

Managing National Assessment Report

Westland High School

August 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Westland 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, 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 2019* (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
- *NCEA Information, Westland High School, 2019* (Student Handbook)
- *National Qualifications Framework, Assessment Policies and Procedures, Westland High School 2019* (Staff 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 – Learning
- the Head of Learning for Science
- Teachers in Charge of:
 - Hard Materials Technology
 - History and Tourism
 - Visual Arts and Art History
- three students.

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.

SUMMARY

Westland High School

6 August 2019

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

The school has addressed the significant issues identified in the 2017 report. Senior management has led the change required to improve the school's quality assurance systems. Processes and procedures have been strengthened and teacher practice is more consistent. Staff understand their responsibility for ensuring results are credible through robust assessment practice.

This review found that the school has consistent assessment practice. Teachers and students interviewed for this report demonstrated a thorough understanding of the school's assessment policy and procedures. The school offers students a range of qualification pathways to meet their needs. Courses that appeal to student interests have been created to engage them in assessment. External providers are used to extend assessment and vocational pathway opportunities.

The school's moderation procedures ensure that only credible results are reported to NZQA. The process that has been developed since the last review has strengthened the robustness of internal moderation. Reconciling documentation against actual practice to monitor internal moderation is now an embedded practice. The school effectively addresses issues identified from external moderation. The historically high rate of agreement between teacher and NZQA moderator judgements attests to the robustness of the school's internal moderation system.

The school has made effective improvements to its data management and use. Data management processes ensure that student entries and results reported to NZQA are accurate. Tracking student achievement data enables Whānau teachers and the Academic and Pastoral Leader to monitor student progress towards gaining a qualification and provide appropriate support when required. Students interviewed for this report commented that this was a strength of the school.

School documentation is fit for purpose. Staff and student handbooks have been updated to reflect current practice. The school community is well informed about the school's assessment policy and procedures through a range of media.

Areas for improvement

There are no agreed action items. To extend good practice the school is recommended to consider having the Whānau teachers explain the student handbook to students during Whānau time. This will assist to ensure that students have a thorough understanding of the school's assessment policy and procedures and to further develop teacher understanding of NCEA assessment practice.

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18 September 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 April 2017 Managing National Assessment Report This review identified significant issues related to the school not meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*. From this review, the school was required to:

- follow-up external review recommendations and findings (CAAS Guidelines 3v)
- monitor internal moderation systems to ensure that only results that have been subject to the internal moderation process are reported to NZQA (*Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2017, 6.4b*)
- provide adequate and appropriate information about assessment processes to students (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i).

The follow-up review on 6 March 2018 found the school had made progress toward addressing these issues, which have now been fully implemented. This is discussed in further detail in the relevant sections of this report.

There were six agreed action items from the 2017 report. These were to:

- ensure that the reporting of derived grades is based on standard-specific evidence
- ensure that the final decision in the appeals process is by a person not involved in the investigation
- provide adequate resources to enable Whanau teachers to mentor their NCEA students
- ensure all entries submitted to NZQA have a reported result
- develop a school-wide understanding of all credible assessment practices
- ensure all teachers and students have an understanding of the *Privacy Act 1993*
- review and up-date documentation to reflect current practice.

Westland High School has addressed these by:

- subject areas purchasing commercial materials to use for the school's practice examinations
- having the Principal make the final decision in the appeals process and ensuring staff understand that he is not to be involved in any aspect of an investigation
- improving the provision of resources to support Whānau teachers mentor students, as detailed in the data management section of this report

- improving processes for checking data accuracy including staff taking more responsibility for managing data so that all entries now have a result reported or are withdrawn, as appropriate
- holding student assemblies and staff meetings to explain the school's assessment policy and procedures and updating school documentation to reflect current practice.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has an effective process to respond to external moderation outcomes. Moderation reports are discussed with Heads of Learning, Teachers in Charge of subject areas, the Deputy Principal and Principal's Nominee. Action plans are developed to address those standards identified as requiring action and the Deputy Principal monitors that these are completed. The school offers professional development support to teachers to assist assessment practice improvement when required.

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 now has greater capacity to review its assessment practices. The school reviewed its assessment practice and procedures and has made effective changes to address the identified significant issues from the 2017 review.

Senior Leadership has driven the changes necessary to improve the school's practice. Through a number of staff meetings the Deputy Principal and the Principal's Nominee made staff aware of the significant issues and what was required to address them. This shared ownership approach has led to improvement in assessment practice school-wide. Teachers understand the importance of having consistent assessment practice to ensure credible results.

School review has gone beyond the identified significant issues. A number of changes have been made to improve student achievement. The timetable structure was redesigned so that the school can offer a greater range of courses to students. The Principal identified that Whānau teachers for senior students need to have specialist knowledge about NCEA and qualification pathways. All Whānau teachers for senior students are now secondary trained, so that they can hold more effective academic and mentoring conversations with students.

The changes that the school has made have been effective in strengthening the robustness of their assessment practice and in providing a range of assessment pathways to engage students. The next step is for the school to develop its self-review processes to become an embedded cycle capable of identifying areas for improvement.

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 2019 5.5)

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

- using school-based testing to identify students requiring Special Assessment Conditions and making applications appropriately
- scaffolding and contextualising assessment tasks so that they are more relevant and engaging to students
- making portfolio and research-based assessments more manageable using milestone checks and templates
- offering extension opportunities for Year 10 students capable of undertaking NCEA assessments
- extending assessment opportunities by using external providers, such as the West Coast Trades Academy to deliver:
 - courses the school is unable to offer
 - assessment against individual standards related to vocational pathways
- assessing when ready, where appropriate.

Westland High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules and student appeals of assessment decisions
- ensuring derived grades and unexpected event grades are based on valid, authentic and standard specific evidence.
- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on late and missed work, extensions, resubmissions, and further assessment opportunities
- complying with the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*, when handling students' assessment information
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have not submitted work.

Assessment opportunities extended to engage students Student assessment needs are being met through a range of pathways that offer opportunities reflecting their interests. The school has introduced new courses that appeal to student interests within a new timetable structure that provides more choice and allows contextualised and personal assessment. The timetable offers a range of courses, such as Home Economics and Media Studies, to run during a double-period that students can choose to do either as a short-course for a term or as a longer programme, depending on their interest level. The new Rugby Academy engages students in assessments, particularly for literacy and numeracy, using rugby as the context. These courses, along with those provided by external providers, are

effective in assisting students to achieve their qualification goals and engages them in the learning and assessment process.

Equity for Māori and Pacific students The school has analysed its data on equity and has identified little improvement in student numbers succeeding in STEM subjects over time. The school is focusing on engaging students in STEM subjects within the junior school, so that they may continue participating in these subjects at senior level.

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 2019 6.4b)

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

- critiquing all assessment materials prior to use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- staff reviewing standard clarifications and using NZQA and school exemplars to improve assessor judgements
- using subject specialists, within and outside the school, to verify the grades awarded on a purposefully selected sample of student work
- requiring Heads of Learning and Teachers in Charge to ensure internal moderation is completed and documented for all standards assessed in their faculty prior to reporting results to NZQA
- Senior Leadership monitoring that internal moderation occurs and reviewing departmental moderation processes during the faculty review cycle at the end of each year.

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

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- annually checking that assessment materials and student work are stored and readily available if selected for external moderation
- valuing external moderation feedback for the clarification of grade boundaries, assistance with understanding of the standard and to confirm the robustness of the school's internal moderation
- discussing external moderation feedback with teachers, documenting actions and monitoring this is completed
- encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan.

Robust internal moderation process ensures credible results are reported The school has addressed the NZQA requirement to monitor internal moderation systems to ensure that only results that have been subject to the internal moderation process are reported to NZQA.

The school has an effective process for monitoring that internal moderation is occurring within the school and for assuring that only credible results are reported. To check documentation against actual practice, the Deputy Principal randomly selects standards that have reported results and checks that teachers are following and completing the school's internal moderation procedures. This process is now fully embedded as school practice. Teachers interviewed attested to their departments undergoing this process each year since its inception.

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)

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

- informing assessment programme design so that the standards offered match student strengths and interests
- annually reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA achievement, to inform strategic goals and actions.

Westland High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- reconciling results from external providers with which they hold a current Memorandum of Understanding, to ensure results are reported with the correct provider codes
- reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- ensuring all students attest that their entries and results have been entered correctly
- actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the student portal on the student management system and the NZQA Learner Login
- using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data errors
- ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn, as appropriate
- ensuring a low number of late entries for external examinations by teachers reviewing external entries after the school's practice examinations.

Data management enables effective monitoring of student progress Better data management has improved the tracking and monitoring of student progress towards gaining a qualification. The Deputy Principal has developed a process to track student progress using a spreadsheet. This information is shared weekly with Whānau teachers and the Academic and Pastoral Leader (APL).

Whānau teachers and the APL use this data to hold academic conversations with students and support them towards their qualification goals. Students are interviewed at the beginning of each year about their goals and aspirations. This information is held in the student management system so that more informative conversations occur when used in conjunction with the progress data. The APL monitors the data to identify those students that may be at risk of not achieving their qualification goals. The APL works with the students and their subject teachers to provide support as required. Students interviewed for this reported commented that the support and mentoring they receive was a strength of the school.

No action required

No issues with the school's management and use of assessment-related data were identified during this review.

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))

Westland High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all of their courses
- communicating consistent NCEA information, assessment policy and procedures
- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year via emails and staff meetings
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing online access to the information held on the school's student management system.

Westland High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- holding at the beginning of each year, a professional development meeting for staff, to inform and remind them about school policies, procedures and updates
- holding student assemblies to inform them of school assessment policies and procedures
- improving parental understanding of NCEA and the school's assessment procedures through an information evening.

School assessment documentation is fit for purpose The school has addressed the NZQA requirement to provide accurate and sufficient information to students about assessment processes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f)). The staff and student handbooks were reviewed following the 2017 report and redeveloped to ensure that the information is accurate and relevant to its audience. A standard template is used for all course outlines to ensure consistency.

To strengthen student understanding, the school could consider introducing the handbook to students during Whānau time. This will allow the Whānau teacher to explain the document in detail, reinforce the messages provided at the student assembly and ensure that the students have a thorough understanding. This would also develop the capacity of all teachers by developing their understanding of NCEA assessment practice and further ensure robust consistent practice.

No action required

No issues with the way in which the school maintained the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicated them to staff, students and families were identified during this review.

For consideration

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

- having the Whānau teacher explain the student handbook during Whānau time.