

Managing National Assessment Report

Woodford House

November 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Woodford House:

- 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
- *Woodford House Assessment Procedures for National Qualifications 2018* (Staff Handbook)
- *Woodford House Assessment Guidelines for National Qualifications 2018* (Student Handbook)
- *Woodford House Strategic Review Cycle*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the:

- Principal's Nominee, who is also the Deputy Principal -Teaching and Learning
- Assistant Principal – Student Outcomes
- Head of Department for:
 - Business Studies, who is also the Director of Innovation
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Education
 - Science
- Teacher in Charge of Drama
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Principal's Nominee, Deputy Principal - Student Wellbeing and Assistant Principal 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

Woodford House

1 November 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 issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

What the school is doing well

Woodford House has effective processes in place which ensure credible assessment for national qualifications.

Students are at the centre of any decisions relating to assessment practice. Assessment programmes, both academic and vocational, have been designed around student needs, and early testing, together with suitable applications to NZQA, ensure students eligible for special assessment conditions are appropriately supported.

Review of assessment practice is embedded in the school's strategic review cycle. Staff and Senior Leadership exhibit a high degree of ownership of the process.

The school has effective processes for managing assessment and moderation practices and these are applied consistently by staff. The online learning management system facilitates digital learning, and provides a tool for staff to ensure the authenticity of student work submitted for assessment and its storage.

Internal and external moderation processes are well embedded. The Principal's Nominee effectively monitors the completion of internal moderation processes by staff and the actions they take in response to external moderation issues.

Achievement data is analysed to monitor individual students' academic achievement, review school courses, and set strategic direction. Students are encouraged to take ownership of their results and use their online access to NZQA and to the school's student management system to check on the accuracy of their results and progress towards completing qualifications.

A range of effective communications are in place to ensure staff, students and parents have a common understanding of the school's assessment policy and procedures and the NCEA qualification.

Areas for improvement

The school should ensure that by the end-of-year data file submission, all internal entries are reported with a grade, or entries are withdrawn if a student has not had an adequate assessment opportunity.

The staff and student handbooks contain information that is out of date, or no longer reflects staff practice. Information on special assessment conditions entitlements and the use of student work as exemplars should be added. Updating the handbooks will ensure they provide users with not just appropriate, but current information.

Agreed action

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

- ensure all entries have a reported result or are withdrawn, as appropriate by, 1 December
- update staff and student assessment handbooks as outlined in the report.

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14 February 2019

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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 4-5 June 2014 Managing National Assessment Report There were no action items identified from the 2014 Managing National Assessment review

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has a robust response process for external moderation. Staff are required to complete an external moderation response form for each standard moderated. Where the outcome of moderation is other than Consistent, materials need modifying or there is disagreement between assessor and moderator over any grades, the steps they will take to address the issue must be documented. These are followed up by the Principal's Nominee to ensure any required support is supplied. Having departments deliver feedback on external moderation outcomes to the Board of Trustees, as part of their annual report, provides staff and Senior Leaders with the opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of any actions taken.

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)

Review of assessment practice is embedded in the school's strategic review cycle. Senior Leaders, departments and teachers all take ownership of the review processes. This enables the school to effectively identify, and then action, improvements in its assessment practices to meet the needs of its students.

Introduction of Faculty system Following evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's present department-based middle management system, the school has decided to introduce a Faculty-based system in 2019. Senior Leaders consider the new system will provide clearer reporting lines for staff, especially Teachers in Charge of subjects that do not clearly fit into a specific department. It should also facilitate the transmission of assessment information and the monitoring of assessment processes.

Introduction of new courses Heads of Department spoke of using achievement data and student voice as reasons for introducing new courses. These have been designed to meet student assessment needs and academic pathways. An example provided was the Level 3 Business Studies course based around the Young Enterprise Scheme. Students set up and run a real business. Evidence for NCEA assessment falls out of the material the students produce while running their business. The teacher noted that student interest and academic achievement has been very high, with one group within the class being judged Regional winners for the scheme.

Improved processes for identifying special assessment conditions candidates

Special assessment conditions candidates are now identified using school evidence. The previous practice of using reports from registered professionals created barriers to identifying students who might be entitled to support. More thorough testing of students in the junior school has provided evidence of need that supports this change in practice. Staff and students reported being well supported by the Diverse Needs Leader.

Teacher learning inquiries Several of the teachers interviewed as part of this Managing National Assessment review commented on using their learning inquiries to review aspects of their assessment practice. Examples included reviewing external moderation outcomes to ensure planned actions appropriately address issues raised by moderators and investigating patterns of achievement in internal and external assessments to focus on improving outcomes for individual standards.

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 2018 5.5)

Woodford House has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- expanding the range of vocational assessment opportunities available through local tertiary institute Trade Academies, and Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) and Gateway programmes
- using work and study skills unit standard numeracy assessments to assist those needing support to meet NCEA requirements
- negotiating the standards to be undertaken in some assessment programmes to reflect their needs, abilities, interests and future pathways
- ensuring staff are well informed of those with special assessment conditions entitlements and providing appropriate support as required
- assisting with the efficient management of NZQA external examinations.

Woodford House has effective processes and procedures for:

- helping students to present authentic work by using a range of suitable strategies during the assessment process, including online authenticity checking software
- managing missed and late assessments, further assessment opportunities and resubmissions, and student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules
- ensuring the collection of credible evidence to support derived grade applications
- complying with the requirements of the *Privacy Act, 1993* when communicating students' assessment information, and the *Copyright Act 1994* when using their work as exemplars.

School making good use of digital tools The school's Bring Your Own Device policy and online Learning Management System support digital learning and assessment. Senior Leaders noted that while its students are digitally ready to participate in digital examinations, the speed of its current internet connection makes this difficult. Once a fibre optic connection is established the school anticipates being able to enter students for NZQA's digital external examinations.

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 2018 6.4b)

Woodford House has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- Staff:
 - critiquing assessment materials prior to use to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and provide students with the opportunity to present evidence at all grade levels
 - using exemplars, standard clarifications and verification notes to inform grade judgements during the marking process
 - using subject specialists from within, and outside of, the school to verify samples of student grades
 - documenting all moderation processes on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*.
- Heads of Department checking teachers' internal moderation processes
- the Principal's Nominee monitoring school-wide internal moderation processes by:
 - collecting and collating copies of cover sheets to ensure all reported results have been through a quality assurance process
 - confirming department moderation processes through discussion at Curriculum Committee meetings.

Woodford House has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- storing assessment material securely so it is available for external moderation
- selecting samples of student work for external moderation using a random selection process that meets NZQA requirements
- providing appropriate staff with access to the NZQA external moderation application so that they can assist with the submission process, and view and query moderation reports
- ensuring teachers get feedback on specific standards by strategically selecting these for external moderation through the school's Assessment Plan
- requiring all external moderation, regardless of the standard-setting body, to follow the same processes
- departments reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees on the outcomes of their external moderation.

Clarify grade verification sufficiency with staff The school should consider providing staff with guidance on the strategic selection of student work for grade verification and other best internal moderation practice. There is no guidance on internal moderation processes in the staff handbook.

Teachers assure the quality of the grades they award by including work at grade boundaries for verification. However most of those interviewed verify more samples of student work than is required.

Strategic selection has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

For consideration

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

- providing staff with guidance on internal moderation best practice.

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)

Woodford House effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - assisting them to monitor their progress towards qualification requirements and meeting other academic goals through the online portal to the school's student management system and their NZQA Learner login
 - setting strategic academic goals based upon the comparative analysis of a range of achievement data
 - teachers analysing achievement data to inform course or programme design, and their academic inquiries
 - appropriately placing them in classes, with differentiated assessment programmes, to suit their academic ability
 - Deans monitoring their academic progress and providing mentoring, as appropriate, to help them meet their qualification goals.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - frequent and timely reporting of results to NZQA
 - ensuring low levels of late external entries
 - submitting fees paid and financial assistance applications on time
 - encouraging students to check the accuracy of their results the school submits to NZQA and report any errors.

Remove entries for students with no result The school should ensure that there is a result reported for all entries by 1 December. Where there is no result because there has not been an adequate assessment opportunity, the entry should be withdrawn. In 2017, there was no result reported in more than four per cent of entries for internally assessed standards. If tracking of progress towards qualifications includes these entries for which no results are ultimately reported, an inaccurate view of possible student achievement may be provided.

There are reports from NZQA and the school's student management system that can be used to help identify entries that have no reported result. Use of these would enable to school the either report a result or withdraw the entry, as appropriate.

Improve accessibility of stored Memoranda of Understanding The school should consider storing copies of all Memoranda of Understanding online. This would make it easier to reconcile results reported using an outside provider with the memoranda held. These are presently stored with the Pathways Coordinator and therefore not readily accessible to the range of staff who may need to access them.

A few student results have been reported this year against providers who do not have consent to assess the standards. These show as errors on the school's Key Indicators and data file submission reports. If not corrected or resolved, the students will not be able to access the results for qualification purposes. While the Principal's

Nominee is aware of these errors, currently he can only check for the correct provider code by viewing the Memoranda of Understanding the school has signed with its outside providers.

Agreed action

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

- ensure all entries have a reported result or are withdrawn, as appropriate by, 1 December.

For consideration

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

- making the Memoranda of Understanding it holds more accessible, to facilitate the reconciliation of results reported using external providers.

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))

Woodford House has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating information on assessment policies to the various sectors of the school community
- ensuring students receive appropriate information to help them understand what they need to achieve to gain a qualification
- providing information on students' academic progress through online access to the school's student management system.

Woodford House assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- Heads of Departments working with new teachers to ensure they understand school requirements
- providing students with consistent assessment information in course outlines
- the Principal's Nominee explaining NCEA requirements and school assessment processes, as appropriate, at year level and school assemblies
- providing teachers with information about assessment best practice and giving them opportunities to discuss changes in school or NZQA requirements at Curriculum Committee, staff and department meetings
- holding a mid-year NCEA information evening for parents.

Assessment handbooks require updating Both the staff and student assessment handbooks require updating to ensure the material they contain is consistent, current, reflects staff practice, and school and NZQA requirements. Information on the school's internal and external moderation requirements, obtaining and using special assessment condition entitlements, and student rights on the use of their work as exemplars for other students, should be added to the handbooks.

When updating the student handbook the school could consider rewriting it in language more appropriate to its student audience. This would make it more accessible.

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:

- update staff and student assessment handbooks as outlined in the report.

For consideration

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- rewriting the student assessment handbook so that the language used is more appropriate to its audience