

Managing National Assessment Report

Mission Heights Junior College

May 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Mission Heights Junior 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
- *Mission Heights Junior College, Curriculum and Assessment Policies, 2019*
- *Mission Heights Junior College, Procedures for Managing NQF Assessment, 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *Mission Heights Junior College, NCEA Assessment and Course Booklet, 2019* (Student Handbook)
- *NCEA Parent Information Evening, Mission Heights Junior College, 2019*
- *Year 10 Assembly NCEA, MHJC, 2019*

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Teachers in Charge of:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Education
 - Science
 - Spanish
 - Social Studies.
- six 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.

Background

Mission Heights Junior College offers most Year 10 students an opportunity to be assessed in six achievement standards across five core curriculum subjects and an optional subject.

The key purpose is to prepare students as they transition into Year 11 in their new school, focussing on learning rather than high stakes assessment. The school believes that NCEA assessment opportunities for students can fall out of the learning rather than drive the learning.

The school works closely with neighbouring secondary schools to choose appropriate achievement standards, to contribute to the Level 1 NCEA qualification when they move into Year 11. These secondary schools also support Mission Heights Junior College internal moderation verification processes, as outlined in this report.

SUMMARY

Mission Heights Junior College

2 May 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

Mission Heights Junior College effectively manages assessment practice of achievement standards ensuring credible results are reported to NZQA. Self-review supports continued improvements in practice to meet student needs through personalised learning.

Learning programmes drive assessment practice. Students choose to be assessed against achievement standards in consultation with their teacher. Assessment opportunities are differentiated, whereby students are assessed using different rubrics aligned to curriculum levels and standards.

Strategically, the school has adopted a two-tier moderation process. Tasks are critiqued, and samples of student work are selected purposefully for grade verification by other subject experts both across school subjects and externally. Due to the limited number of achievement standards assessed by all teachers, the Principal's Nominee randomly selects student work to be verified at surrounding secondary schools. This process provides teachers with confidence for the verification decisions they make and upskills their ability to make sound assessor judgements.

As a consequence of these robust internal moderation processes, external moderation agreement rates between teachers and NZQA moderators have improved significantly over the last three years.

Reflective practice is embedded in quality assurance processes. Teachers annually review the achievement standard they have assessed and make informed changes to task design. Student achievement outcomes are reported to the Board of Trustees in terms of the standards offered, distribution of grades and contribution to NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements.

Student results are closely checked for completeness and accuracy and are reported to NZQA in a timely fashion.

Communication is thorough and accessible, with a variety of modes used to engage all school stakeholders. The Principal's Nominee has digitalised all published documentation which allows frequent review to reflect changes in practice.

The Principal's Nominee has a thorough knowledge of school processes and manages changes and issues to improve current practice. Staff acknowledge her professionalism, approachability and support. The Principal's Nominee is supported in her work by the Principal, who alongside the staff, support students to achieve.

Areas for improvement

The school identifies students requiring Special Assessment Conditions but does not apply to NZQA for approval of these conditions as it assesses only internal achievement standards. All students using Special Assessment Conditions for assessment should have an NZQA-approved entitlement, so that access to appropriate assessment conditions is available for the remainder of their senior secondary assessment years

Documentation on the *Privacy Act 1993* only refers to student results. As discussed with senior management, it should also include reference to the protection of samples of student work.

Agreed action

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

- apply to NZQA for approval to provide Special Assessment Conditions for students being assessed against achievement standards
- update documentation on privacy requirements to ensure students' permission to use samples of their work for exemplars or benchmarking.

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13 June 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 6 April 2016 Managing National Assessment Report The two agreed items from the previous Managing National Assessment review have been actioned. School documentation has been updated to reflect current practice and the staff handbook is now reviewed annually.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has an improving external moderation history with a current high agreement rate between teachers and NZQA moderators. This trend reflects strengthened robust internal moderation processes and the close monitoring by the Principal's Nominee of the completion of teacher's action plans in response to external moderation issues. Teachers are actively encouraged to seek clarification of issues raised by moderators so that they can take action to address them.

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 review of assessment practice for achievement standards occurs at a number of levels of the school's organisation. Regular Quality Assurance meetings between the Principal's Nominee and all subject areas require teachers to review:

- the achievement standard they offer in terms of its suitability and task design
- the outcomes of changes made to address issues identified in internal and external moderation.

Student voice is used by teachers to co-construct assessment opportunities, allowing the development of personalised learning programmes that reflect student agency and need.

Regular meetings facilitated by Learning Area Liaison teachers are held in each Whānau area to facilitate discussion on learning and achievement outcomes of which achievement standard assessment is one component. Mentoring of each student by Learning Advisors allows decisions from these discussions to enable review of the standards being offered to the current cohort of students.

On an annual basis, the Principal and Principal's Nominee, through the NCEA Learning Area Group, review all standards offered by the school to ensure that they are meeting student needs. The Group also evaluates the adequacy of preparations to transition students to senior secondary school.

To review standards offered the Principal's Nominee liaises closely with its main destination secondary schools. This ensures that these schools are aware of which

standards students have achieved to support students to be effectively integrated into NCEA Level 1 the following year.

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)

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

- designing rubrics enabling students to be assessed against curriculum levels and / or achievement standards
- conferencing with students to enter or withdraw from assessment in specific achievement standards
- scaffolding learning and contextualising assessment tasks to be relevant and better engage student interest
- using formative assessment activities, milestone checks and feedback / feedforward to prepare students for assessment opportunities
- gathering authentic evidence using a range of techniques including written, digital, oral, presentation and production activities.

Mission Heights Junior College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide practice on missed and late work, extensions, resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- investigating appeals following the principles of natural justice
- ensuring student work is authentic using a variety of strategies.

Special assessment condition applications to NZQA The school should apply to NZQA for approval to use special assessment conditions for students who may need barriers to fair assessment to be removed when completing achievement standards.

The Special Education Needs Co-ordinator uses school-based evidence to identify students requiring special assessment conditions. These students are adequately resourced to complete assessment opportunities. However, because these students are not entered for external achievement standards approval is not sought from NZQA.

Applications for special assessment conditions in Year 10 would also mean that the students approved would have their conditions rolled over for the start of Year 11 at their secondary school destination.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- apply to NZQA for approval to provide special assessment conditions for students being assessed against achievement standards.

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)

Mission Heights Junior College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use to confirm they are valid and fit for purpose
- using subject specialists to verify a strategically selected sample of student work
- documenting the internal moderation process by using the standard *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions.

Mission Heights Junior College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- randomly selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored
- encouraging teachers to digitally submit material.

Strategic selection of student work for internal moderation Strategically the school operates a two-tier internal moderation system to ensure confidence in teacher assessment judgements.

Samples of student work are selected purposefully across the school's four Whānau where standards are assessed at different times using different tasks or contexts for each standard. Grade verification is completed by subject experts within the school or externally.

The Principal's Nominee randomly selects eight standards which are verified at a nearby secondary school. Although extra workload, this approach is taken because annually teachers only assess one standard which limits the development of their expertise. The feedback they receive from the other school develops confidence in their assessment judgements, the capacity of the school to deliver credible assessment, and informs review of the tasks and the standards offered.

The robustness of this approach is evident in the significant improvement in external moderation agreement rates between teachers and NZQA moderators over the past three years.

Monitoring of internal moderation completion The monitoring of internal and external moderation is now documented online in a subject drive where samples of student work are also shared. The Principal's Nominee can readily identify issues and teachers are required to address these in a timely manner.

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)*

Mission Heights Junior College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- annually reviewing the tasks and achievement standards in each subject to ensure suitability
- reporting to the Board of Trustees the number of achievement standards assessed, the distribution of grades and progress students have made towards NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements

Mission Heights Junior College reports accurate achievement data by:

- systematically recording student achievement
- having appropriate checks to ensure results are complete and accurate before they are reported to NZQA
- submitting results to NZQA in a timely manner

Using data to monitor and track student achievement progress The school has effective processes for monitoring and tracking all students who are assessed against achievement standards.

Learning Advisors meet with students when appropriate to discuss progress with achievement standard assessment.. Conversations focus on the student's readiness to be assessed against standards and the understanding of the assessment process. Learning Advisors liaise with parents and the Principal's Nominee to resolve issues and inform teachers of the suitability of the standards chosen for assessment.

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))

Mission Heights Junior College has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating consistent NCEA information, assessment policy and procedures through:
 - publication in physical and digital forms of staff and student assessment and course booklets
 - student assemblies
 - parent information evenings.
- providing course outlines online for all subjects offering achievement standards detailing specific tasks and assessment requirements
- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year via emails
- regularly reviewing assessment practices and updating changes online
- widely distributing information on financial assistance to cover all students who may be eligible.

Mission Heights Junior College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- regularly discussing best assessment practice at meetings with subject teachers and the Learner Area Liaison Teacher in each Whānau
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with assessment and moderation processes and expectations
- requiring subject teachers and Learning Advisors to ensure that students understand what is needed to successfully complete assessment opportunities and how credits gained contribute to future qualifications.

Digitalisation of documented NCEA practice The Principal's Nominee has digitalised documentation, including moderation processes. This has led to more effective communication with staff and students as information is more accessible and processes can be more easily reviewed and changed to reflect current practice.

Privacy Act 1993 requirements Senior management have agreed to document the privacy of students' work to meet the requirements of *the Privacy Act 1993*. Current documentation only refers to student results. Permission is required from students if their work is used as exemplars or for exemplars.

Discussion with students and staff did, however, indicate privacy requirements were being adhered to.

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 documentation on privacy requirements to ensure students' permission is sought to use samples of their work for exemplars or benchmarking.