

Managing National Assessment Report

Kavanagh College

August 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Kavanagh 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
- *Kavanagh College, School Assessment Policy and Practices from Y7 -13: Revised January 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *NCEA, National Certificate in Educational Achievement at Kavanagh College, Parent – Student Handbook 2019 Edition*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal
- Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
 - Drama
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Visual Arts
- three students.

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.

SUMMARY

Kavanagh 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

Kavanagh College ensures students can maximise their achievement by offering a broad range of opportunities to meet their needs. Assessment is differentiated through multiple course choices in core subject areas, and some individualisation of courses where appropriate. 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. The school is making good use of school-based evidence to support eligible students' access to approved special assessment conditions and provides them with appropriate support.

Assessment practices are effective, understood by both students and staff, and consistently applied. These practices contribute towards assisting students to improve their achievement outcomes. The school actively manages student assessment workload but continuing the review of the number of credits assessed may further improve student achievement.

As part of their annual plan, the school has a focus on engaging Māori and Pacific students. This aims to build on what they have already accomplished in supporting these learners, as shown in the success rates of Year 13 students of different ethnicities achieving three or more Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics subjects at Level 3.

The school responds appropriately to issues identified by both internal and external review. Self-review is driven by the management team along with the Principal's Nominee and subject leaders, often taking into account wider teacher, student and parent voice. This leads to changes in assessment-related practice to better meet the needs of students. A major focus of review has been on the development of courses structured to deliver this outcome.

Internal moderation processes, responses to external moderation, and monitoring by the Principal's Nominee, Deputy Principal and Heads of Department ensure that only credible assessment results are reported to NZQA. This effective practice means issues are identified promptly and followed up until they are resolved.

Data management and use effectively supports student achievement outcomes and ensures the timely reporting of results to NZQA. Achievement data is analysed to review departmental practice and courses, and evaluate the effectiveness of changes. Students monitor their own progress towards completing qualifications

through their portal into the student management system and their NZQA Learner Login. Staff use data to identify and then intervene with students at risk of not achieving a qualification.

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

Areas for improvement

The staff handbook needs updating to make it a more useable document and to ensure it provides accurate information that reflects current practice. The Principal's Nominee was already aware of this issue and plans to update it for next year.

Agreed action

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

- update the staff handbook so it provides current and accurate information.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

23 October 2019

NZQA

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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 25 May 2016 Managing National Assessment Report The two action items covering documentation have been resolved by the school.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has effective processes for responding to external moderation. These ensure senior management 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.

The Principal's Nominee reads each report and shares them with the Head of Department, leading to a conversation about the outcomes. This may result in queries and/or appeals, and action plans where required. The Principal's Nominee keeps a summary record of the outcomes. Any actions are shared with the Deputy Principal who follows up with any support that is required, and he checks that the actions taken resolve the issue.

In response to materials not being available for two standards this year, the Principal's Nominee has already put in place plans for a more rigorous end of year check of the storage of materials.

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 is driven by the senior management team and the Principal's Nominee, but can be initiated through ideas brought to the Curriculum and Assessment meeting. This can then lead to the involvement of the wider staff, student and parents in the review process.

Recent curriculum changes from review include the introduction of semester courses to better engage students. The aim is to provide them with the flexibility to be assessed in standards they need for their future career pathway without having to complete a whole year's course. There has not been a large uptake this year, but the school plans to further inform students how they can use semester courses to their benefit, and it will continue with this in 2020. The school also added new full year courses – a combined Physical Education and Duke of Edinburgh's award course, Financial Literacy, and Agribusiness and plans to offer Earth and Space Science in 2020.

Another change this brought about by self-review has been to move school examinations to the end of term 3. This is to ensure students have finished internal assessments and are fully focused on achieving to the best of their ability in their external assessments.

The school has improved its communication to parents of students' assessment results and progress by giving them access through the parent portal to the student management system. As part of this improved access the school has also moved to fortnightly snapshot grades shared through the portal, so students and parents get prompt feedback on students' attitudes to learning. The school is monitoring access, and around 70 percent of parents are already engaging with this functionality.

The Principal's Nominee is new to the role this year. As the year has progressed, she has been reviewing and updating assessment systems to ensure consistent practice. A planned area for future focus is making greater use of the data in the student management system to support improved assessment outcomes.

Throughout the year, at the end of each unit of work, departments review assessment outcomes with a focus on student achievement and engagement. This results in prompt modifications to teaching practice and courses. Their findings and actions are recorded in a shared document so the Deputy Principal can monitor the process and offer support.

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)

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

- offering a range of academic and vocational focused courses
- differentiating assessment through the provision of several courses in core subjects and, where appropriate, tailoring assessment opportunities to individuals within a course through optional extra standards and/or withdrawing them from standards
- extending assessment opportunities through using a range of external providers to deliver:
 - courses the school is unable to offer
 - assessment against standards related to career pathways
- offering weekly tutorials throughout the year, for both targeted and self-selected students, and extra tutorials in terms 3 and 4 that are timetabled to minimise clashes for students
- ensuring that students potentially entitled to special assessment conditions are identified, support trialled, and that data is gathered to support school-based evidence applications
- clearly informing staff of students' special assessment conditions and readily providing appropriate assistance.

Kavanagh College has effective processes and procedures for:

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

Managing student assessment workload Course outlines are submitted to the Deputy Principal and he compiles this information into an assessment calendar. He negotiates changes with departments to reduce periods of excessive assessment before publishing the calendar to students and parents. The calendar is regularly updated to reflect course changes so both students and parents can see when assessments are scheduled.

In 2018 the school reduced the number of courses students are expected to undertake in Year 13 to five to help manage workload. However, a significant number of students still opt to complete six. This did result in the number of students gaining over 100 credits at Level 3 in Year 13 changing from around 30% to just over 20%.

Departments are encouraged to create courses that offer approximately 18 to 20 credits. The students spoken to were assessed in 22 or more credits in around half of their courses, with some courses assessing 25 to 30 credits. Close to half of the students in Year 12 gain over 100 credits at Level 2. Most students only need to gain 60 credits at each of Level 2 and Level 3 to gain their NCEA certificates.

The school should continue to consider the impact of assessing a high number of credits, and if reducing the amount assessed could improve student assessment outcomes.

Māori and Pacific student engagement and success Achieving equitable outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students has been a focus of the Dunedin Catholic Schools' Community of Learning. The school is working with external experts looking at what does success for Māori mean, and partnered with local community groups to offer homework clubs.

Over the last five years there have been equitable success rates for Year 13 students of different ethnicities achieving in STEM subjects at Level 3. The school has appointed a Pasifika Dean this year to further support students. They also plan to investigate the use of a 'significant other' to give individual support to a student, and to survey students and parents about what they think success looks like.

For consideration

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

- if reducing the number of credits assessed could improve student assessment outcomes.

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)

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

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

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

- teachers suggesting standards for external moderation and negotiating appropriate changes to the moderation plan
- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements.

Effective monitoring of internal moderation Processes assure senior management that all reported results are credible.

The Principal's Nominee or Deputy Principal visit each subject area annually to discuss moderation processes and formulate any actions required. Details of the meeting and the follow up of any actions are recorded and stored centrally. This ensures key staff are clearly informed and the school is able to mitigate possible continuity issues due to any personnel changes.

In larger departments the Head of Department also proactively monitors the completion of all aspects of internal moderation.

Develop a policy for the storage of digital assessment material As more assessments are being completed digitally the school should consider developing a policy for the storage of digital material. This will enable the school to ensure materials are secure, can continue to be easily accessed, shared with outside verifiers, and be available for external moderation.

For consideration

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

- developing a policy for the storage of digital assessment material.

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)

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

- assisting students to register and use their NZQA Learner Login, and their portal to the student management system, to monitor their progress towards gaining qualifications.

Kavanagh College reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting data files to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- reporting Not Achieved results as appropriate
- having Head of Department, Deputy Principal and Principal's Nominee checks of entries at key points in 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 a centrally stored current memorandum of understanding.

Student progress is tracked effectively, and interventions put in place to improve achievement outcomes

The school uses data effectively to track student progress, with a focus on improving student achievement outcomes. The school submits all entries in their first data entry file to NZQA, thereby ensuring students, parents and staff can see the full year's assessment programme. This allows them to track results and plan ahead.

Students who are at risk of not achieving are identified by Deans and/or the senior management team. Interventions are implemented as necessary to help students to improve their assessment outcomes.

Student progress towards meeting the literacy requirements for University Entrance is reviewed at the start of Year 13. A follow up conversation with the student ensures that if gaining University Entrance is part of their intended pathway, that a plan of support is initiated.

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))

Kavanagh College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive clear outlines for all courses they undertake through class teachers distributing them directly to students, and publishing them on the school's website
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to staff, students and their families using a range of methods
- the Principal's Nominee and the Specialist Classroom Teacher inducting new staff to familiarise them with the school's expectations for assessment and moderation processes.

Kavanagh College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- regular discussions between, the Principal's Nominee, Heads of Department and Teachers in Charge of a Subject at Curriculum and Assessment meetings
- using senior and year level assemblies to brief students about NCEA assessment and qualifications, with class teachers reinforcing messages
- presenting NZQA and school assessment related expectations at well-attended parent meetings and through regular and timely reminders in newsletters.

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, moderation, dealing with authenticity, derived grades and appeals, and felt their teachers applied them consistently.

The student handbook presents information effectively to students and parents

The student handbook is a comprehensive and user-friendly document. As well as explaining procedures it offers advice and guidance to help students make well informed decisions about assessments. This is emailed to students and parents, and is available on the school website.

Update the staff handbook The staff handbook is a cumbersome reference document and needs review as some of the information is out of date and does not reflect current practice. The Principal's Nominee is already aware of this and plans to update it.

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:

- update the staff handbook so it provides current and accurate information.