

Managing National Assessment Report

Albany Junior High School

May 2017

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Albany Junior High 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 review
- *Managing National Assessment, Teacher Handbook, Albany Junior High School 2017* (Staff Handbook)
- *Student Handbook, National Qualifications, Albany Junior High School 2017* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Year 10.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee and Heads of Learning Areas for Dance, Drama, English, Music, Social Science and Visual Arts, and teachers of Mathematics and Science and the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator.

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

Albany Junior High School is a middle school. It has offered some standards to students in previous years. This is the first year in which a class of students will become participants in a full NCEA Level 1 course.

SUMMARY

Albany Junior High School

03 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

Albany Junior High School assesses students when they are ready where appropriate. According to their identified needs and abilities students are offered a single standard in each faculty or become full participants in an NCEA Level 1 programme. Teachers negotiate these programmes with students and their families to support student achievement.

Sound internal moderation is becoming embedded. All teachers of NCEA critique tasks prior to use and hold benchmarking meetings to identify grade exemplars. They store all verified student work in departments and submit *Internal Moderation Cover Sheets* to the Principal's Nominee.

The external moderation agreement rate between moderators and teachers is high. Effective storage systems mean internally moderated material is available for external moderation. Departments develop action plans to effectively follow up any concerns identified in external moderation reports.

NZQA statistical reports inform course design and are used to check the accuracy of entries and results. The school ensures that only credible results are submitted to NZQA by checking that these are complete and accurate before they are reported. Data analysis informs decisions about entries into NCEA standards at student, department and school-wide levels and it is used to plan for ongoing pathways to senior secondary school. Any issues over task design or accuracy of grades awarded are identified through NZQA reports and these are effectively addressed.

Students and parents are informed about NCEA requirements through parent evenings, school assemblies and a student handbook. Students are encouraged to track their progress towards gaining credits of an NCEA qualification through the NZQA NCEA app. Developed practice and understanding of NCEA is shared through the staff assessment handbook, and in department, and Head of Faculty meetings with Senior Managers.

Areas for improvement

The school's internal moderation monitoring checks need to be documented by the Principal's Nominee. Greater emphasis on reconciling actual internal moderation practice with internal moderation documentation will provide clarity about the effectiveness of current teacher practice. Teachers are not always making a purposeful selection of marked work for verification by another subject expert or

documenting their reasons for awarding a grade. This is important for teachers to develop standard-specific expertise.

The current random selection of samples of marked student work for external moderation does not meet NZQA requirements.

The further assessment and resubmission processes need to be made clearer in the next version of the staff handbook. Following the school's decision to enter students for external standards the processes for managing derived and emergency grades, and special assessment conditions also need to be updated.

Agreed action

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

- ensure that teachers document a purposefully selected sample of student work for verification on the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheets* to inform future decisions
- document the outcomes of audits of departments internal moderation processes
- ensure the random selection of student work for external moderation meets NZQA requirements
- review the staff handbook to update assessment procedures.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

26 July 2017

NZQA

0800 697 296

www.nzqa.govt.nz

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 the 29 May 2013 Managing National Assessment Report

There were three action items in the previous Managing National Assessment review. Two of these required clarifications to communications. These have been addressed.

The third action item required:

- that the staff supplement is clear on
 - internal and external moderation requirements
 - the school's system to monitor that internal moderation is complete and satisfactory
 - the processes for random selection of student work for external moderation purposes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6).

Internal moderation practices are sound, with teachers interviewed following the school's procedures, however the monitoring of internal moderation needs strengthening.

Response to external moderation outcomes The most recent external moderation round was in March 2017. The school's high external moderation rate reflects agreement between teachers and moderators. Where the external moderation results indicate the need to make changes to practice, the Principal's Nominee requires staff to complete a written response and develops an action plan. Strategies to improve agreement rates include attendance at Best Practice Workshops, checking that assessment materials are fit-for-purpose and identification of more suitable verifiers. The Principal's Nominee checks that any action plans have been completed before standards are offered again.

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)

Recent changes as a result of reflective practice include:

- teachers selecting, for assessment, a single standard in each learning area at Year 10 that reflects student abilities and interests
- using year 8 and 9 student data to identify students who are going to be offered an opportunity to participate in a full NCEA Level 1 course at Year 10 this year
- aligning standards assessed at Albany Senior High School with Albany Junior High School course design to provide better connection to, and foundation for, future secondary assessment pathways for students
- annual review of the staff handbook to include a flow chart on internal moderation.

These examples illustrate the school's capacity to effectively meet student assessment needs, proactively identify issues, and to resolve these to ensure student needs are met.

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 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)

Albany Junior High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the needs of their students by:

- providing assessment of individual achievement standards to support future NCEA learning pathways at senior secondary school, and to meet each students' interests and abilities
- using digital tools, such as Google docs and blogs, to gather credible evidence of student achievement
- gathering evidence of student achievement through portfolios, practical activities and performances
- enabling students studying a sufficient number of credits in NCEA to meet the requirements for Level 1 literacy and numeracy through assessment of a range of standards

Albany Junior High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment
- reporting Not Achieved, where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity and submitted no work
- managing authenticity and breaches of the rules through a shared knowledge of process and strategies for staff, students and families
- providing one further assessment opportunity where appropriate and managing resubmission and reassessment practices
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Systems support students who may be entitled to special assessment

conditions School-based evidence is gathered through the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator where students may be entitled to special assessment conditions. These students are generally identified before they reach Year 10. Early identification through testing reduces barriers for students who may need to apply for special assessment conditions. The information in the staff handbook needs to be updated to provide greater clarity about this process,

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)

Albany Junior High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- **managing internal moderation by:**
 - critiquing new or altered assessment activities before they are used
 - holding benchmarking meetings to develop their understanding of grade boundaries
 - using subject specialists from within and outside the school to verify assessment decisions
 - reflecting on external moderation feedback to inform changes to internal assessments and verified internal assessment decisions
 - updating and using exemplars to inform assessment decisions.

Albany Junior High School has effective processes and procedures for

- **managing external moderation by:**
 - ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being adequately stored
 - submitting work required by NZQA for external moderation.

Documentation of moderation processes needs to reconcile with actual practice Teachers interviewed confirmed that the Principal's Nominee annually visits their department to reconcile *Internal Moderation Cover Sheets* with actual practice, but this is not documented. The school's internal moderation processes are sound but need to be better documented in two ways:

- Teachers need to document on their *Internal Moderation Cover Sheets* assessment decisions made for a purposeful selection of student work, to inform future decisions
- The Principal's Nominee needs to document the outcomes of moderation audit visits to departments.

Ensure the process for random selection of external moderation samples is not adjusted The Principals' Nominee, who manages the published random selection process, explained that sometimes she adjusts the random selection list to ensure that the school receives feedback on all levels of grades awarded. NZQA expects that feedback of this nature would occur during internal moderation, where teachers are encouraged to have grades verified on a purposefully selected sample of marked student work. External moderation serves another purpose as an independent check of a random selection of grades awarded.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure that teachers document on the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheets* assessment decisions made on a purposefully selected sample of student work for verification to inform future decisions
- document the outcomes of audits of departments' internal moderation processes
- ensure the random selection of student work for external moderation meets NZQA requirements.

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)

Albany Junior High School effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - systematically recording student achievement through the student management system
 - tracking student progress towards NCEA goals, literacy and numeracy
 - informing course and programme design to meet identified student needs.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner
 - making appropriate checks to ensure entries and reported results are complete and accurate.

Annual analysis of results The school uses their annual analysis of results to reflect on the future selection of standards to meet students' abilities and interests. For example, the school now offers a broader range of achievement standards, for students to achieve literacy and numeracy, rather than using the unit standards pathways, and is entering student into external assessments. As a next step the school will need to consider whether the move to external assessment and whole class engagement have been successful.

The student management system is used to provide data summaries to teachers who use a common template to complete data reports. These form the basis of school-wide reports by the Principal to the Board of Trustees. Results are evaluated and comment on barriers and enablers relation to their NCEA courses are shared with senior management.

For consideration

To extend good practice in meeting student needs and supporting assessment practice, the school is encouraged to consider:

- whether the move to external assessment and whole class engagement have been successful.

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)

Albany Junior High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake in advance of their assessment
- communicating assessment policy and procedure, and the requirements for NCEA, to staff, students and their families
- ensuring teachers new to the school are supported in their understanding of NCEA by peer-mentoring them with experienced teachers of NCEA.

Albany Junior High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- assisting students and their families to monitor NCEA progress through the parent portal, Learner login and NZQA NCEA app
- reinforcing teacher understanding of NCEA assessment processes department and at staff meetings using Mythbusters to inform discussion
- supporting teacher attendance at Best Practice Workshops and subject association meetings
- providing opportunities to discuss changes to the standards offered in their courses with Senior Managers and Heads of Faculty.

Staff and student handbooks updates required The published staff handbook must be reviewed annually to clarify assessment procedures so that these align with current good practice, and to keep pace with the introduction of external assessment.

Changes to the assessment handbooks should include:

- separation of the sections on further assessment and resubmission to add clarity and reflect actual practice
- the requirements to provide standards-based evidence to report derived and emergency grades
- updating to the section on special assessment conditions to include information on the application process and how the provision of conditions is resourced.

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:

- review the staff handbook to update assessment procedures.