

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Whanganui High School**

**May 2023**

# FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

## Whanganui High School

04 May 2023

### 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.

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2022.

### Actions and considerations

#### Agreed actions

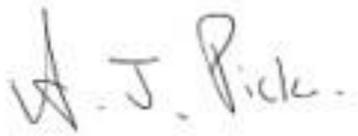
The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications.

Action	Timeframe
<b>External and internal review</b>	
Evaluate the effectiveness of responses to external moderation.	Immediate
<b>Credible assessment practice to meet student needs</b>	
Ensure all derived grades reported to NZQA have been quality assured.	Within the current year
<b>Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results</b>	
Strengthen the reporting process for the completion of internal moderation prior to submitting results to NZQA.	Immediate

### **For consideration**

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

- documenting the strategies used to address variance between attainment goals and outcomes, and their effectiveness.



Amanda Picken  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

31 August 2023

**NZQA**

**0800 697 296**

**[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://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 April 2019 Managing National Assessment Report** The Principal's Nominee has resolved two of the three action items from the previous report and made good progress on the third. Annual review of NCEA handbooks for staff and students ensures they are current. One learning area was reviewing samples of student work prior to providing them for external moderation which could have compromised the validity of the moderation sample. This issue has been resolved. The response to external moderation requires further strengthening to be fully effective.

**External moderation response to outcomes and processes** Senior leaders can have confidence that the responses teachers make to external moderation reports are well considered and thoroughly documented. Teachers engage well with the information from external moderation reports using the online reporting system the Principal's Nominee has developed.

There is further work required following up actions taken in response to moderation feedback, to evaluate the effectiveness of the changes made. The final step of review is for senior leaders to have confidence that the actions taken have either resolved the issues raised or have identified any further action that may be required. This will strengthen the support for learning areas where ongoing patterns of teacher grades being not consistent, or not yet consistent with the standard require greater attention to resolve.

### 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 school has effective internal review processes that enable teachers and department leaders to identify what works best for students and aspects of assessment that need to be improved or changed. Each department leader works with a line manager to reflect on past assessment performance, understand the current situation and to plan ahead.

It is evident from this review that teachers use assessment and attainment data to adapt courses to meet the needs of their students. An example of this is the development of alternative vocational courses at Level 1 and 2 to better support individual learners. It had been identified that the previous vocational studies course was not designed to meet the needs of all learners and that more flexibility with course design was required.

Thorough departmental reporting to senior leaders and the Board of Trustees connects department planning to the school's strategic goals. This helps to ensure a common focus on supporting literacy and numeracy and strengthening the understanding and use of mātauranga Māori in teaching and assessment practice. Leaders are aware of the attainment gap between Māori and other ethnicities, including in STEM subjects at Level 3, and between boys and girls generally. As

discussed below, the next step is for the strategies used to address these gaps to be evaluated for effectiveness.

At the time of the previous review an Academic Dean had been recently appointed to lead and support the pastoral team in effective coordination of support for students at risk of not attaining their NCEA achievement targets – particularly at level one and the literacy and numeracy requirements. The Academic Dean ensures all students receive mentoring support and follow up guidance. The approach is effective, as demonstrated by the school's results for Literacy and Numeracy being consistently higher than national averages.

**Strengthen review of assessment by evaluating strategies used to improve outcomes** Senior leaders have set student NCEA attainment targets for assessment and achievement priorities that have not all been reached. Therefore, it is important that school leaders review and revise the strategies being used to ensure they are effective or being adapted. The next step in this process is to document specific information about the strategies being used to address variance between the attainment targets and student outcomes. This should include an evaluation of the effectiveness of those strategies in review.

## **Credible assessment practice to meet student needs**

*Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2022 6-11)*

### **Well-managed support for students with special assessment conditions (SAC)**

The school has excellent processes in place to ensure that candidates eligible for SAC are identified and provided with the opportunity to access their entitlements for all assessment. Learning support staff work alongside the Principal's Nominee to provide effective support for teachers and students, with almost all of the evidence for determining eligibility for SAC entitlements being school-based. Teachers work with students to ensure that appropriate entitlements are offered for each assessment.

Students interviewed for this review spoke very positively about the support received for SAC, the agency they have over their use of entitlements, and the value of it to them.

**Quality assurance of derived grades requires strengthening** Senior leaders must monitor that quality assured grades are reported to NZQA for derived grade purposes. Quality assurance requires an expert 'second pair of eyes' to verify a selection of grades, or a justification process where this is not available to provide assurance that the grades are accurate and standard specific.

A process for teachers confirming to senior leaders that the outcomes for derived grades assessments have been subject to quality assurance prior to being reported to NZQA is required. This could include using the same or similar documentation to that used for internal moderation. Not all departments are currently meeting this requirement.

## **Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results**

*Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2023 11a)*

**Strengthen process for monitoring completion of internal moderation** The current system does not provide adequate assurance that internal moderation has been completed for all assessment standards prior to results being reported to NZQA. In order to provide NZQA with assurance that school processes support the reporting of valid results, the Principal's Nominee must strengthen the system of reporting by teachers, and check documentation to ensure the effective completion of this process.

Currently, all departments are required to complete a coversheet to attest to and document the steps of the process, and to store this with student work. In past years, the Principal's Nominee has arranged for, or conducted a system of checks (spot audits) in each department to ensure the completion of the process and to evaluate practice. This review found inconsistencies in the Principal's Nominees ability to access cover sheets when required for standards with reported grades.

## **Appendix 1: Effective Practice**

### **Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students**

**Whanganui High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations
- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers to offer courses the school is unable to offer
- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so students can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement
- 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
- engaging in Review of Achievement Standards pilots to prepare for future assessment
- identifying and providing targeted support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals.

**Whanganui 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
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have submitted no work
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

## **Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality**

**Whanganui 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.

**Whanganui 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
- monitoring and documenting actions taken to address external moderation feedback.

## **Effective management and use of assessment-related data**

**Whanganui 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 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.

**Whanganui 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
- conducting student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year
- ensuring low levels of late external entries, and internal entries with no results
- 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 families about assessment**

### **Whanganui High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- keeping assessment-related communications current and accurate, and reviewing communications to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- 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.

### **Whanganui 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 in order to gain a qualification.

## Appendix 2: Overview

### What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Whanganui 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.

### 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) 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 *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023*.

### 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
- *Whanganui High School Assessment Statement Section A: Policy and Procedures* (Staff Assessment Policy)
- *Whanganui High School Assessment Statement Section B: Senior School Assessment* (Staff Handbook)
- *Your Guide to NCEA: The National Certificate of Educational Achievement* (Student Handbook).

### The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
  - English
  - Mathematics
  - Performing Arts
  - Technology
- Teachers in Charge of:
  - Accounting
  - Digital Technology
- three students.

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