

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Lincoln High School

May 2017

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Lincoln 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 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, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report 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 2017* (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:

- *Lincoln High School – NCEA Assessment Procedures – Staff Handbook 2017*
- *Lincoln High School – Assessment Procedures – Student Handbook 2017*
- *2017 Charter – Assessment and Achievement Strategic Goals and Targets*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, Assistant Principal's Nominee, Data Manager, three students and Heads of Learning Areas for Careers and Pathways, English, Learning Support, Mathematics, Food Technology and Hospitality and Visual Arts, and the Teacher in Charge of French.

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

## Lincoln High School

24 May 2017

### 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 four years.

### What the school is doing well

Lincoln High School meets student assessment needs and career aspirations by offering a range of academic, vocational, extension and supported learning programmes. Student support mechanisms, assessment programmes and practices are reviewed and evaluated to ensure positive outcomes for the wide range of students attending the school. The school's vision is to support students to leave the school with a minimum of NCEA Level 2 and be going to employment or further education.

Quality Assurance systems are in place with the Principal's Nominee and his assistant annually monitoring that all learning areas are meeting the school's internal moderation expectations. External moderation feedback is valued by staff members and used to improve assessment practice. A robust process for following-up on external moderation ensures that moderation feedback is effectively used to further develop teacher assessment understanding.

A consistent understanding of good assessment practice was described by teachers interviewed. Regular meetings with Heads of Learning Areas, timely emails and discussion at the annual internal moderation monitoring meeting have been used to further develop good assessment practice. Students interviewed are well informed of the school's assessment processes.

Comparative and longitudinal NCEA achievement data is used to review achievement against national statistics and goals, implement changes to courses and set goals for the next year. Priority learners, boys and students at risk of not gaining a qualification are identified and monitored by a number of staff. Strategies are put in place to support individual students to achieve their personal learning goals.

On-going effective communication using a range of tools is used to inform staff, students and whānau of assessment processes and achievement, and to collect feedback to inform changes.

The Principal's Nominee is experienced in the role. He works in partnership with the Assistant Principal's Nominee to effectively oversee the school's credible assessment practice and lead teachers with confidence.

## **Areas for improvement**

The review identified that the selection of work for external moderation requires changing as it does not meet current NZQA requirements in some subjects.

The selection of work for verification by some teachers followed the process for the random selection for external moderation. The school agreed to clarify with staff that the student work selected for verification should be purposefully selected and sufficient to confirm assessment decisions at the standard. The purposeful selection will assist with managing teacher internal assessment workload.

Staff and student handbooks are relevant and comprehensive documents. This review identified the need for refinements to these documents to reflect teachers' good assessment practice and provide additional clarification to support credible assessment.

The school plans to review the process for checking internal entries and results reported to ensure that all entries have a grade reported.

## **Agreed action**

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

- ensure the random selection method for external moderation meets current NZQA requirements and is not subject to verification
- clarify that student work for verification should be purposefully selected
- ensure all internal entries have a result reported or are withdrawn if there has not been an adequate assessment opportunity.

Kay Wilson  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

12 July 2017

**NZQA**

**0800 697 296**

**[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)**

# FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

## How effectively has the school responded to external and internal review?

### External review

*Evidence found that external review actions have been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3v)*

### Action Items from 30 August 2013 Managing National Assessment Report

There were no agreed action items from the 2013 review.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** An effective process for following up on external moderation feedback is in place. Evidence of actions to address identified moderation feedback concerns from 2016 and monitoring of their completion were sighted at the review meeting. Additional support has been provided for the subject areas with an historical low agreement rate or where the need is identified because of a sole subject teacher.

### Internal review

*Evidence found that the school is effectively 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)*

A culture of collaborative internal review is used to meet the school's achievement targets of meeting students' assessment needs, improving outcomes for Maori, Pasifika, boys and students at risk, and developing assessment good practice. Examples of changes from recent internal reviews to support the Board of Trustees strategic assessment and achievement goals include:

- A new timetable structure and new courses including innovative contexts to provide greater choice and flexibility for individual students, and better engage boys. Student and teacher feedback was used to inform changes for 2017.
- A reduction in the number of standards or credits in a course to enable students to focus on the quality of achievement.
- The introduction of a course selection afternoon to provide parents, teachers and students the opportunity to discuss next year's options and possible future pathways. Evidence shows there have been fewer student timetable changes in 2017 with the students better informed of pathways available.
- The introduction of a Flexible Learning Room to provide the opportunity for individual students to have additional support including one-to-one help. The room supports disengaged students, and those at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy, and a qualification.
- Increased differentiation and individualisation of assessment programmes to support the wide range of student needs and abilities.

The school's ongoing review of assessment processes is used to identify areas of potential risk or where improvements can be made. Three examples of recent changes are:

- All Industry Training Organisation moderation and communication is now through the Principal's Nominee to ensure the timely submission of moderation

material, the monitoring of the feedback and ensuring follow-up action as appropriate are completed.

- The Principal's Nominee and his Assistant now visit all learning areas annually to monitor that internal moderation processes are being followed, that the documentation matches the practice, and to clarify school procedures.
- The provision of a template for Heads of Learning Areas to analyse student NCEA achievement with focus questions to enable more in-depth investigation of data and to better inform next steps to support the school's strategic achievement goals.

These examples illustrate the school's capacity to effectively anticipate and identify issues, and to resolve these to ensure student needs are met and credible assessment practice.

**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 found that assessment practice is meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6 I & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 5.5)*

### **Lincoln High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the needs of their students by:**

- collecting evidence of student achievement in a variety of ways including portfolios, digital, verbal and video recording
- differentiating and individualising assessment programmes to enable students to undertake an assessment course that meets their needs including:
  - offering flexible assessment submission timeframes, where manageable and appropriate
  - offering NCEA Level 1 extension opportunities in Mathematics, Science and English for identified students
  - offering supported learning programmes to those students identified as needing this support
  - contextualising assessment tasks so they are more relevant and better engage student interest
- extending assessment opportunities for students by engaging with external providers to provide vocational and trade-based courses
- collecting school-based data to support applications for students for special assessment conditions, ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with entitlement and providing resources as appropriate
- assisting students to present authentic work by helping them to understand plagiarism and the need to reference sources of information
- identifying and supporting students at risk of not meeting the literacy or numeracy requirements of NCEA or University Entrance.

### **Lincoln High School has effective processes and procedures for collecting credible evidence by:**

- consistent school-wide assessment practice for further assessment opportunities and resubmissions
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- using digital tools and other strategies to monitor the authenticity of student work submitted
- ensuring derived and emergency grades are based on standard-specific authentic evidence from practice examinations
- ensuring consistency in the granting of extensions by the Principal's Nominee and tutor teacher being responsible for this.

**Use of digital tools in teaching, learning and assessment supports student engagement and outcomes** The school is proactive in engaging with the use of digital tools in teaching and assessment practice in most subjects reflecting the



school's digital strategic direction. Teachers use a range of digital evidence collection methods to engage students and to support them to present their best evidence.

Involvement in external assessment digital trials and pilots in 2016 and 2017 is encouraged by senior management to further support student achievement and reflect classroom evidence collection and teaching and learning practice.

**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 found that internal and external moderation are ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 6.4b)*

### **Lincoln High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal and external moderation. The Principal's Nominee and Assistant Principal's Nominee:**

- require Heads of Learning Areas to be responsible for ensuring internal moderation is completed and documented for all standards assessed in their area prior to reporting results to NZQA
- annually audit all departments to ensure the documented moderation process reflects actual practice and to confirm school processes are followed
- follow-up on external moderation feedback, including documenting actions and monitoring that agreed actions are completed
- proactively monitor external moderation feedback and agreement rates to identify trends and potential issues in a subject area
- use the same external moderation follow-up procedure for ITO and NZQA standards.

### **Lincoln High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal and external moderation. Teachers:**

- ensure new and amended assessments are critiqued before use
- use a panel marking process or subject specialists from outside of the school to verify a sample of assessor judgements including recording discussions on grade judgements for future reference
- use clarification documents and past student work for benchmarking to support assessment judgements
- ensure assessed work is stored securely so that it is available, if requested, for external moderation.
- value external moderation feedback and use it to modify tasks before further use and to clarify and develop understanding of the standard.

**Random selection of work for external moderation requires changing** The method used to select student work for external moderation is alphabetical and predictable where there is only one class so does not meet NZQA's current requirements. The school plans to use the random selection function of the student management system in future.

**Selection of work for verification requires clarification** Some Heads of Learning Areas of smaller departments described verifying and documenting the random selection for external moderation in addition to borderline student work where teachers were unsure of the grade. Good internal moderation practice was described using a panel marking process in large departments.

The school agreed to clarify with Heads of Learning Areas that the random selection for external moderation is not to be the verification selection and that work for verification should be purposefully selected at grade boundaries and sufficient to be confident marking is consistent with the standard. The purposeful selection will assist

with managing teacher assessment workload and support teachers understanding of grade boundaries and provide future benchmarks.

**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:

- ensure the random selection method for external moderation meets NZQA requirements and is not the internal moderation verification selection
- clarify that student work for verification should be purposefully selected.

## How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

*Evidence found that data management and use supports student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)*

### Lincoln High School effectively:

- uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:
  - identifying and tracking priority learners, boys and those at risk of not achieving an NCEA qualification and providing appropriate support, including programme changes where required
  - encouraging student achievement of Level 3 NCEA and University Entrance by awarding a graduation diploma to engage and support students to reach their goal by celebrating success
  - annually reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA achievement data by gender and ethnicity against national statistics and department goals and to inform changes to further support achievement and set targets for next year.
- reports accurate data by:
  - submitting fees paid and financial assistance applications on time
  - checking the accuracy of the internally assessed grades reported
  - ensuring a low number of late entries for external examinations
  - using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data errors
  - reporting results against the correct provider code of external providers, which are reconciled with current memoranda of understanding
  - supporting students to register for their Learner login and encouraging them to use this to check the accuracy of their entries and results and monitor their qualifications progress.

**Ensuring all internal entries have a result reported** The school had a number of internal entries without a result reported in 2016. While the school has multiple checking processes to ensure the accuracy of reported grades and external entries this review identified the need to ensure that internal entries for students who have left school or withdrawn from a subject have a grade reported or the entry withdrawn if no assessment has taken place. The Principal's Nominee plans to investigate the use of NZQA reports prior to 1 December to strengthen the school's data checking processes.

**Effective tracking and mentoring supports student progress and achievement outcomes** The school effectively uses a range of data to identify priority learners, and those at risk of not achieving a qualification.

The school is proactive in supporting Māori to achieve success as Māori. A consultation hui with whānau has been used to guide the school in supporting student achievement including:

- celebrating student success at a Māori Graduation ceremony

- ensuring Māori students aim to gain University Entrance and NCEA Level 3
- ensuring a range of pathways for post secondary education remain open for students.

Students are assigned a *Linc Teacher* who they meet with twice per week. Mentors actively monitor student qualifications progress and workloads. The Assistant Principal has oversight for Māori, Pasifika, boys and students at risk of not achieving. His role includes liaising with whānau, identifying and rectifying issues and implementing interventions including the development of individualised assessment programmes and negotiating time in the Flexible Learning Room to catch-up on assessments.

### **Agreed action**

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

- ensure all internal entries have a result reported or are withdrawn if there has not been an adequate assessment opportunity.

## How effectively does the school's communication inform staff, and students and their families about assessment?

*Evidence found that school communication ensures understanding about assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7iib)*

### **Lincoln High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- providing students with consistent course outline information digitally and in hard copy using an assessment template from the student management system
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and whānau using written, digital and face-to-face methods
- annually reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

### **Lincoln High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- using *Linc Classes* to assist students understand the school's assessment processes and what they need to achieve, in order to again a qualification
- assisting students and parents to use the parent portal and NZQA Learner login to monitor NCEA qualification progress
- using Heads of Learning Areas and staff meetings to clarify changes to assessment procedures, expectations and facilitating discussion on good assessment practice
- using emails to parents of NCEA Level 3 students to inform them of their progress towards their Graduation Diploma
- providing Parent-Student-Teacher conferences to assist parents to discuss their student's achievement, understand NCEA and informing students about suitable learning pathways
- improving parental understanding of NCEA and assessment procedures through targeted meetings.

**Effective and on-going communication supports students and whānau assessment understanding** Students interviewed are well informed of the school's NCEA procedures and their assessment responsibilities. A multi-pronged communication strategy that includes providing a hard copy of the NCEA Student Handbook at the start of the year, newsletters and timely emails on fees payment and Learner login card distribution keep students and whānau informed.

**Recommended additions to staff handbooks** The staff and student handbooks are relevant documents presented in plain English. The school agreed that when the staff handbook is next updated the following additions and clarifications would be included:

- that work selected for verification should be a purposeful selection and sufficient to assure teachers of their understanding of the standard
- the random selection method to be used for external moderation
- the internal moderation responsibilities of Heads of Learning Areas and the annual monitoring process.

**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 the staff handbook as agreed at the review.