

Managing National Assessment Report

Waitaki Boys' High School

October 2021

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Waitaki Boys' 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 2021* (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
- *WBHS 2021 Parent and Student Handbook*
- *WBHS 2021 Staff Handbook*
- *WBHS Self Review Procedures 2021*
- *WBHS Strategic Plan 2021*
- *WBHS Strategic Plan 2021 Term 2 Progress*
- a range of governance, operational policy and procedure documents
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the:

- Rector
- Assistant Rector – Teaching and Learning
- Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Education and Health
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
- Teacher in Charge of:
 - Music
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Rector and Assistant Rector 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

Waitaki Boys' High School

18-19 October 2021

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.

At the request of NZQA, and with the school's agreement, this review was rescheduled from 2020 due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

What the school is doing well

Waitaki Boys' High School is going through a phase of robust and rigorous self-review to re-establish its proud heritage of optimising educational outcomes for its young men. Disappointing NCEA results in 2019 were the catalyst for change. In consultation with staff, students and the community, the school has undertaken a number of changes to improve educational outcomes for its learners. Notwithstanding the effect of Learning Recognition credits in 2020, there was a significant improvement to all levels of NCEA attainment, with the school posting its best results for the past five years.

The school has made positive steps towards meeting its key strategic goal of having *all students fully engaged with their teaching and learning*. To better meet students' diverse abilities and aspirations and help prepare them for the rapidly changing demands of the 21st century, a six day timetable has been introduced. This engages students by offering greater subject choice and allowing more options to run for the whole year. Several new subjects have been introduced, benefitting those students who transition to employment or vocational training straight from school.

Mobile phones were banned in 2020 in a bid to engage students more fully in their learning. Students report a more focused learning environment through a reduction in distractions. Improved results in 2020, together with fewer discipline issues arising from a shortened lunch hour, would seem to justify the ban.

The school is making effective use of achievement data to track student progress. A strong pastoral network, based on vertical House groupings, offers students wrap around support, both academically and pastorally, by supporting students' sporting, life and career goals. Achievement data is analysed to review department practice and courses, set strategic direction and evaluate the effectiveness of changes to assessment for qualifications.

The school has a range of effective communication channels that allows staff, students and their families to gain a common understanding of current NCEA and school assessment procedures.

Areas for improvement

In 2021, external moderation reports indicated that some practitioners were not getting their assessment tasks and schedules effectively critiqued, nor were some assessors completely au fait with the detail in certain standards. This was the case particularly where a single-subject teacher was unfamiliar with a standard, or the teacher was new to NCEA assessment. Closer monitoring of the critiquing phase is required of Heads of Department to ensure students are not disadvantaged by any weaknesses in the process. Further guidance on the critiquing phase of assessment is included in this report.

In a small number of cases, departments used verifiers who did not meet NZQA's requirements for subject specific and recent, standard specific expertise. The Principal's Nominee has received the support of management to direct departments to use verifiers they deem suitable, as required.

In 2017, NZQA introduced new protocols for the storage of examination papers. The Principal's Nominee and the Exam Centre Manager are the only people who should have access to the room where papers are stored during the examination period. This protocol needs to be strictly followed.

Information regarding the availability of further assessment opportunities is difficult to retrieve from existing course outlines. All course outlines should provide clear and consistent information about further assessment opportunities.

Agreed action

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

- ensure procedures and protocols for protecting the security of examination papers are strictly followed
- monitor internal moderation to ensure the critiquing process is credible and complete
- use suitably-qualified subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a sample of internally moderated work
- provide clear and consistent information about further assessment opportunities.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

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NZQA

0800 697 296

www.nzqa.govt.nz

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 28 July 2017 Managing National Assessment Report There were three agreed items in the 2017 report to improve the quality of the school's assessment processes. The school has effectively addressed two of the three action items by ensuring Memoranda of Understanding are in place with external providers before assessment commences and by increasing the number of students accessing their NZQA Learner Login.

The third item, to *provide clear and consistent information about further assessment opportunities* has been partially resolved as most course outlines do contain this information, albeit worded differently by individual departments. However, this information could be added to the assessment statements in the *Senior Option Booklet* which utilise a common template. This would improve access to information on the availability of further learning opportunities for every standard offered in a course and enable students and parents/caregivers to develop a common understanding of the school's assessment practice.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school's quality assurance processes are generally good. However, the choice of verifier has been an issue for a few subject areas over the past three years. As a response to external moderation outcomes, the Principal's Nominee is monitoring the verification process to ensure the verifier is a subject specialist with recent standard-specific knowledge. Some Heads of Department share external moderation reports with the whole department for professional development and as part of department self-review. This good practice would strengthen assessment quality, if it were more firmly embedded school-wide.

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)

Waitaki Boys' High School's process of self-review is evident both school-wide and within departments. Assessment related data, staff and student voice and the Achievement Plan of the Waitaki Ara Kāhui Ako, all inform the strategic direction of the school. A key strategic goal for 2021 is to have *all students fully engaged with their teaching and learning* with a view to improving students' personal, educational and achievement outcomes. A review of the current curriculum has led to the introduction of a six day timetable and a range of new subjects, offering students greater subject choice, thereby improving student engagement. The school's 2021 Annual Plan is supported by a report at the end of Term 2 evaluating progress against its three overarching strategic goals.

NCEA assessment practice is generally well-managed by the Principal's Nominee. She liaises with senior management primarily through the Assistant Rector - Teaching and Learning. Regular meetings with Heads of Department support the consistency of

assessment practice and quality assurance processes throughout the school. A comprehensive analysis of assessment data and a strengthened self-review process have resulted in improved NCEA outcomes for all students, as well as those in target groups.

Following the publication of disappointing NCEA outcomes across all levels in 2019, senior management consulted staff and the community to support a move to ban mobile phones at school. The main reason for the ban was to remove distractions from the classroom and to improve the school's assessment outcomes.

The school has a deliberate focus on improving outcomes for Māori and Pacific students and has implemented actions to improve engagement and achievement for each of these target groups. In 2020, outcomes for Level 2 Māori and Pacific students were better than those of the previous four years and better than those of comparable schools and schools nationally. To support and sustain progress towards this goal, there is a designated Dean for each group of Māori and Pacific students. Successful actions include:

- appointing a Māori Engagement Kaiarahi to work with targeted Māori students and their whānau
- supporting Pacific students and their families to get involved in the Ōamaru Pasifika PowerUP Plus PowerStation, a programme helping Pacific parents and adult family members navigate NCEA and better support their children's academic achievement.

An analysis of data from contributing schools has flagged the need for literacy and numeracy support for a sizable group of Year 9 students at risk of not achieving the new literacy and numeracy co-requisite standards in 2023. The school has a literacy specialist working with teachers of Year 9 and 10 to integrate literacy and numeracy strategies into their teaching. The teachers are increasingly using the Progress and Consistency Tool (PaCT) and the Learning Progression Frameworks (LPFs) to pinpoint where they need to accelerate progress for students working below expected levels and at risk of not gaining a Level 1 NCEA. 'At risk' Year 9 students get withdrawn from timetabled classes for one on one support and anecdotal feedback on progress for these students has been very positive. Data will be available at the conclusion of 2021 to inform how ongoing literacy and numeracy support will be delivered.

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 2021 5.1 – 5.7)

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

- offering courses differentiated to meet students' abilities, interests and goals, for example:
 - English, Mathematics and Science with either an external or internal focus
 - unit standard courses with a practical, performance or vocational focus in several subject areas, including: Vocational Pathways Studies, Ready for Work, Police Studies, Physical Education 302 and Outdoor Education 303
 - maintaining Fraser Farm and offering Primary ITO standards for students interested in pursuing a career in Primary Production, as well as courses in Agribusiness, in partnership with Waitaki Girls' High School
- enabling students to undertake multi-level study and supporting those students capable of extension and acceleration by promoting them to a higher year level and/or allowing them to enter New Zealand Scholarship from any year level
- achieving rates of attainment for Māori and Pacific students at Level 2 in 2020 above those at national level and above those of similar decile schools
- using student voice, co-construction and engagement strategies to improve engagement and retention in Year 12 and 13 Mathematics
- engaging with external providers to extend the school's capacity to support students' vocational pathways through Gateway, STAR and dual enrolment in ARA courses
- using assistive technologies such as, the C-Pen and voice-to-text to support student learning, and using Evidence Gathering Templates and portfolio approaches in some courses to extend the ways evidence is gathered for assessment
- managing and monitoring students at risk of not gaining an NCEA qualification and where necessary, developing Individual Education Plans
- applying for, and providing, special assessment conditions.

Waitaki Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted for assessment by using digital tools and suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process
- ensuring credible and consistent school-wide assessment practice, regarding missed and late assessments, extensions, resubmissions, and further assessment opportunities
- ensuring school-based evidence for derived and unexpected event grades is collected for all external standards
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020*.

Initiatives to improve equity of outcomes in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) The school has initiated a range of interventions to help improve equity of outcomes for Māori and Pacific students in Level 3 STEM subjects. These include:

- using traditional te ao Māori contexts across all units in junior Science
- providing individualised mentoring conversations with Māori and Pacific students who show an interest in STEM subjects
- promoting a Pacific STEM graduate into a senior leadership role who is proactively working to engage and support more Pacific students in STEM.

This has resulted in an increase in the number of Maori and Pacific students at Year 12 opting for STEM subjects over the past 5 years.

Mobile phone ban enhances learning environment and assessment outcomes

Following the publication of disappointing NCEA outcomes across all levels in 2019, senior management consulted staff and the community to support a move to ban mobile phones at school. The main reason for the ban was to remove distractions from the classroom and to improve the school's assessment outcomes. The senior management team believes the ban has had a positive impact on learning and assessment outcomes at all levels.

Adhere to procedures for managing assessment processes In the 2020 exam period, a number of school employees had access to the room where exam papers were stored and further secured in a locked cupboard. NZQA requires the school to provide a locked room in which exam papers can be stored between morning and afternoon sessions or for the entirety of the exams. NZQA expects that only the Exam Centre Manager and the Principal's Nominee will have keys to access this room for the period of the examinations. The school was notified in 2020 by NZQA that these security protocols must be followed in order to protect the security and credibility of the examination process.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure procedures and protocols for protecting the security of examination papers are strictly followed.

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 2021 6.4b)

Waitaki Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- documenting the internal moderation process, including noting verification discussion and decisions
- creating an online process for uploading and checking internal moderation to improve accessibility and visibility for teachers and management
- monitoring completion of the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* for every standard before results are submitted to NZQA.

Waitaki Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being stored digitally by default and easily accessible
- monitoring agreement rates between teachers and NZQA moderators to identify emerging trends and potential issues within subject areas.

Engage with suitably-qualified subject specialists to verify grades awarded on samples of student work for every internally moderated standard In 2021, a small number of departments had issues with the quality of their grade verification. The person who undertakes this work should have recent, successful experience working with the standard and be aware of the content of the clarification documents, have access to valid, up-to-date exemplars and ideally belong to a subject association or professional community of subject experts. An assessment of the quality of the grade verification should be part of the school's response to external moderation feedback and, where applicable, a more suitable verifier should be used in future if they do not meet NZQA's requirements.

Heads of Department/other suitable critiquer must monitor NZQA's requirements for internal moderation Disregard of the critiquing process can result in unfair consequences for students. A robust critiquing process ensures the assessment activity focuses on the requirements specified in the standard and Conditions of Assessment and provides the opportunity for students to present evidence at all grades. Single-subject teachers offering standards infrequently, teachers new to NCEA assessment and any teacher assessing an unfamiliar standard must ensure the following steps are followed prior to assessing a standard:

- unpack the standard and, where necessary, use the *Request for clarification of internally assessed standards* form, or consult a subject expert who has recent and successful experience with assessing the standard, to check that the task and assessment schedule are fit-for-purpose and valid
- get confirmation that the students are capable of working at the level being assessed

- follow guidance provided in the clarification documents, Conditions of Assessment, the most recent National Moderator's report, up-to-date benchmark exemplars from the school's external moderation feedback and NZQA exemplars.

The school's Internal Moderation Cover Sheet reminds teachers of these steps in Section A and B and these should be routinely followed by all practitioners as part of their assessment practice.

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:

- monitor internal moderation to ensure the critiquing process is credible and complete
- use suitably-qualified subject specialists to verify grades awarded on internally moderated work.

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)

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

- reporting to the Principal and the Board of Trustees annually, a departmental analysis of NCEA achievement:
 - against set goals, identifying variances in internal and external standard achievement and unexpected results and trends
 - comparatively and historically to inform changes to standards and justify future course content
- gathering student voice to evaluate courses, inform changes to programmes, assessment contexts and standards.

Waitaki Boys' High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- reporting results to NZQA on a regular and timely basis
- using the Key Indicator Checklist and Data File Submission reports to identify and resolve data issues
- monitoring the availability of Unexpected Event Grades prior to NCEA examinations
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of external providers with which the school holds a current Memorandum of Understanding.

Comprehensive data analysis supports achievement outcomes for students An analysis of achievement data is undertaken at regular intervals throughout the year at department level to mitigate against the risk of individual students not meeting their qualification goals. Through these meetings with Heads of Department, the Assistant Rector - Teaching and Learning ensures students are progressing effectively, and/or receiving extension or targeted support as required. Live reporting of achievement data, with associated formative feedback, gives teachers, students and their parents a comprehensive overview of how an individual student is tracking. Year level Deans and House Group teachers also track progress for groups of students, providing effective wrap around support.

External entries review and change in procedure reduces number of Late Entries

Following a large number of late entries in 2018, senior management clarified with staff the necessity of entries being as accurate as possible and the consequences of not following the school's policy and procedures. This resulted in a dramatic drop in the number of late entries in subsequent years. In addition, management reinstated the practice of students physically signing off the accuracy of their results, rather than relying on students to check through the portal on the student management system.

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))

Waitaki Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- using a common template for assessment statements with every course in the *Senior Option Booklet*, providing consistent assessment information for students and their families
- communicating assessment policy and procedures through assemblies and regular meetings with the House Group teacher
- providing live reporting of student progress to students and parents through the portal on the student management system, including fortnightly reports on conduct, behaviour and attitude
- using an alternative online platform for three-way conferences with students, families and teachers during Lockdown
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and current.

Waitaki Boys' High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- assisting students and whānau to monitor NCEA progress through the parent and student portal and NZQA Learner Login
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- having a number of staff involved in subject associations and subject clusters, including writing assessment items for their subject association and actively participating on their subject's Facebook page
- holding whānau hui and fono several times throughout the school year to assist common understanding of NCEA and enable Māori and Pacific parents to better support their son's educational outcomes
- ensuring that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Clarify standards offering Further Assessment Opportunities The assessment statements in the *Senior Option Booklet* could include whether a standard will have access to a Further Assessment Opportunity. This will enable students and families to retrieve this information through a single accessible document, which is available online. Course Outlines, which vary from department to department in format, make this information difficult to access.

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:

- provide clear and consistent information about further assessment opportunities.