

Managing National Assessment Report

Oxford Area School

June 2022

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Oxford Area School

15 June 2022

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 2021*.

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 2021.

Actions and considerations

For consideration

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

- expanding the student appeals process to cover all assessment-related decisions
- reviewing processes to ensure that students register and use their Provider/Learner login so they can access the functionality it provides.



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9 August 2022

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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 31 October 2018 Managing National Assessment Report

The review identified a need to reconcile internal moderation documentation with actual practice. This has been actioned through an annual check by one of the Principal's Nominees in term 3. Several other actions to improve assessment practice have been successfully addressed through updating school documentation and upskilling staff in Heads of Department and section meetings.

Response to data issues 2021 results data showed a subject area as an outlier at Level 2. There was a difference between the school's internal and external results in the subject area and the national pattern for schools of a similar decile band. The school readily identified that the reason behind this was a strong cohort, with students achieving well in both internal and external assessment.

External moderation processes and response to outcomes The school has effective processes to respond to external moderation. These ensure senior management is aware of issues and involved in the review of outcomes where required.

Staff fully engage in the external moderation follow-up process with most departments making considered suggestions about which standards to include in the moderation plan and requesting appropriate changes where required. This helps to ensure that moderation is focused on current standards and areas of need.

Report outcomes are tracked by the Principal's Nominees. Any that raise concerns are discussed with the Head of Department and actions to resolve any issues are recorded. The completion of the actions is checked by one of the Principal's Nominees before assessment occurs again. Moderation outcomes show actions have led to improvement in assessor judgements in individual subject areas over time. The school is aware of, and working with, areas that require further support.

The school should continue to encourage teachers to use the function in the moderation application to query reports where they feel they would like further clarification or feedback. Staff should also make use of the new option to give feedback on the reports to help inform NZQA if we are meeting their needs.

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)

School self-review is focused on meeting student needs. This can be through a whole school focus or individual departmental plans, and considers student voice. Subject areas create annual goals that feed into department improvement plans covering both their own and school goals. Heads of Department have professional growth meetings at least termly with their mentor where they review progress and alter their plans as necessary. This process develops the capability of teachers in

departments encouraging them to take ownership of improving assessment practice to meet student needs.

A current area of focus is ensuring that the school continues to support the strong vocational pathways that are in place, whilst also increasing the academic pathways. This aims to keep students engaged, open more pathways, and provide greater opportunities for them to gain Merit and Excellence results and endorsements. Examples include adding in the option to undertake Achievement Standards in Technology and Agriculture courses that were previously focused on Unit Standards and refocusing the tracking and support of students. The use of predicted credits/grades to identify targeted students is now starting earlier in the year and is focused on students achieving their desired pathway.

Due to the size of the school, changes can focus clearly on meeting the needs of cohorts as they move through the school. At Year 9 and 10 students can take elective subjects, with some subjects being 'connected' such as Biotechnology. Providing a choice of subjects aims to keep students engaged and prepare them for choices with NCEA subjects. The connected subjects are designed to allow learning to happen in a more realistic context. The school is currently considering how NCEA subjects can build upon the connected subjects concept.

The Principal's Nominees review assessment practice and processes as issues arise. The guidelines around dealing with cases of plagiarism have recently been updated and shared with staff and students in response to a situation which was not clearly covered by the existing guidelines.

The school should consider also reviewing its appeals process as it currently focuses on appealing the grade awarded for an assessment. It should cover all assessment related decisions; for example, the timing of an assessment or the outcome of applying for an extension.

Staff are forward looking and considering the implications of the Review of Achievement Standards on their subject areas. They are participating in the Numeracy pilot and most staff spoken to have considered the new standards and are planning how they may alter their programmes to best support student learning progressions and achievement.

The school's approach to self-review helps ensure that concerns and potential improvements relating to assessment practice are identified effectively and addressed appropriately.

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 2021 5.1 – 5.7)

Increase student access to their NZQA Student/Learner login The school should consider reviewing their processes to ensure students register and use their Student/Learner login. Where students do not access their NZQA Student/Learner login, they cannot take advantage of the functionality it provides. This includes access to digital exams, checking the reporting of results, applying for reconsideration and reviews of external assessments, and ordering certificates and their Record of Achievement.

In recent years, logins by students had been below 30 percent but this rose to over 40 percent in 2021 with the increase in students undertaking digital external assessment.

Students currently check their internal results and external entries through the school's Student Management System.

Changing assessment processes to meet changing student needs The school is able to update assessment processes effectively in response to external changes to allow students to continue to have the opportunity to achieve whilst still ensuring results are credible.

After the internal assessment resubmission rules were changed in 2021 teachers adapted practices to help ensure students were sufficiently prepared so they could still achieve as expected. In response to the impact of Covid the school has adapted its policy for internal assessment deadlines and teachers have made more material available online to support students to catch up any missed work. Covid forced a change in how and when the school undertook its school/derived grade examinations last year and this has led to reviewing how they should be run this year to best support student achievement.

Making use of digital tools in the classroom and for assessment Continuing to normalise digital tools will ensure the school is well placed for when external examinations move to being designed to be completed digitally. A BYOD policy has been put in place that allows for students to use a variety of devices. This has enabled more students to engage in digital activities and for staff to use digital tools in an authentic and flexible way to support learning. In 2020, 25 percent of students who undertook NZQA assessment engaged in digital external examinations. In 2021 this rose to 41 percent.

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 2021 6.4b)

Effective monitoring of internal moderation The school has an effective process for monitoring internal moderation, clearly recording the process and sharing the outcomes to inform self-review and apprise senior management.

The school uses the online ASSAY system to record the completion of the internal moderation process for each standard. One of the Principal's Nominees regularly checks the information recorded and follows up any issues or missing information with individual teachers in a timely manner.

An annual physical check is carried out in Term 3 by the same Principal's Nominee to ensure practice matches the information recorded. They visit departments and select several random standards and discuss the information recorded, the process followed, and check the evidence stored. Any issues that arise are followed up through to resolution.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Oxford Area School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their 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
- assessing students when they are ready
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support
- providing expanding opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- 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.

Oxford Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed or late assessment
- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- 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
- assuring valid, verifiable, and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived and unexpected event grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Oxford Area 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.

Oxford Area 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

Oxford Area 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.

Oxford Area 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

Oxford Area 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.

Oxford Area 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 Oxford Area 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 2021* (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 2022* (Assessment Rules).

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
- *National Qualifications Framework, Oxford Area School, Staff Guidelines 2022. School Policies and Procedures for National Qualifications* (Staff Handbook)
- *National Qualifications Framework, National Certificate of Education Achievement, Oxford Area School Student Information, 2022* (Student Handbook).

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominees
- Heads of Department for:
 - Arts
 - English
 - Languages
 - Performing Arts
 - Science
 - Technology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal and Principal's Nominees 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.

Background

The school has two staff members in the role of Principal's Nominee, each with their own specific responsibilities along with some areas where they work together. Staff feel well supported by this model as it means they are led by Principal's Nominees working in areas matched to their own strengths, whilst also having two knowledgeable staff members to discuss issues with.