

Managing National Assessment Report

Western Heights High School

May 2025

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Western Heights High School

1 May 2025

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is effectively meeting the requirements of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022.

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.

As a school with effective assessment systems and practices for national qualifications, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three to five years.

Actions

Agreed actions

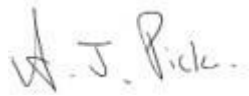
The school agreed that three actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. These are:

Action	Timeframe
External and internal review	
Review the staff and student handbooks to ensure information is current and fit for purpose	Immediate and ongoing
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Review the school's quality assurance process for creating, collecting, and reporting derived grades to ensure that they are credible and reported to NZQA within the required timeline	Prior to the end of year examinations
Report a result for all internal entries or withdraw the entry as appropriate	By the last data file submission, 1 December

For consideration

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

- supporting a consistent internal moderation verification process.



Amanda Picken
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Support

12 May 2025

NZQA

0800 697 296

www.nzqa.govt.nz

External and internal review

External review

Evidence of external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Items from 10 June 2021 Managing National Assessment Report This report identified five action items that would improve the quality of the school's assessment systems and practice for national qualifications:

- Ensuring staff responses to external moderation are effective, and planned actions are appropriately evaluated and recorded. The Principal's Nominee monitors all responses and discusses the effectiveness with the appropriate staff and Head of Faculty.
- Ensuring staff follow resubmission requirements. All staff and students are aware of the requirements for resubmissions, and the process is clearly defined in the staff documentation.
- Monitoring internal moderation by reconciling documentation with actual practice has been strengthened with the introduction of the use of the school's Student Management System moderation tool. The Principal's Nominee and the Senior Leadership team are now confident that all standards assessed have been subject to internal moderation. More details are discussed later in this report.
- The requirement to ensure information is current and fit for purpose has not been met. Despite updates to the assessment handbooks and a better understanding of assessment practices among staff and students, the requirement remains unmet. Following the previous review, certain areas of assessment practice need further updates in the school's documentation to ensure they are current, fit for purpose and reflect actual practice. These areas are discussed later in the report.
- Strengthening staff practices and processes for managing authenticity of student work has been comprehensively reviewed with details discussed in the internal review section of this report.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes The proactive measures taken by the school to address external moderation feedback demonstrate a strong commitment to maintaining high standards and fostering continuous improvement.

They have effectively addressed issues identified in external moderation feedback by updating processes and assessments in subject areas to prevent recurrence. The Principal's Nominee and Deputy Principal have implemented new systems to support responses to external moderation outcomes. When a report indicates "Not Yet Consistent" or "Not Consistent," teachers and the Head of Faculty review feedback and create action plans based on the external moderator's recommendations. Staff also review reports that are Consistent, to support informed assessment decisions. Subjects with trends of "Not Yet Consistent" and "Not Consistent" are well supported, although some changes in staffing have occurred, which the Principal's Nominee and Deputy Principal believe will address some of the issues. The Principal's Nominee and Deputy Principal, in discussion with the Head of Faculty, monitor the effectiveness of these actions. With time, the new system will be embedded with the goal of improving external moderation outcomes. All moderation outcomes and their effectiveness are recorded in the cloud on a shared drive.

The school has revised its systems to ensure timely submission of external moderation. Previously they had a moderation month and then in 2024 they were not submitting external moderation as results were being reported but waiting till the October date. This change over the past year enables timely submissions, enabling the school to receive feedback promptly and supports the change in NZQA's external moderation submission requirements.

Outlier reports In 2024, Western Heights High School had several internal/external outliers, as well as one for two consecutive years. Each Head of Faculty and the Principal's Nominee discussed these outlier reports, and as a result, the Principal's Nominee was confident that the reasons for their occurrence were due to the high internal component of their courses, leading to many students opting out of external assessments. Additionally, students who had already achieved their assessment goals did not feel the need to aim for higher external assessment grades. Teachers also spoke of how their focus in some courses were on the internal assessments more than the externals.

Internal review

Evidence of 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 thorough and systematic approach taken by each department at Western Heights High School demonstrates a strong commitment to continuous improvement and student success.

Each department completes two detailed reports, providing in-depth reviews and analyses based on data from internal and external assessments. This analysis examines trends in student achievement across various demographics, including Māori and Pacific peoples. These reviews align with teachers' appraisal goals, focusing on success and areas for improvement, which inform goal setting for the year. Teachers continually review their assessment processes, and the courses offered within their departments, supporting them in making informed decisions to best meet their students' interests and learning needs.

This comprehensive review process ensures departments are continually improving and adapting to meet the diverse needs of their students, enhancing overall student achievement and success.

Literacy and Numeracy Western Heights High School participates in the Te Manu Ka Rere program, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, that provides targeted support for Secondary Schools. Literacy and numeracy are now whole-school responsibilities, supported across the curriculum. Baseline data in literacy and numeracy has been collected on entry to the school and during year 9 and 10, and a review of data from previous assessments has been conducted. The school has decided that all Year 10 students will sit the dedicated co-requisite unit standards during the second assessment event. Additionally, Year 9 and 10 students who are at the appropriate curriculum level in the initial testing will be entered to participate in the first assessment opportunity of the year.

The school has developed a literacy course, Marau Ho Kainga, for students at risk of not achieving the literacy co-requisite requirements. This course includes Geography, Commerce, and Religious Studies standards. A numeracy programme that includes Level 1 Mathematics internal standards and Financial Literacy unit standards focuses

on developing skills towards achieving the Numeracy co-requisite or additional numeracy standards.

For those students most at risk of not completing the NCEA co-requisite in Year 12 and 13, the school assists this priority group by supporting them through the additional standards pathway. A global literacy and numeracy markbook support the tracking and identification of students at risk. This is used by the senior leaders and year level Dean's to support all students with literacy and numeracy and has ensured no student slips through the gaps.

These initiatives ensure that Western Heights High School is effectively supporting its students to achieve the co-requisite requirements and providing targeted assistance when needed. This comprehensive approach enhances academic performance and prepares students for future educational and career opportunities.

Authenticity and Generative Artificial Intelligence(AI) Western Heights High School has substantial and consistent practices embedded across all faculties, ensuring learner evidence for assessment is authentic. Students are explicitly taught how to ensure their work is authentic. Staff are also well-versed in detecting breaches of authenticity, utilising a variety of detection tools and extensive knowledge of students' capabilities gained through checkpointing, interviewing, and evidence gathering. Students and staff have a clear understanding of the processes for investigating suspected breaches, appealing decisions, ensuring equitable outcomes.

The school will be introducing 'The AI Guide' in Term 2, 2025, to provide staff and students with four guiding principles for using AI in education: Transparency, Accuracy, Process, and Expectations. This will support staff and enable students to be aware of the level of assistance AI may provide in their assessment tasks. These measures will ensure staff and students at Western Heights High School are well-equipped to maintain the integrity of assessments while responsibly integrating AI tools into the educational process. This comprehensive approach upholds academic honesty and prepares students for a future where AI is an integral part of education and professional environments.

Credible assessment practice to meet student needs

Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025)

STEM subjects for all students The school's dedicated efforts to promote STEM education reflect a strong commitment to providing diverse learning opportunities and preparing students for future careers.

Teachers of Science, Mathematics, and Technology encourage attainment in these subjects to provide access to future learning and career opportunities. Although current data does not fully reflect the school's efforts in STEM, the emphasis remains on providing opportunities for all learners as cohorts change. These include:

- the school proactively engaging external speakers to encourage participation in STEM subjects for all learners
- the availability of extension courses for all students through the School of Engineering at the University of Canterbury

- Māori students participating in medical school visits to the University of Auckland
- the Whakapiki Ake programme coordinated by mentors from the University of Auckland, supporting junior Māori learners in the sciences
- the Science department using external providers to inspire science learning for Māori students, such as the Pūhoro Science Programme through Waikato University, which has seen increased student engagement over the past few years.

These initiatives demonstrate the school's commitment to fostering a strong STEM foundation for all students, ensuring they have the skills and opportunities needed to succeed in future academic and career pursuits.

Review of derived grade quality assurance processes needed NZQA requires each school to document the quality assurance process, ensuring only credible derived grades are reported. The school needs to review its process for collecting, quality assuring and reporting derived grades to NZQA. At the time of the review, staff were collecting grades through inappropriate methods, such as gathering evidence based on demonstrated ability over time. Assessments should be conducted in a way that mirrors the format and conditions of the externally assessed standard. The verification or justification process used by each learning area must be documented to ensure that grades are derived from authentic evidence, specific to and covering all criteria of the standard. Derived grades must be reported before the beginning of the external exams to ensure they are available in the case of unexpected or adverse events. Templates to record this process and support the Principal's Nominee to monitor this process are available on the NZQA website.

Reporting entries with no results recorded Schools must report a grade for all entries if students have had an adequate opportunity or withdraw the entries if an opportunity for an assessment has not been provided. The school should strengthen its process to ensure that internal assessment entries without grades are appropriately withdrawn. If students have had an adequate opportunity to be assessed, a Not Achieved grade should be reported. Heads of Faculty should complete the initial review, followed by the Principal's Nominee and Data Manager, who will complete the final check to ensure that entries are withdrawn if students haven't had the opportunity to be assessed. This will improve the tracking of students' progress towards their intended assessment programme and qualification goals.

Ensure staff and student handbooks reflect current practice and are subject to a cycle of ongoing review Guides for staff and students should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose and accurately reflect current practice. Several required updates to documentation were identified in this review. These include the requirements for NCEA attainment, processes for generating and reporting derived grades, the use of consistent language to align with NZQA, and the process for selecting student work for external moderation. By keeping these guidance documents current, the school will strengthen the support for staff and students, particularly for those new to the school and/or less experienced with NCEA.

Moderation to ensure assessment quality

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025)

Robust internal moderation processes ensure credible results are reported

Western Heights High School's internal moderation process is embedded as part of the normal quality assurance practice in all faculties. To improve practice, the Principal's Nominee and Deputy Principal have introduced the use of the student management system (SMS) moderation tool. This provides the school with confidence that checks are in place to ensure all results reported to NZQA are verified and correct. The SMS tool allows senior leaders to monitor each step of the process, which includes the critiquing of the task, strategic and purposeful selection of student work for grade verification and the verification process. It also provides checks for results reported using an external provider. The Deputy Principal also conducts random standard checks to ensure the internal moderation processes have been followed before results are reported to NZQA.

Staff use a variety of methods to verify grades awarded to samples of student work. This includes group marking or moderation meetings within a department. The process is documented in the SMS moderation tool for each assessed standard. To improve this process, marker and verifier judgment statements could be more specific in some subject areas. More detail allows teachers to make better evaluations when comparing judgement comments with moderator reports.

The school's improved external moderation consistency rates reflect the improvements made to internal moderation practice. By implementing a robust internal moderation process and utilising the SMS moderation tool, Western Heights High School ensures the accuracy and reliability of student assessment results.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Western Heights High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its students by:

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are culturally appropriate focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations
- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers and extending the school's Consent to Assess if required
- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so students can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement
- providing credible opportunities for students to complete the NCEA co-requisite
- assessing students when they are ready
- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet student needs
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support
- providing opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- identifying and providing support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals
- implementing strategies to provide opportunities to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Western Heights High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed or late assessment
- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules
- monitoring the authenticity of student work using a range of strategies
- ensuring teachers and student are aware of authenticity requirements including the use of Generative AI
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Western Heights High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment judgements
- using subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a strategic selection of a sufficient sample of student work
- using grade verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes
- monitoring and documenting completed internal moderation processes to ensure only quality assured results are reported to NZQA.

Western Heights High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- selecting sufficient samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes and providing support for assessors where appropriate
- monitoring and documenting actions taken to address external moderation feedback
- using external moderation outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation processes.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

Western Heights High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- monitoring and tracking student progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure these allow students to meet their assessment goals, and inform changes to courses and standards offered
- gathering student voice to evaluate courses and assessment workloads to inform changes to programmes, contexts, and standards
- reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Western Heights High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date data
- checking Key Indicators and NZQA reports to identify and resolve any errors
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding.

Effective communication to inform staff, and students and their whānau about assessment**Western Heights High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive outlines for courses they undertake
- supporting students to monitor their achievement
- discussing assessment policy and procedure with staff, and providing updates of NCEA information throughout the year
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing opportunities for parents to discuss their children's NCEA goals, progress, and achievement
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction programme to understand school and NZQA assessment processes
- celebrating students' success.

Western Heights High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- communicating assessment information, such as holding NCEA information evenings for parents and NCEA assemblies for students
- informing students about suitable learning pathways
- supporting students to understand what they need to achieve to gain a qualification.

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Western Heights 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 whānau.

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 effectively meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022* (CAAS) and its *Guidelines* (CAAS Guidelines) to maintain their consent to assess; and
- to help schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment according to the requirements of the *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025*.

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- identifying the effectiveness of the school's review processes, assessment practice and quality assurance
- 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's consideration 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 five 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
- *NZQA Assessment Policies 2025 Staff handbook*
- *Western Heights High School Operational Policies*
- *NCEA Student Handbook*
- *The AI Guide*
- *TMKR Action Plan Western Heights High School – Te Manu Ka Rere* – targeted literacy and Numeracy support for schools.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum/Assessment
- Heads of Faculty for:
 - Business Studies
 - English
 - Digital Technology
 - Geography
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy 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.