

Managing National Assessment Report

Lynfield College

March 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Lynfield 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 2018* (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
- *Lynfield College Staff Assessment Guide 2018* (Staff Handbook)
- *Lynfield College Assessment Policy 2018*
- *Lynfield College Assessment Procedures*
- *Lynfield College Student Assessment Guidelines 2018* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, the Deputy Principal responsible for Teaching and Learning, three students and Faculty Leaders for Arts, Health and Physical Education, Language and Languages, Mathematics, Science, and Technology.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Principal's Nominee and the Deputy Principal responsible for Teaching and Learning 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

Lynfield College

15 March 2018

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

Lynfield College has developed effective practices and self-review processes which support students to meet their achievement goals. A consistently high proportion of senior students have programmes of study that lead to an NCEA qualification and the success rate of these students is testament to effective teaching and assessment programmes teachers provide. Students are carefully guided into courses that teachers believe will lead to successful achievement outcomes.

Self-review occurs within existing procedures and is usually based on the analysis of data. Amendments to courses are made as needed, as a result of this analysis. Assessment practices are sound and teachers have a thorough understanding of schoolwide expectations and procedures to be followed. Some innovation in the gathering of evidence for assessment purposes is occurring.

Effective processes are in place to respond to any concerns raised in external moderation reports. Action plans are put in place in consultation with Faculty Leaders and the Principal's Nominee follows up to ensure completion.

There is also a shared understanding of the school's expectation that internal moderation and verification occurs according to the requirements of NZQA. Samples of work for verification are purposefully selected and verifiers are subject specialists either from the school or from another school. Random selection is appropriately used to identify material for external moderation purposes. The school has submitted more work digitally for external moderation than the national average.

Students' results for internal standards are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner. Any data issues that arise are identified by the school and efficiently followed up and corrected. Students use a sign off process to confirm the accuracy of their results and the school has introduced a buddy check process in which a second teacher confirms the accuracy of results before these are published. These thorough processes ensure that entries and results are complete and accurate.

A comprehensive student handbook and staff handbook are published. The school holds information evenings for parents and assemblies for students to explain NCEA processes.

Areas for improvement

A challenge for the school is to consider reviewing some fundamental practices even though these currently support the academic success of students. Over-assessment may be occurring, with students taking six subjects and achieving many more credits than is needed for an NCEA qualification. This is a workload concern. A start has been made by the school on this review process. A schoolwide strategy to encourage innovation in the gathering of evidence for assessment purposes could increase student engagement while at the same time potentially reducing both their and their teachers' assessment workloads.

The school does not currently have a systematic process to manage or monitor Memoranda of Understanding with external providers who offer courses to students. As this has the potential to raise questions about the credibility of these results, the school should conduct a review and establish a process to ensure that Memoranda of Understanding are current and fit for purpose.

With the use of digital tools for assessment and moderation purposes increasing, a policy on the storage of digital assessment material must be established to counter the risk of inadequate storage.

The published student handbook on NCEA procedures is a comprehensive document and the school further supports students' understanding by holding assemblies. However, a review of the effectiveness of these forms of communication to students should be undertaken to ensure students are equipped with the fundamental knowledge they need for success.

Agreed action

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

- review the process for managing Memoranda of Understanding
- establish a policy on the storage of digital assessment materials
- review the effectiveness of assessment communication to students.

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30 May 2018

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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 19 September 2014 Managing National Assessment Report

This report detailed two items to be actioned. These were to:

- apply for an extension to the school's Consent to Assess for standards offered in one Faculty
- investigate how the school can progressively increase the proportion of work that is electronically submitted for external moderation.

Both of these items have been actioned by the school. In 2017, the school submitted more work for external moderation using the digital pathway than the national average.

Response to external moderation outcomes

Senior leaders can have confidence that any issues raised in external moderation reports are effectively followed up.

The Principal's Nominee initiates and monitors this process. The previous Principal's Nominee reviewed moderation reports and agreed with Faculty Leaders the concerns that had been raised and what actions were to be taken. The completion of these actions was then monitored by the Principal's Nominee. The newly appointed Principal's Nominee intends to continue this process.

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 has developed a process of self-review within established procedures to meet the needs of students. Faculties are expected to prepare an annual Achievement Report which reflects on achievement in the previous year and a Curriculum Review that reflects on possible changes to courses in response to data. The latter is a "live" document with the intention that faculties will develop this as the year progresses to inform review.

The current very good achievement results of students in NCEA qualifications is indicative of successful processes. A challenge for the school is whether to engage in a review of some fundamental processes even if these are currently leading to qualification success for many students.

These fundamental processes may include the timetable structure, students taking six subjects, the use of mainly "traditional" assessment methods and the early direction of students into academic pathways that teachers believe will lead to academic success.

Some of these challenges are expanded upon later in this report.

No action required

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews 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 2018 5.5)

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

- using class profiles to identify ability
- designing courses based on students' needs and abilities
- differentiated assessment within courses to match student abilities
- in some cases, accepting evidence in a variety of formats that is appropriate to the assessment task
- publishing an annual assessment calendar
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements and providing these resources for internal assessment where appropriate
- extending assessment opportunities by engaging with outside providers to offer vocational and trade based courses
- monitoring the progress of priority learners through the Academic Dean and offering additional coaching, on a voluntary basis, as appropriate.

Lynfield College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring grades awarded are valid, authentic and verified
- providing one further opportunity for assessment when appropriate
- providing suitable opportunities for resubmissions
- investigating appeals by students of assessment decisions
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*
- ensuring derived grades are based on valid, authentic and standard specific evidence.
- managing missed and late assessments
- reporting Not Achieved where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- efficiently managing NZQA external examinations.

High level of student involvement and success in NCEA qualifications is notable The school is particularly successful in involving a significant proportion of senior students in academic programmes that lead to an NCEA qualification. Consistently good qualification rates further provide evidence of the successful preparation of students towards gaining their academic goals.

Careful consideration is given by teachers to direct students towards course options in which it has been judged that the students will be successful.

Innovation in evidence-gathering for assessment should be encouraged

Senior leaders should consider actively encouraging innovation in evidence-gathering for assessment purposes and developing a schoolwide strategy to address this. This has the potential to increase student interest and engagement.

A challenge for the school is to develop this strategy even though students are currently achieving well using more traditional assessment methods and some stakeholders (including parents) may find this approach difficult initially.

Some Faculty Leaders reported using innovative strategies but were a little reluctant to develop these ideas more fully without a clear schoolwide strategy.

Innovative strategies sighted included:

- project-based assessment for a usually traditionally assessed subject
- providing students with a choice about the format they could use to submit evidence
- using one body of work as evidence for assessment in more than one standard
- submission of digital evidence.

Assessment workload should be reviewed A review of the assessment requirements for students should be considered to address any workload concerns for both students and teachers. The school has already started to review this process by surveying certain students in 2017 and by senior leaders and faculty leaders holding some preliminary discussions on the issue in 2017. The school has set a goal to reduce the number of credits offered by 2019.

Students usually take six subjects with many subjects offering eighteen or more credits. This can lead to the gaining of many more credits than is required for an NCEA qualification. A critical question for the school is whether this amounts to unnecessary over-assessment.

No action required

No issues with the school's management of assessment for national qualifications were identified during this review.

For consideration

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

- developing a schoolwide strategy to encourage innovation in evidence-gathering for assessment
- reviewing the assessment workload of 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 2018 6.4b)

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

- teachers being clear in their understanding of the school's internal moderation requirements and expectations
- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work
- where appropriate, using verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the process using the Internal Moderation Coversheets
- keeping benchmark exemplars to inform future assessment decisions
- monitoring the completion of all moderation activities by Faculty Leaders and the Principal's Nominee.

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

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes
- actively encouraging digital submission of student work.

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)

Lynfield College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - accessing NZQA statistical reports to analyse results and to inform decisions about future course content
 - evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure they allow students to meet their achievement goals and inform changes to standards offered
 - tracking student achievement to identify priority learners at risk of not achieving their chosen assessment pathway.
 - annually publishing an Achievement Report and Curriculum Review from each Faculty to review achievement and develop action plans.
- reports accurate achievement data by:
 - ensuring that datafiles are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner
 - checking reports such as the Key Indicators to identify and resolve any errors
 - ensuring low levels of late external entries and internal entries with no results
 - using a “sign-off process” with students to confirm the accuracy of the internally assessed grades reported
 - using a “buddy check” system with a second teacher confirming the accuracy of results data.

The process for managing Memoranda of Understanding must be reviewed

The school has a number of Memoranda of Understanding with Providers who offer courses for students. The school reports these results to NZQA. The process for establishing and managing these Memoranda of Understanding should be reviewed to ensure that they remain current and fit for purpose.

The Principal’s Nominee does not currently have a systematic way to manage or monitor Memoranda of Understanding and this could lead to some reported results being invalid because they are outside of the provider’s consent to assess or have been inappropriately submitted to NZQA.

A policy on the storage of digital assessment material should be established

With an increase in the number of samples submitted digitally for external moderation and the growing number of opportunities for students to submit work for assessment digitally, the risk if this material is not adequately and securely stored is heightened.

Agreed action

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

- review the process for managing Memoranda of Understanding
- establish a policy on the storage of digital assessment materials.

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))

Lynfield College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring all course assessment outlines and other materials provide consistent information for students
- communicating concise and accurate assessment policy and procedure to teachers
- regularly reviewing the content of communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current
- supporting students to monitor their achievement through access to the portal into the student management system and through the student login to the NZQA website
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing online access to the information held on the school's student management system.

Lynfield College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- holding NCEA information evenings for parents and NCEA assemblies for students
- publishing staff and student handbooks containing assessment procedures
- ensuring Heads of Faculty and staff are aware of the school's NCEA policies and procedures and clarifying changes to procedures or expectations as needed.

The effectiveness of assessment communication to students must be reviewed

Although the student booklet published by the school is complete and informative and NCEA assemblies are held for students, the effectiveness of these methods of communication should be reviewed to ensure that students are fully equipped with the information on assessment and qualifications that they require.

Students interviewed during this review were unclear about some fundamental aspects of NCEA and some school processes. They had referred to sources outside the school to find information. This raises the question about the effectiveness of school communication in this regard.

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 effectiveness of assessment communication to students.