

Managing National Assessment Report

Darfield High School

April 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Darfield 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
- pre-review information from the teachers interviewed
- *Darfield High School Assessment Process for NZQF Qualifications 2019* (Staff Edition)
- *Darfield High School Assessment Process for NZQF Qualifications 2019* (Student Edition)
- The school's Assessment Policy
- External Moderation – *Storage Using Google Drive*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Managers met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum
- Head(s) of Department for:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Technology
 - Visual Arts
- Teacher in Charge of:
 - Japanese
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy Principal - Curriculum 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

Darfield High School

2 April 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

Darfield High School uses the flexibility of the NCEA model to meet the individual needs and career aspirations of students. Extensions to the school's consent to assess and engagement with outside providers enable students to undertake assessment programmes towards a range of vocational pathways. The school has established a Rural College course to support students to pathway into local agricultural industries.

Effective processes and procedures are in place for the management of assessment for national qualifications. Teachers demonstrate a clear understanding of expectations. Adapting task contexts to reflect student interests, the use of local examples and gathering evidence of achievement in a variety of ways are features of the school's assessment practice.

Internal moderation is embedded practice. The Principal's Nominee monitors its completion through the submission of a moderation cover sheets for all standards before grades are reported to NZQA. An external moderation follow-up process that includes documenting required actions, monitoring agreement rates and providing assessor support is in place.

Deans monitor achievement data and student progress to identify those at risk of not achieving a qualification or to their potential. Additional support and modifications to assessment programmes are implemented to support these students.

Heads of Department NCEA result analysis, using a common template, is reported to Senior Management. The analysis is a basis for reflection on the previous year's programmes, assessment contexts used, and standards offered.

The school's detailed analysis of NCEA achievement data by the Deputy Principal - Curriculum has identified a focus area of boy's achievement for 2019. Initiatives have been put in place to support their achievement.

Relevant assessment information is available online for staff and students to enable ease of access. Regular student assemblies and staff meetings ensure students and staff are kept up to date with NCEA information and the school's expectations. The school demonstrates a capacity to undertake its own review and evaluation of the effectiveness of their NCEA assessment practices and procedures. The Principal's

Nominee and Deputy Principal - Curriculum provide effective leadership that ensures credible assessment for national qualifications.

Areas for improvement

The school has identified the need to strengthen the process to respond to external moderation outcomes and confirm all actions to address identified issues are completed. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum, who identified this potential risk, has plans to implement, in 2019, a process to monitor completion.

Discussion was held at the review on ways to strengthen internal moderation to confirm that the moderation documentation reflects actual practice. The school plans to visit departments to review the completed internal moderation documentation against the samples of work selected for verification. This will provide senior management with confidence that all results reported are credible. These visits will also provide the opportunity to check that the student work selected for verification is a purposeful and sufficient selection.

When the staff handbook is next reviewed the school agreed to include information on the processes it has developed to strengthen internal moderation monitoring and external moderation follow-up. A review of the consistency of information provided to students in course outlines was also discussed at the review for the school to consider.

Agreed action

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

- implement a process to confirm internal moderation documentation reflects actual practice
- strengthen external moderation follow-up to ensure actions are completed
- include in the staff handbook:
 - the internal moderation monitoring process developed
 - the external moderation follow-up process.

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7 June 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 5 July 2016 Managing National Assessment Report The five agreed actions from the 2016 review have been completed. The school:

- has focused on ensuring student privacy is protected when confirming grades
- now uses the student management system to generate the random selection for external moderation and teachers do not change this selection
- has made clear to staff that the random selection for external moderation is not to be subject to further verification or scrutiny
- has implemented checking procedures to ensure all internal entries have a result reported
- updated the staff and student handbooks as indicated in the 2016 report.

Response to external moderation outcomes External moderation reports are reviewed by the Deputy Principal – Curriculum. Heads of Department and Teachers in Charge develop an action plan where reports show inconsistency in the assessor judgements against the standard. Changes to verifiers are made or assessor support is provided, where appropriate.

The school has identified that the follow-up to check planned actions are completed requires strengthening. This is in response to the school identifying that, in one case, the agreed action was not made to the following years assessment task.

The school uses the Moderation Application to select standards for external moderation, in some subject areas. The school is encouraged to continue this practice including targeting standards for selection where external moderators have identified issues. This enables an evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's actions in addressing an issue.

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's on-going self-review focusses on providing students with a broad range of opportunities to undertake an assessment programme to meet their qualification goal and planned career pathway while ensuring student wellbeing is managed.

Teachers reflect on their assessment practice, course design and against school and department goals. Teachers interviewed discussed changes as a result of their review including:

- providing choice of standards for students to be assessed against to enable them to select standards reflecting their strengths, aspirations or to manage their workload with attendance at off-site courses
- moving to more contextualised learning and assessment to provide greater authenticity and relevance for students
- reviewing the internal / external assessment balance to support the school's goal of increasing the NCEA Merit and Excellence endorsements
- reducing the number of credits offered to assist students to focus on the quality of achievement and manage assessment workload.

Analysis of NCEA data has identified a gap between boys and girls' achievement at all levels. The school conducted individual analysis of those students not achieving a qualification to confirm the reason. This analysis identified that many students did not gain the Level 1 literacy and/or numeracy requirement. In response to this the school has:

- developed a dedicated numeracy class for students identified as needing additional support
- introduced a boy's literacy class that uses authentic contexts and interests relevant to boys including focusing a number of assessments around an outdoor education trip
- explored the possibility of gender bias in assessment practices to ensure equity of access for all students.

These changes provide evidence of the school's capacity to effectively evaluate NCEA data and review assessment practices to support the ongoing improvement of achievement and manage student workloads. Evidence sighted during the review identified that the school uses data to continually review student achievement outcomes and to evaluate the effectiveness of assessment programmes.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice. Senior management undertakes to:

- strengthen external moderation follow-up to ensure actions are completed.

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)

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

- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers to offer vocational and trade-based courses including tourism, hospitality and outdoor education
- extending the school's consent to assess to offer farming standards at their Rural College and furniture making
- differentiating and individualising assessment programmes to enable students to undertake an assessment course that meets their needs and planned career pathway
- broadening the ways evidence of student achievement is collected including portfolios, digital, verbal and video recording
- offering assessment programmes with fewer credits so students have the opportunity to focus on the quality of achievement
- collecting school-based data to support applications for students identified as potentially meeting the entitlement criteria for special assessment conditions
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlement and providing these resources for assessment where appropriate
- identifying and supporting students at risk of not meeting the literacy or numeracy requirements of NCEA or University Entrance.

Darfield High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- consistent school-wide assessment practice for further assessment opportunities and resubmission
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- ensuring derived grades are based on standard-specific authentic evidence from practice examinations that has been subject to a quality assurance process
- ensuring consistency in the granting of extensions by the Principal's Nominee being responsible for this
- assisting students to present authentic work by helping them to understand plagiarism and the need to reference sources of information
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Māori engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects The school has a focus on meeting individual student needs by providing a wide range of vocational and academic opportunities. There are no further actions planned as the 2014 – 2018 STEM data shows most Year 13 Māori students' successfully study at least one STEM subject.

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)

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

- requiring teachers to submit the completed internal moderation cover sheets to the Principal's Nominee prior to reporting results to NZQA
- using department marking process or appropriate subject specialists from outside of the school to verify assessor grade judgements for a sample of student work
- using clarification documents and past student work for benchmarking to support assessment judgements.

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

- using a random selection method that meets NZQA requirements
- reflecting on external moderation feedback to inform changes to assessment tasks and grade decisions
- proactively monitoring external moderation agreement rates to identify developing trends and potential issues in a subject area to initiate support
- establishing protocols for the storage of digital evidence to ensure it is readily available with appropriate file names and access rights for external moderation submission.

Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency Learning Areas assure the quality of grades awarded by including work at grade boundaries when verifying assessor judgements. However, most of those interviewed described verifying additional samples including a random selection, all student work if a small class or other samples to make eight pieces of work. The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on sufficient verification by the strategic selection of student work.

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.

Strengthen internal moderation monitoring processes The internal moderation monitoring process requires strengthening to reconcile the moderation paper work with actual practice. This will provide confidence to senior management that all reported results are credible.

The Principal's Nominee ensures a cover sheet is submitted for all standards where results are reported. Cover sheets are returned to teachers where verification discussion and the final grades reported are not detailed to ensure that the school's requirements are met.

To confirm that internal moderation paper work reflects actual practice the school should require a member of senior management to annually visit all Learning Areas to check alignment. This would also provide the opportunity to check that student work for verification is a purposeful and strategic selection.

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:

- implement a process to confirm internal moderation documentation reflects actual 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)

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

- providing credit summaries to students to assist them to monitor progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure they allow students to meet their achievement goals, inform changes to standards offered and meet student needs and aspirations
- submitting fees paid and financial assistance applications on time, so that all achievement can be transferred to students Record of Achievement and qualifications can be awarded.

Darfield High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
- checking the accuracy of external entries to ensure minimal late entries and ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
- reconciling reported results from external providers with a Memorandum of Understanding annually
- timely reporting to NZQA of results that have been checked for accuracy.

Data analysis informs changes to support qualification achievement Effective use of NCEA statistical data informs the achievement of strategic and annual goals and identifies areas for improvement. Heads of Department and Teachers in Charge of a subject reflect on student achievement by gender and ethnicity and their assessment practice and course design in meeting student needs. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum prepares a school summary of analysis for reporting to the Board of Trustees.

Ongoing and robust data analysis of student achievement effectively identifies students at risk of not achieving a qualification or completing literacy and numeracy requirements. This enables changes to be made to assessment programmes, other support initiated and where appropriate a meeting with whānau. The school identifies this early identification, the implementation of support and close tracking of students at risk as a contributing factor to these students gaining an NCEA qualification.

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))

Darfield High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and whānau using a range of media
- using email to communicate information to staff
- ensuring students are provided with assessment information for all the courses they undertake
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing online access to the information held on the school's student management system
- storing Memoranda of Understanding with external providers, in digital format, to facilitate annual monitoring that correct provider codes are used.

Darfield High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- ensuring new Heads of Department and staff are aware of the school's NCEA policies and procedures
- using Head of Department and staff meetings to clarify changes of procedures, expectations and to facilitate discussion on assessment best practice
- providing NCEA handbooks and information using Google Drive to enable version control and ease of access for students and staff
- informing students about suitable learning pathways.

Review course outline information provided to students Course outline information provided to students is not consistent with the requirements specified in the staff handbook. The information is also presented in different formats not aligned to the school template. It is suggested the school review the information provided in each subject area against the template and staff handbook requirements. Standardising assessment information provided to students better ensures they receive consistent messages across all their subjects. This will also assist with student and parent understanding.

Amendments to staff and student handbooks The staff and student handbooks are comprehensive and relevant documents written in plain English. The school agreed that when the staff handbook was next updated the internal moderation monitoring process developed to confirm documentation aligns with actual practice and the external moderation follow-up process to ensure that actions are completed would be included.

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:

- include in the staff handbook:

- the internal moderation monitoring process developed
- the external moderation follow-up process.

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:

- ensure that course outlines provided to students are consistent in format and contain the required information.