

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Halswell Residential College

August 2019

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Halswell Residential 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

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee

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**

Halswell Residential College is a coeducational specialist residential school for students aged 8-18 years with intellectual and/or learning disabilities, and complex needs. Student intakes are staggered throughout the year and the length of tenure varies from one term to up to two years. The Halswell curriculum is designed to balance academic learning and living skills, and to enhance a student's social and emotional development. Students are on Individual Education Plans which may include NCEA assessment.

The school did not assess students in 2017 and 2018, nor did it use external providers to assess students. Halswell Residential College students are only assessed where they are ready and able to be assessed.

This review focuses on the processes the school has in place to ensure credible results are reported. This includes having effective internal moderation processes, NCEA assessment practice ensuring valid, authentic and verifiable grades are reported and that students and teachers understand qualification requirements.

# SUMMARY

## Halswell Residential College

21 August 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

Halswell Residential College is responsive to the individual needs of students by offering assessment where appropriate. The school develops Individual Education Plans and where appropriate assessment is conducted by the school or an external provider. Where students are assessed, naturally occurring evidence is gathered and students are only assessed when they are ready.

Self-review of programmes offered has informed the school's decision to discontinue assessing Supported Learning standards as a means to assess the Residential Curriculum. As the school has not assessed in the past two years this review does not evaluate the effectiveness of the school's internal moderation practice nor response to external moderation. The Principal's Nominee is aware of NZQA's quality assurance expectations. She confirmed her role is to monitor the moderation process and its documentation to provide confidence that any results reported are credible.

Communication, appropriate to the student needs, supports students' understanding of any assessment tasks they complete.

### Areas for improvement

The school does not regularly assess students. When teachers do assess they need to be aware of NZQA's expectations and their assessment practice enable credible results to be reported. The school should develop a staff assessment handbook to provide accessible and relevant information to assessing teachers. Prior to any student assessment the teacher should check the staff handbook to confirm their understanding of good assessment practice and that they are meeting NZQA assessment expectations.

### **Agreed action**

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

- ensure teachers are aware of NZQA assessment expectations for credible assessment prior to assessing students
- develop a Staff Assessment Handbook.

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4 October 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 31 March 2016 Managing National Assessment Report

There were two agreed actions in the 2016 review. As the school has not assessed standards since 2016 neither action continued to be relevant.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has not assessed standards in 2017 and 2018. No student work has been requested for external moderation.

### 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)*

On-going review is embedded practice in addition to the school's scheduled review cycles. Review in 2017 and 2018 of assessment programmes offered resulted in the school deciding to:

- terminate the subcontracting arrangements with two outside providers
- discontinue assessing Supported Learning Standards as part of the National Certificate in Communication and Work Skills
- use external providers for the delivery, reporting and assessment of standards
- retain its Consent to Assess to remain responsive and adaptable to so that it is well placed to meet student needs where appropriate.

These decisions reflect the school's context of ever-changing cohorts, varying tenure and student readiness and ability to be assessed. The school acknowledges that it may not deliver and assess standards on-site in the future.

Halswell Residential College is currently reviewing its curriculum and the relevance of what is currently delivered and why. It is considering becoming a Therapeutic Boarding School, focusing on social behaviour, emotional regulation and positive relationships. The outcome of this review may lead to the school not assessing students at all.

### 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)*

### **Halswell Residential College's processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students include:**

- developing Individual Education Plans
- offering assessment opportunities to those students who are able and ready to be assessed
- gathering naturally occurring evidence to support achievement
- using a range of strategies to ensure students present authentic work, including monitoring that students are not over-guided by the teacher
- engaging with external providers to extend assessment opportunities for students
- holding evidence to support a student's application for special assessment conditions if their individual learning programme includes assessment towards NCEA.

**Ensuring credible assessment practice** Teachers who assess students must be aware of and understand NZQA's expectations and the school's assessment practice must ensure authentic, valid and verifiable grades are reported. Prior to any assessment taking place, Senior Management agreed for the school to provide to any assessing teacher the school's assessment procedures and professional learning on NZQA's expectation to ensure credible results are reported.

### **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 teachers are aware of NZQA assessment expectations for credible assessment prior to assessing students.

## **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)*

### **Halswell Residential College described the following processes and procedures for managing internal moderation for school assessment by:**

- being aware that teachers at the school cannot work in isolation
- using contacts at local schools to verify assessor judgements for any assessment undertaken
- the Principal's Nominee ensuring internal moderation occurs by being part of the process and signing off the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* when completed
- storing student work centrally so it is available for external moderation if requested.

### **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)*

### **Halswell Residential College described the following processes for managing assessment-related data by:**

- monitoring students' individual learning goals and using this information to identify if assessment toward NCEA is appropriate
- ensuring a Memorandum of Understanding is held for external providers whose codes are used to report grades.

### **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))*

### **Halswell Residential College has effective processes and procedures for supporting student achievement by:**

- communicating assessment programmes to students and caregivers as part of the development of an Individual Education Plan where relevant.

**NCEA Staff Handbook is required** The school currently does not have documented assessment procedures to share with teachers in the event that they carry out assessment. Documenting these procedures will provide readily accessible information for the school to use to ensure that an assessor understands the school's assessment procedures, NZQA expectations and assessment best 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:

- develop a Staff Assessment Handbook.