

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Alfriston College

5 June 2019

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Alfriston 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 Learners' and Whanau AC Way guide to NCEA Assessment Year 11 for 2019* (Student handbook)
- *The Learners' and Whanau AC Way guide to NCEA Assessment Guide Year 12 and 13 for 2019* (Student handbook)
- *Learning Leaders AC Way Guide to NCEA Assessment in Year 11-13 for 2019* (Staff handbook)
- *BOT Assessment Policy*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- New Zealand Curriculum Leader of:
  - Arts
  - Languages
  - Mathematics
  - Physical Education
  - Social Sciences
  - Technology
- 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

## Alfriston College

5 June 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

Alfriston College has responded to the significant issues identified in the last Managing National Assessment review and now demonstrates an effective culture of self-review of its NCEA assessment practice. Since the last review, the school identified areas of improvement, and implemented changes to ensure the credibility of assessment. They now better utilise the flexibility of the NCEA model to meet the needs of their students.

As part of the self-review process, the college has developed a number of standardised systems to ensure school-wide assessment practice is consistent. The review indicated the school has the capacity to embed and have ownership of these new processes.

Alfriston College puts learners needs, interest and ability at the forefront of decision making. The students are at the centre of all discussions and the focus of all Learning Leaders. Support includes *Personalised Learning Pathways Plans* which are monitored through the mentoring programme. Students report feeling well looked after and talked about the support, communication, planning and the setting of goals that were happening at all senior year levels. They were also appreciative of the focus on their mental wellbeing and felt they were being educated to be good contributors to society in the future in addition to their academic studies.

Internal moderation processes are well understood and consistently applied by the teachers involved in the review. External moderation is effectively used to assure the quality of internal moderation processes, including ensuring tasks meet the requirements of the standard.

Data analysis is used to inform changes to programmes. Each Learning Leader uses the analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of their courses. This information is shared with the Curriculum Leader, but it has been suggested that it is shared with departments as part of their professional learning and to enable discussions for improvement for all staff.

The Principal's Nominee has systematically reviewed all assessment documentation to ensure that it is current and fit for purpose. These updates have supported school wide consistency and understanding of school assessment processes and NCEA.

### **Areas for improvement**

With the review of all documentation the school has implemented processes to ensure the credibility and robustness of their internal moderation system. They now need to embed the new processes including using the newly modified *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*, and other assessment procedures.

To ensure consistency of practice New Zealand Curriculum Leaders are encouraged to share findings from their Learning Leaders programme reviews.

The college's data checking processes can be strengthened by ensuring that all internal entries have a result attached or are withdrawn if there has not been an adequate opportunity to be assessed.

### **Agreed action**

The school agreed that the following action will improve the quality of their assessment system.

- ensure that all internal entries made to NZQA have a corresponding result attached.

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7 August 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 11 August 2017 Managing National Assessment Report** The College has addressed the significant issues identified in the 2017 Managing National Assessment review.

- The college has resolved all the communication issues identified in the 2013 and the 2017 Managing National Assessment reports. The actions taken are detailed in this report.
- The Principal's Nominee has developed effective monitoring of the completion of internal moderation and the Curriculum Leaders spoken with provided evidence that they are meeting the college's requirements.

The agreed actions have been addressed in the following ways:

- There are now clear guidelines regarding the resubmission process which is understood by all learning leaders and students.
- The Principal's Nominee has redesigned the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to ensure clarity and to reinforce sufficient and purposeful selection of student work for internal moderation

**Response to external moderation outcomes** External moderation is used to confirm the credibility of grades submitted to NZQA. To confirm actions taken have addressed issues identified in external moderation, the Principal's Nominee requires all Learning Leaders to respond through an *External Moderation Action Plan* form. Learning Leaders summarise the issues identified in the report, detail the cause and state how this might affect other work outside the sample selected. They detail next steps to address the issue and identify the key people who can assist. The Learning Leaders decide whether professional learning, additional resourcing or guidance through external networks is required. The action plan is discussed with the Curriculum Leaders with timeframes, agreed outcomes and what evidence will confirm that plan has been implemented and effective. The Principal's Nominee ensures this is completed.

### 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)*

**Curriculum review leads to improvement** The vision of the school is to put the needs of the students at the centre of all changes at Alfriston College. The college continues to review how they deliver the assessment tasks and adapts its programmes to best meet the learning needs and interests of their students. At Level 1 they have three per year trimester courses.

There are two types of courses:

- **Project Based Learning** Each course has two teachers deliver assessment of three standards under a common theme. Each course of study is connected, authentic and relevant to the theme. The design of the program has evolved from assessments from three different curriculum areas to three standards from the curriculum areas of the Learning Leaders. After discussion the college acknowledged the need for subject specialists to deliver the content and conduct the assessment required for each assessment task.
- **Passion courses.** These are based on one curriculum area and can be taken as three individual trimester courses to make up a year's course of study. This allows students to follow an area of interest for example in Visual Arts, Languages, Mathematics.

At Level 2 and 3, courses run in semester blocks. This allows more in-depth study and also allows students to continue with a course of study leading to tertiary study. Approximately one third of all Year 12 and 13 students are involved in a tertiary pathway course where Year 12 students are off site one day per week and Year 13 students two days per week. For students to be able to participate in these external courses the college has made structural changes to their timetable to meet the variety of learning needs of the individual students.

There is ongoing review of the assessment programmes in response to the learning needs of the students. Data shows that the achievement at Level 1 is below the school's expectation and of other similar schools. The school is developing programmes to address this. This year the school is responding to the low numeracy achievement in level 1 in 2018. They have introduced a practical numeracy course to meet the requirements of students with low numeracy skills.

**Review of college leadership structure to best meet student needs** The college has reviewed its pastoral structure to best support all learners' academic achievement. In response to an identified lack of ownership around the pastoral and academic needs of students, the question was asked – How can we change our leadership structure to best support each individual student?

The college has moved from vertical form classes to horizontal, and introduced New Zealand Curriculum Leaders. All learners now have amokura who, along with all other teaching staff, mentor and guide students. As a result of these changes there is now greater ownership and support for students with assessment and achievement.

#### **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)*

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

- developing a Māori Health Academy to address inequality in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects
- extending assessment opportunities by engaging external providers to deliver:
  - Secondary Tertiary programmes
  - Gateway and STAR courses
  - assessment against individual standards related to career pathways
- collecting evidence of student achievement in a variety of ways, including through portfolios, mini projects, practice tasks and group activities
- providing project-based learning programmes to meet student interest and learning needs
- assessing students when they are ready, as appropriate.

### **Alfriston College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on late and missed work, extensions, resubmissions, and further assessment opportunities
- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules and student appeals of assessment decisions
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993* when returning student assessment and maintaining exemplars.

**Assessment practices meet NZQA requirements** Actions taken after the Managing National Assessment review in 2017 have resulted in clear procedures and practices around assessment. These include clear documentation, shared understanding around late and missed assessments, extensions, resubmissions and further assessment opportunities. All staff and students interviewed were aware of the expectations.

### **Personalised Learning Pathway Plans support student achievement outcomes**

Students have a daily tutor group meeting with their amokura to provide academic mentoring and goal setting, with an emphasis on providing assessment support for students. In addition, students have an in-depth individual discussion with their amokura every 2 weeks. These meetings involve:

- discussing individualised programmes and goal setting
- discussion around what they want to *Stop, Start, Continue*
- what needs to be done to achieve their set goals
- tracking and monitoring academic progress.



Learning Leaders also provide guidance within their programme to support students and many will adapt assessment programmes to best suit the learner. Curriculum Leaders monitor over all student achievement, and guide and advise them in consultation with the teacher. Students reported feeling well supported and spoke positively about teachers' communication, support with planning, assessments and the schools focus on their mental wellbeing.

**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)*

### **Alfriston College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- using suitably qualified subject specialists both within and outside the school to verify a strategic selected sample of student work to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- documenting the internal moderation process by using the schools own *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- New Zealand Curriculum Leaders monitoring that all standards have been subject to the internal moderation process prior to reporting results to NZQA.

### **Alfriston College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- using the schools newly developed *External Moderation Action Plan* template to address issues identified in external moderation
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

**Need to embed newly established internal moderation grade verification process** Two sections of the internal moderation process have been emphasised by the college; critiquing and verification. Learning Leaders critique all tasks prior to use and this is monitored by Curriculum Leader.

The second section focussed on is the verification of student work. Curriculum Leaders currently assure the quality of grades awarded by selecting student work at grade boundaries as well as other identified scripts. Identified scripts could be those that the Learning Leader has difficulty making an informed judgement over. They use a verification sheet which notes the reason for selection for verification. This has ensured that internal moderation has been streamlined and resulted in consistent schoolwide practice, although this still needs to be embedded. New Zealand Curriculum Leaders monitor the internal assessment practice in their departments and report to the Principal's Nominee on completion.

### **For consideration**

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

- strategies for embedding the new internal moderation process and the use of the college's newly developed *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*

## 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)*

### **Alfriston College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- using NCEA data to inform course and programme design to meet the interests, aspirations and abilities of all students
- using NZQA statistical reports to analyse results comparatively, and to reflect on, and identify next steps.

### **Alfriston College reports accurate achievement data by:**

- timely reporting of results to NZQA
- using the NZQA key indicators to identify and resolve data errors
- requiring students, Learning Leaders and New Zealand Curriculum Leaders to check the accuracy of entries and reported results.
- annually reconciling memorandum of understanding with the provider codes of externally reported results.

**Effective use of data to affect change** Alfriston College has moved from generic Board of Trustees reports to each Learning Leader selecting a course of study that may have produced anomalies, low achievement rates or interesting data to analyse and report on. Learning Leaders look at any variations and comment on the equity of outcomes, and report this to their Curriculum Leader. The report is the starting point for discussion where departments look at the outcomes and explain the next steps for the course of study. This practice needs to be extended to provide professional learning within and across departments to further support the learning needs of all students.

**Ensure all internal entries have a result reported** The school must ensure that all internal entries have a result reported or are withdrawn if the student has not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed. In 2018, 5% of internally assessed standard entries were reported to NZQA without a corresponding result attached. This has a potential for some student achievement to have been unreported, which could impact on the qualifications achievement.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior leadership agree on the following action to improve the management and use of assessment-related data. Senior leadership undertakes to:

- ensure that all internal entries made to NZQA have a result reported or are withdrawn, if there has not been an adequate opportunity for students to be assessed.

### **For Consideration**

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

- learning leaders sharing their analysis with other staff to inform change.

## **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))*

### **Alfriston College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- reviewing and updating student and staff handbooks on an annual basis to ensure they are current and fit for purpose
- ensuring students receive course outlines, using a common template, for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure through a variety of modes to staff, students and their families.

### **Alfriston College assists 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 changes
- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

**Improved access to information for staff, students and parents** Since the MNA review in 2017, Alfriston College has updated all of its assessment documentation including the development and introduction of handbooks for Students and Learning Leaders.

The student handbooks are given to each student and these are discussed at meetings with the year level co-ordinator as well as through Learning Leaders and amokura. All students spoken to were well informed and aware of the assessment processes detailed in the handbooks.

### **No action required**

No issues with the way in which the school maintained the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicated them to staff, students and families were identified during this review.