewer questions from teachers. They have identified that, now they have access to the information, the next step is to check the consistency of teacher understanding and practice.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, students and families. Senior management undertakes to:

- check that all teachers share a common understanding of assessment practice expectations.