

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Waimate High School**

### **March 2026**

# FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

## Waimate High School

19 March 2026

### 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 2022.

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.

### Actions and considerations

#### Agreed actions

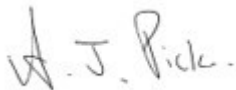
The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. These are:

Action	Timeframe
<b>Credible assessment practice to meet student needs</b>	
Regularly review and update the staff and student NCEA handbooks to ensure they are current, accurate, and remain fit for purpose.	Review annually
Strengthen management and monitoring of missed and late assessments.	Immediate and ongoing
Ensure both internal and external entries are checked at key points in the year and removed where there is no longer an intent to assess.	Prior to 1 September for external entries prior to 1 December for internal entries.
<b>Moderation to ensure assessment quality</b>	
Strengthen the process for documenting external moderation follow up to ensure Action Plans are documented, verifiable and accessible to future assessors of the standard.	Immediate and ongoing

### **For consideration**

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

- encouraging use of the moderation tool in the Student Management System
- employing student agency to determine preferred mode of assessment for Level 1 Digital Examinations
- promoting the Query and Appeal processes as part of external moderation follow up.



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30 April 2026

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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 27 April 2023 Managing National Assessment Report** The school has effectively resolved its one issue by clarifying the resubmission rules and sharing the revised NCEA Myths with all staff.

**External moderation response to outcomes and processes** Follow up to external moderation is monitored effectively by the Principal's Nominee, who hyperlinks completed External Moderation Action Plans to a centralised spreadsheet that records the internal moderation of every standard the school assesses, each year.

Currently, this spreadsheet is only accessible to Heads of Department and not to all future assessors of affected standards. The school needs to devise a process for sharing Action Plans with all teachers, so that the follow up in one year can inform practice in the years following. A consistent schoolwide process will better support teachers new to a standard, teachers new to the school, or NCEA, and ensure advice from NZQA moderators feeds forward into future assessment of standards that are yet to gain consistent outcomes.

Historically, Waimate High School has had exemplary external moderation outcomes. In 2021, 2022 and 2023 outcomes were above 70 percent consistent. In 2024 and 2025, with the shift in focus to externally moderating new Level 1 standards only, outcomes have been less consistent. The main reason for this decline is evident in an analysis of external moderation reports from this period, which show that assessors have not availed themselves of all of the available assessor support. Going forward, the school's assessors need to ensure that their preparation involves more robust checks of assessor support documentation to improve their grade judgements and to clarify their understanding of the new standards. To this end, those receiving a Not Consistent, or Not Yet Consistent, report need to Query or Appeal the report, while it is still *"In Progress."*

In 2025, the school was required to send Additional Moderation for one Geography standard. The standard received a Not Yet Consistent report. The assessor devised an Action Plan to resolve the issues. Due to the size of Waimate High School, many standards are taught to composite, multi-level classes. In this case, the assessor overlooked nuances in the Level 3 standard, while they were teaching the same topic to a Level 2 class. The school's Head of Department identified this issue themselves and has taken steps to ensure that future assessment of similar standards in composite classes meets the requirements of each specific standard.

## 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)*

Waimate High School is using its annual process of self-review based on effective use of data analysis and staff/student voice to review programmes and implement changes designed to reduce barriers to success for all students. The school has sustainable and effective processes to identify issues and respond to these successfully, thereby reducing risks to the credibility of the NCEA qualification. The school has an effective system and support structure to manage and track student progress towards qualifications.

At the end of 2025, Waimate High School gained a new Principal and made changes within the senior leadership team. The leadership team is currently drafting a new 2026 - 2029 school strategic plan and is working with its Board of Trustees to update the school's authenticity policy to reflect changes required since the advent of Generative AI tools and technologies. With most students well-known to teachers at the school, there were only two breaches of authenticity identified by staff in 2025.

In recent years, the school's retention rate from Year 8 to 9 has improved, with fewer students leaving to commute to secondary schools in nearby Timaru. As the school of choice for the majority of its local rural community, the school is driven by the need to anticipate, plan and review its programmes to ensure they remain future focussed and meet all students' needs. For Year 11, the school year continues to start with a weeklong programme using External Providers to gain *Ready to Study* skills and similarly, Year 12 undertakes a weeklong programme of *Ready to Work* skills. This ensures that the students have a good foundation of Vocational credits to build on in the oncoming year and that those attending Gateway have completed their workplace Health and Safety requirements. This initiative, begun in 2023, is subject to annual review and continues to support student success.

Waimate High School's positive achievement outcomes can be partially attributed to its size. The school has approximately 300 students from Year 7 to Year 13. The size of the school supports student success, because teachers get to know their students well and the school is able to offer small class sizes in the senior school. However, staffing restraints can mean that in order to offer some NCEA courses, the school has to combine students from different year levels in one class, and teachers have to manage multi-level standards that are similar but nuanced differently for each year level. Critiquers of these standards need to check that the assessment tasks are aligned with all aspects of each standard at each level. Students engage with NetNZ, or Te Kura, where the school is unable to offer a subject. Since 2021, Waimate High School has achieved better achievement outcomes at Level 2 and Level 3 than comparable schools and schools nationally. This has been enabled by having a culture of placing students at the centre, providing tailored support for individual students and a committed staff.

## Credible assessment practice to meet student needs

*Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and Assessment and Examination for NCEA and New Zealand Scholarship Rules 2026)*

**Annually review staff and student handbooks** It would be advisable to review the school's staff and student "handbooks" regarding their accuracy and accessibility to each of their target audiences. The staff handbook is designed to be used online,

using a dashboard approach. However, this has proven difficult to navigate as much of the content is embedded within other sections and at the time of this review, many of the links to external websites were broken and needed updating. Those interviewed stated that they rely on updates from the Principal's Nominee and other sources, rather than utilising the school's dedicated *Assessment Guidelines (Staff Handbook)*. This document also includes non-NCEA related content, which might be better located elsewhere. It would be timely now for the school to review this documentation to ensure that each is current, accurate and remains fit for purpose. Exemplars of approved handbooks are available through the Aotearoa New Zealand Principals' Nominee Network (ANZPNN) to guide Principal's Nominees needing to improve the content and/or format of their handbooks.

**New drama course meets students' needs, interests, and aspirations** Drama will be offered at Waimate High School for the first time in over ten years. The students interviewed see this course as a perfect vehicle for supporting their aspirations and interests, including gaining Merit or Excellence endorsements. Students can build a personalised course based on a range of Achievement and/or Unit Standards, which support those interested in the technical or production side, as well as meeting the needs of those interested in performance.

**Ensure entries reflect intended assessment opportunities** Teachers should remove external entries before 1 September, if their students have no intention of undertaking the standard, or attending the examination. Leaving those entries in, creates a false narrative for those tracking progress towards qualifications. Similarly, internal entries with no result should be removed by 1 December, if they are not going to be assessed.

**Encourage greater engagement in external assessment** Greater take up of external assessment at all levels could boost the school's rate of Course Endorsement, which currently lags behind that of similar schools. Compared with similar schools, Waimate High School has a higher percentage of students either absent from an examination or not attempting standards for which they are entered.

**Encourage engagement in Level 1 digital examinations** The school currently has very few students engaging in Level 1 digital exams where they have external entries and a digital exam is offered. The new Level 1 standards are designed to be delivered and assessed digitally. Students should be able to choose their preferred mode of assessment for digital examinations, and the school should mirror the mode of assessment when the student sits their practice external exam.

**Ensure extensions are managed and monitored in a consistent manner** To ensure more consistent practice, the school needs to review and/or follow its published missed and late assessment requirements. Although the school's *Assessment Guidelines* outline the process for managing extensions and provide links to the approved form, the process is not being followed as specified in that documentation. The process needs to be resocialised with staff, and the documentation needs to be readily accessible to staff and students. If the forms are sent to the Principal's Nominee for approval, then this will ensure more equitable practice and better monitoring of students at risk of not managing their workload.

## Moderation to ensure assessment quality

*Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment and Examination for NCEA and New Zealand Scholarship Rules 2026)*

### **Internal Moderation effectively monitored through existing manual system**

Senior leaders can be confident that results are not reported until internal moderation has been completed. The Principal's Nominee manages and monitors a centrally held spreadsheet, which records the completion of each step in the internal moderation process. This spreadsheet includes hyperlinks to the internal moderation cover sheets, supporting documentation and any external moderation follow-up for relevant standards.

With the automatic and immediate upload of grades being reported to NZQA through the new Application Programming Interface (API), the school should consider using the moderation tool in its Student Management System, to confirm that standards reporting results have been internally moderated, prior to results being automatically uploaded to NZQA.

**Ensure critiquing is more robust** In response to the number of external moderation reports the school received in 2024-2025 stating that assessors need to access more of the available assessor support, the school is advised to resocialise best practice in this area by ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose, and ensuring preparation for *internal* assessment, for any standard, includes a review of:

- the latest version of the standard and a check of the school's consent to assess
- the National Moderator's report
- the current year's Clarifications for each standard
- past feedback from external moderation for the standard
- any changes to standards through the Review and Maintenance Programme (RAMP)
- assessor support in the Assessor Practice Tool (APT) in Pūtake
- the relevant NZQA subject resource pages for exemplars
- the subject association and NZQA/MOE websites for approved tasks/exemplars/assessment schedules.

A more thorough approach to the critiquing step will allow assessors to make more accurate grade judgements.

Similarly, prior to the *external* assessment of any standard, assessors need to check:

- the previous year's subject *Assessment Report* for each level
- the current year's *Assessment Specifications* for each standard delivered, which for Level 1 may contain approved tasks, for example, Physical Education
- any RAMP or other changes signalled through Circulars in *Assessment Matters* on the NZQA website
- for Level 1 check both the NZQA and MOE websites for approved tasks, exemplars, and assessment schedules

- communicate clearly to students the *Conditions of Assessment* and authenticity requirements with regard to the use of prohibited GenAI applications, translation tools and browser extensions.

All teachers submitting *external* moderation should have access to NZQA's External Moderation Guide, to familiarise themselves with all of the External Moderation Application's features, including how to access past external moderation reports and to use the Query/Appeal functions.

More thorough use of available assessor support, prior to both internal and external assessment, will improve students' assessment outcomes.

## **Appendix 1: Effective Practice**

### **Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students**

**Waimate High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its 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
- providing credible opportunities for students to complete the NCEA co-requisite
- assessing students when they are ready
- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet student needs
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support
- identifying and providing targeted support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals.

**Waimate High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules
- monitoring the authenticity of student work using a range of strategies
- ensuring teachers and students are aware of authenticity requirements including the use of Generative AI
- 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 grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

## **Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality**

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

- 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.

**Waimate High 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**

**Waimate High 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 assessment workloads 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.

**Waimate High School reports accurate achievement data by:**

- ensuring that data is submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date entries and results
- 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
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding

- seeking NZQA approval through a subcontracting agreement to engage with any non-consented provider to deliver specific standards.

## **Effective communication to inform staff, students and their families / whānau about assessment**

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

- 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
- celebrating students' success with appropriate rewards and recognition.

### **Waimate High 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 Waimate 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 / whānau.

### 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 2022* (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 and Examination for NCEA and New Zealand Scholarship Rules 2026*.

### 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
- a range of assessment policies
- *Assessment Guidelines Waimate High School 2026* (Staff Handbook)
- Link to student handbook 2026 on school website (Student Handbook)
- samples of departmental 2025 NCEA Data Analysis.

### The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- two Deputy Principals
- Heads of Department for:
  - Arts
  - English
  - Mathematics
  - Physical Education and Health
  - Social Sciences
  - Technology
- 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 require.