

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Linwood College**

**August 2018**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Linwood College:

- 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
- *link to Assessment Information for Students and Whānau, Linwood College, 2018*
- *link to Assessment Guidelines for Staff, Linwood College, 2018*
- *Assessment Policy, Linwood College, 2018*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the:

- Principal's Nominee
- Head of Learning Area for:
  - English
- Head of Department for:
  - Digital Technology
  - Health and Physical Education
  - International and English Language Learning
- Teacher of:
  - Science, and
- 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

## Linwood College

30 August 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 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 motto of Linwood College Kimihia, "*to search, to seek, to look for,*" expresses the full commitment of staff to offer coherent and quality learning and assessment experiences and opportunities for student success.

Linwood College has a clear, shared vision and approach to self-review, actively exploring the flexibility of the NCEA model. Changes to teaching and assessment practices focus on meeting current and future student need. These are underpinned by strong learning relationships, and high expectations of teacher practice to enable personal excellence for students and respect for culture.

Self-review is practised at every level of the school and supports credible assessment and robust quality assurance practices. Teachers use data analysis to reflect on course and programme design, and to plan and deliver quality assessment for students. Heads of Department prepare annual reports of student achievement based on the analysis of data. Senior leaders reflect on these reports and other data to set the school's strategic direction. Findings of teacher inquiries and best practice are shared across learning areas, promoting school wide professional learning development and ownership.

Data is regularly used to track achievement progress of all NCEA students and to identify students at risk of not achieving a qualification. Literacy and numeracy are actively targeted to assist the attainment of qualifications. Effective monitoring of student progress towards personal goals occurs through academic mentoring. Timely and accurate results are reported to NZQA.

Assessment practices are effective. The school has developed responsive assessment programmes to differentiate and provide personalised learning opportunities that meet the needs of their students. A range of academic and vocational pathways are offered to provide relevant and engaging pathways for students and to support students beyond school. Teachers described widening evidence gathering methods and assessment strategies to assist students to present their best achievement evidence. The students interviewed for the review were well-informed about the NCEA and consider teachers support them to achieve.

Internal moderation processes are well understood and consistently applied by teachers. They provide senior leadership with confidence that results reported to

NZQA are credible. External moderation outcomes are discussed, and action plans developed and monitored when issues are identified.

The school has communications that enable staff, students and whānau to understand NCEA and school assessment procedures. School documentation has been updated to ensure information is current and fit for purpose. Placing NCEA procedures and practices online has improved accessibility to students, staff and whānau.

Assessment-related matters are ably managed by the Principal's Nominee who, though appointed to this role this year, is a well-experienced senior leader who held this position at a previous school. He leads discussion with staff, students and whānau on best assessment practice and has the capacity to respond effectively to resolve issues. The Principal's Nominee is supported in his work by the senior leadership team, who alongside the staff, work collaboratively to support students to achieve.

### **Areas for improvement**

Student work for verification by teachers is randomly selected. Clarification is needed for staff that student work for grade verification should be purposefully selected at grade boundaries and sufficient to confirm assessment decisions are consistent with the standard. Strategic selection will better inform future assessment judgments and could reduce teacher workload.

Minor modifications are required to student and staff assessment information to ensure documentation reflects current practice. Clarification of the strategic selection of student work for verification and privacy requirements need to be included.

### **Agreed action**

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

- clarify student work for grade verification should be strategically selected
- update documentation as outlined in this report.

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School Quality Assurance and Liaison

5 November 2018

**NZQA**

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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 17 September 2015 Managing National Assessment Report**

The 2015 Managing National Assessment review identified a significant issue requiring the procedures followed by senior management to monitor internal moderation processes be documented and implemented school-wide. A review after one year, in June 2016, confirmed that the issue had been addressed.

A completed *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* for all standards where results are reported is filed on the school's intranet. This document is reconciled with actual samples of verified student work by the Principal's Nominee.

This audit system for monitoring internal moderation, documented in the staff handbook, assures senior leadership that results reported to NZQA have been quality assured.

Five of the other six agreed items from the 2015 review have been resolved, while some minor amendments have yet to be added to the documentation, as outlined in the communications section of this report.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** Heads of Learning Areas review external moderation reports and develop plans to address any issues that have been raised by external moderators. The Principal's Nominee ensures that these plans have been completed. This process provides confidence to senior leaders that any concerns raised are being addressed and evaluated for improvement.

### 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)*

Self-review is a multi-dimensional and important component of school processes. It is integral to ongoing student achievement and improved teaching and learning programmes. It occurs across all levels of the school and is informed by data analysis and student, whānau and teacher voice.

**Reflective analysis to inform change and next steps** Effective leadership and school-wide commitment to a shared ethos of Mauri Ora underpin collective ownership and accountability for assessment practice.

Senior leaders develop and implement a strategic vision, addressing whole-school improvement, curriculum development and professional learning and collaboration, to ensure future students' needs will be met.

Heads of Department critically evaluate student achievement outcomes and course design to ensure student abilities, personal goals and interests are best met. Where

needed, courses are modified. Heads of Department also regularly meet with their designated senior leader to discuss areas for ongoing improvement.

All staff engage in a collaborative personal inquiry process, using research and sharing evidence, in a regular series of meetings. This self-review enables teachers to reflect on the impact of teaching practice to support student achievement.

Inquiry facilitators also meet as a group to 'reflect, review and act.' They run staff workshops to strengthen teaching strategies. A recent workshop examined the value of using student voice and methods to gather this feedback.

Self-review has resulted in a number of developments at the school, including:

- workshopping practices that support the collection of valid, authentic and verifiable portfolio and non-written evidence
- a school-wide audit of assessment practices and internal moderation processes by the newly appointed Principal's Nominee, including interviewing each Head of Learning Area, to share understandings and clarify responsibilities. This will become an annual practice to inform self-review
- the practice of using student assessment evidence for more than one standard being extended, and departmental collaboration to share evidence across subjects being investigated.

The school has planned the next steps for review to include:

- offering stand-alone short courses to cater for students on work experience for part of their week
- appointing a Head of Learning Support to develop strategies and integrate support school-wide, to enable students to meet the Level 1 literacy and numeracy requirements
- enhanced use of data and student voice to modify practice to increase engagement.

The school is preparing to teach and assess in a new learning environment following the completion of the extensive school rebuild in 2021. NCEA is being re-imaged to capture the intended spirit and flexibility offered by the qualification, while maintaining the integrity of assessment practice. Ongoing development of a responsive curriculum driven by learning rather than assessment is occurring. Consideration is also being given to personalised pathways for each student, non-streamed groupings to remove barriers to accessing higher knowledge, course delivery across curriculum areas furthering teacher collaboration, and retro-fitting evidence to pre-determined 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)*

### **Linwood College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- providing differentiated learning and assessment opportunities within the class and across classes in the same subject, including the negotiable assessment of standards
- increasing the number of pathways available to students by offering
  - different levels of academic study within multi-level classes
  - life and ready-to-work skills to support students beyond school
  - a range of vocational courses through engaging with external providers including Ara Institute of Canterbury, Gateway and STAR programmes
- fostering tuākana-tēina mentoring relationships within the classroom
- motivating students by short turnaround in reporting success, and celebrating academic achievement through awards and acknowledgement
- collecting school-based evidence to support applications for students identified as needing special assessment conditions and providing appropriate support.

### **Linwood College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- consistent school-wide practice on missed and late work, appeals and breaches of assessment rules
- providing valid resubmission and further assessment opportunities
- utilising a range of strategies during the assessment and marking process to assist students to present authentic work
- reporting Not Achieved where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity, but submitted insufficient evidence at the standard, or no work
- ensuring derived grades are based on valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence from practice examinations or other appropriate assessment
- effectively managing external examinations
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Meeting student need is the priority** Linwood College is strategically evolving its range of assessment practices and experiences to give students the opportunity to demonstrate their best achievement. School leaders recognise the importance of building teacher understanding and confidence. They adjust modes of assessment that do not compromise authenticity or the quality of assessment practice.

Courses are designed with learning and assessment contexts that offer authentic experiences, engage student interest, and reflect cultural backgrounds. Learning and assessment opportunities within courses are personalised, and standards adjusted



as necessary during the year, enabling students to have greater agency and ownership.

Teachers interviewed discussed broadening evidence gathering practices that allow students to present work in ways that best meet their needs for the standard being assessed. This approach recognises the range of student strengths, improves student confidence, and minimises literacy and numeracy skills as a barrier to demonstrating achievement. Teachers scaffold and chunk tasks, use milestone checks, feedback and feedforward to assist students to improve the quality of their assessment evidence, and to determine readiness for assessment. Students are assessed when they are ready through flexible timeframes, as appropriate.

**Digital assessment conventions** The development of policy and procedures is underway, to establish school-wide conventions in using digital tools to collect and store evidence. As teachers make greater use of digital tools for assessment and moderation, these conventions will ensure that evidence collected continues to be authentic, credible and accessible. Guidelines for developing a digital assessment policy are available in the resources provided for the 2018 Principal's Nominee Seminar.

### **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:

- continue development of policy and procedures for the management of evidence collected using digital tools.

## 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)*

### **Linwood College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- critiquing amended or new assessments prior to use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- making assessment judgements consistent with the standard by using subject specialists within and outside the school to verify grades awarded to student work
- recording the completion of quality assurance processes on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* for all standards assessed, including discussions on grade judgements for future reference, prior to reporting results
- embedding the reconciliation of documentation with actual samples of student work for a random sample of standards for each subject, and addressing the outcomes of this check
- identifying and using benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions.

### **Linwood College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

**Selection of work for verification requires clarification** To reduce over selection and teacher workload, the school should consider providing staff with further guidance on strategic selection. Samples of marked student work should be purposefully selected at grade boundaries, rather than randomly selected, to be confident marking is consistent with the standard across tasks, classes and years. Teachers interviewed are randomly selecting student work for verification, as stated in staff assessment information, in addition to verifying samples at grade boundaries. This is unnecessary.

Verification does not require a fixed or predetermined number of pieces of student work. Factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, and the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed will determine the sample size. Strategic selection has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality. Senior management undertakes to:

- clarify student work for verification should be strategically selected.

## 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)*

### Linwood College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - holding Parent Conferences to set and monitor student achievement goals and learning pathways in partnership with whānau
  - gathering student voice to evaluate courses
  - annually reporting an analysis of NCEA achievement at departmental level, and school-wide to the Board of Trustees to inform strategic goals and actions
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - actively encouraging students and whānau to use the student management system portal and NZQA Learner login to monitor NCEA progress and identify errors
  - using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data issues
  - using a sign-off process for students to verify the accuracy of internally assessed grades
  - checking the accuracy of external entries prior to the 1 September data submission to ensure a match to student intentions
  - ensuring entries submitted to NZQA have a reported result or are withdrawn as appropriate before the 1 December deadline
  - reporting results against the correct provider codes of outside providers which are reconciled with centrally held Memoranda of Understanding.

**Monitoring of student achievement is well developed** The school has developed effective ways to both monitor the achievement of students and to communicate the outcomes to students, teachers and parents.

A fortnightly achievement record for each student is published for use as a tool for discussion between a student and their parents, teacher mentor, subject teachers, and the Dean. This information is distributed to students and relevant staff in hardcopy, and prominently displayed in the staffroom so that teachers can readily recognise those students who may need additional support and provide appropriate interventions, where required. Identified students, including those at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy requirements or qualification goals, are offered opportunities to achieve. This includes tutorials and portfolio evidence gathering during the '25th hour' each week and the provision of further assessment opportunities.

### 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))*

### **Linwood College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive course information for all subjects they undertake
- widely distributing information on financial assistance to cover all students who may be eligible.

### **Linwood College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- using a variety of ways to ensure NCEA communication to students and their whānau is timely, meaningful and understandable including online, in tailored student assemblies, and parent evenings, Whānau hui and Pasifika fiafia
- supporting new teachers to understand the school's assessment and moderation processes through an induction programme
- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year
- using Head of Departments and staff meetings to clarify changes of procedures or expectations and providing opportunities to discuss assessment good practice.

**Students well supported and informed** The students interviewed had a clear understanding of school assessment practices and NCEA procedures, and what was needed to gain a qualification and University Entrance. They acknowledged the support provided by staff to provide opportunities to demonstrate their best evidence of achievement.

**Amendment to staff and student information to reflect practice** Student and staff NCEA information has been updated and digitalised. This supports school-wide ownership and consistent assessment practice through coverage of current, key information in an accessible and understandable format. When the material is next updated, the following amendments should be made:

- strategic selection of student work for grade verification
- information on the *Privacy Act 1993* should state that student results must be kept secure and permission is necessary if student work is used as exemplars.

Discussion with students and staff did, however, indicate privacy requirements were being adhered to.

**Consistent assessment information in course outlines** Information in subject course outlines varies in its description and presentation. Using a common format across all departments will enable students and parents to readily access course-related information in a succinct and consistent layout. Literacy, numeracy and University Entrance requirements are included. It is recommended information on further assessment opportunities is also added.

**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 documentation as outlined in this report.

**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:

- provide consistent course assessment information.