

Managing National Assessment Report

Lawrence Area School

May 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Lawrence Area 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
- *Lawrence Area School, 2019 NCEA Assessment Procedures, Staff Handbook*
- *Lawrence Area School, 2019 NCEA Assessment Procedures, Student and Parent Handbook*
- various assessment related policies
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
 - English
 - Physical Education
 - Technology
- Teacher in Charge of:
 - Food and Nutrition
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal and Principal's Nominee at the end of the review visit to highlight good practice and areas for improvement, with suggested strategies, next steps and to agree on any action required.

SUMMARY

Lawrence Area School

22 May 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

As part of the realisation of their mission statement Lawrence Area School aims to offer teaching programmes that reflect students' interests and needs. This is clearly reflected in the way the school reviews and manages its assessment practice.

Self-review is driven by senior management, taking account of teacher, student and parent voice. This leads to changes in assessment-related practice and review of their impacts to better meet the needs of students.

Assessment processes are effectively managed to meet the qualifications needs of students. Courses and their contexts are often individualised to meet student need. Opportunities are extended by using external providers to offer courses and standards that the school would otherwise be unable to provide. Identified students receive approved special assessment conditions and are well supported. Practices are sound and consistently applied. These actions contribute towards assisting students to improve their assessment outcomes.

Internal moderation processes, responses to external moderation and monitoring by the Principal's Nominee ensure that only credible assessment results are reported to NZQA. This is reflected in the overall high level of agreement between teacher and NZQA external moderator judgements.

Data management and use effectively supports student achievement outcomes and ensures the timely reporting of results to NZQA. Achievement data is analysed to review teacher practice and courses, inform how to best support individuals' progression and evaluate the effectiveness of changes. Students monitor their own progress towards completing qualifications, and staff use data and their knowledge of individuals to identify and intervene with students at risk of not achieving a qualification.

The school has a range of effective communications that allow staff, students and their families to gain a common understanding of NCEA and school assessment procedures.

Areas for improvement

Processes are in place so that the Principal's Nominee, students and staff check the accuracy of results reported to NZQA, but the checks also need to cover that all staff have withdrawn entries in internal standards where no assessment has occurred.

The school must ensure that in all subject areas internal entries to NZQA have a result reported or are withdrawn if the student has not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed. This would mean that data sent reflects the assessment undertaken and ensures that students have an accurate assessment programme recorded to assist them with tracking their progress.

Results from assessment in Year 10 are held over and reported in Year 11 assigned to courses. These results are not eligible for the inclusion in the calculation of a course endorsement and must be reported as unassigned to any course.

Some minor additions are needed to school documentation to ensure the information to staff, students and parents is fully comprehensive.

Agreed action

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

- introduce an end of year checking process so all internal entries made to NZQA have a corresponding result attached or are withdrawn if there has not been an adequate opportunity to be assessed
- ensure results assessed in previous years are reported as unassigned to a course
- make minor changes to school documentation so that it provides fully comprehensive information.

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24 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 12 October 2016 Managing National Assessment report An agreed action item to review course names so they are appropriate has been fully actioned. Two others covering the student and staff handbooks and withdrawing internal entries without results have been partially addressed but require some further action. Further details are in the relevant sections of this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has effective processes to respond to external moderation. These ensure senior management are fully informed of issues and involved in the review of outcomes where required.

The Principal's Nominee reads each report and shares them with staff through a moderation folder on the school network. Teachers are encouraged to appeal and or query a report if required. If a report highlights an issue the teacher produces an action plan. The Principal's Nominee reviews the plan and monitors the completion of actions to ensure an effective resolution of the issue. The process is tracked through a shared summary document.

Feedback from external moderation shows overall there is a high level of consistency between assessor and moderator judgements.

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)

Internal review and change is driven by senior management but all staff can instigate areas for focus and contribute to review processes.

A major area of change this year has been the structure of courses at Year 11. This was to ensure students study a broad curriculum and do not discount subjects until they have had a more in-depth experience of them. After consultation with students and parents, the Year 11 course has been constructed with core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science and students have rotated through all the other subjects. This is being reviewed as the year progresses and may evolve into selected courses in the second half of the year. This would allow students to consolidate understanding for areas they are likely to continue with in Year 12 and enable them to more readily gain course and certificate endorsements.

Due to the small and varied cohorts, both annual department review and the school as a whole look at each group's needs and tailor accordingly what courses are offered each year. As the school is retaining more students who may have in previous years left school, it is considering how it can offer more vocational courses to support more appropriate pathways.

The size and culture of the school means the Principal's Nominee is often aware of assessment issues as they arise. This year, however, teachers completed an online survey, so that she could formally check their understanding of school processes and how well they followed them. Both processes have led to the Principal's Nominee deciding to start a review of managing authenticity; particularly focusing on work completed digitally, and how much guidance a student can receive with a task.

These examples illustrate how the school is effectively reviewing its assessment-related processes in response to identified issues and to explore potential improvements.

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 2019 5.5)

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

- using formative assessment activities, milestone checks and feedback to prepare students for assessment opportunities
- ensuring that students potentially entitled to special assessment conditions are identified and support trialled
- clearly informing staff of students' special assessment conditions and readily providing appropriate assistance
- using a learning management system to ensure students have access to all assessment related materials
- offering informal tutoring outside class time on an as needed basis
- continuing timetabled classes once examination leave starts at the end of year for students who are at risk of not gaining a qualification, to support them to achieve in their remaining assessments
- depending upon the strengths and needs of the cohort, assessing a Science standard in Year 10 to give students a low stakes introduction to NCEA assessment.

Lawrence Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring the authenticity of student work during the assessment and marking process
- managing missed and late assessment, appeals and breaches of the assessment rules
- providing valid resubmission and further assessment opportunities
- ensuring student evidence for derived grades is standard specific and verified.

Focus on providing assessment to meet student needs To ensure suitable pathways are available for students, the school looks at the current individuals in a cohort. School-based courses are often adapted to meet their individual needs. These courses are supplemented with assessment from outside providers to match students' desired pathways. Depending upon what is required, this could be through a virtual learning network, the Otago Secondary Tertiary College, STAR and Gateway courses, Te Kura and several other tertiary providers.

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)

Lawrence Area School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all new or modified assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists within and outside the school to verify student work to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- documenting the quality assurance process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* and submitting it to the Principal's Nominee so that it can be checked before results are sent to NZQA
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions.

Lawrence Area School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- teachers requesting standards for external moderation and negotiating appropriate changes to the moderation plan
- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring student work is available for submission by the Principal's Nominee knowing the location of the materials
- taking advantage of the opportunity to submit work as soon as the internal moderation process has been completed to get timely feedback from external moderators.

Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency The school should consider providing staff with guidance on sufficient grade 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.

Due to small class size, most teachers verify the grades awarded to each piece of student work, and this may be more than is required to assure consistency with the standard. Most teachers felt their chosen level of grade verification contributed to their professional development, but some agreed they could perhaps reduce the number and still meet verification requirements, without compromising the validity of reported results.

No action required

No issues with the school's internal and external moderation were identified during this review.

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)

Lawrence Area School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- analysing results, with a focus on cohort progression and next steps, which informs the modification of courses and teaching practice
- submitting all entries in the first data file to NZQA, ensuring a student's full assessment programme can be considered when tracking progress.

Lawrence Area School reports accurate achievement data by:

- reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- effectively encouraging students to register their NZQA Learner Login and check the results reported
- having student and teacher checks of print outs of results at key times during the year
- the Principal's Nominee checking results reported with the data recorded on each *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- closely managing late entries
- only reporting results for standards for which the school holds consent, or using the correct code of outside providers where the Principal's Nominee has checked there is a current memorandum of understanding
- resolving any issues highlighted in the *Key Indicator Checklist*.

Student progress is effectively tracked and interventions put in place to improve achievement outcomes The school effectively uses data to track student progress, with a focus on improving student achievement outcomes. Any concerns are brought up by class or form teachers in weekly senior syndicate meetings to discuss if any support mechanisms need to be put in place.

Students are also expected to keep a record of their own progress towards their assessment goals on a tracking sheet which can be completed in form time.

Ensure all internal entries are withdrawn if a result is not recorded The school needs to ensure that in all subject areas, a result is reported for all entries for internally assessed standards made to NZQA, or the entry is withdrawn if the student has not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed, so that data NZQA holds reflects the assessment undertaken.

This was an agreed action in the last review, and in 2017 only 1 percent of internal entries did not have a result, but it increased back up to 4 percent in 2018. Due to the size of the school, a small number of entries can make a large difference to the overall picture.

Introducing an end of year check by the Principal's Nominee will ensure that any subject areas that have not followed the required school process can receive additional reminders and correct their entries before the final data submission to NZQA.

This will ensure that students have an accurate assessment programme recorded to assist them with tracking their progress and confirm no grades are unreported, which could have an impact on the qualifications gained.

Ensure results held over from assessment in a previous year are reported as unassigned standards When submitting internal assessment results to NZQA that have been held over from a previous year, the school is reporting them assigned to a course. These must be reported as unassigned standards. Carrying over results allows students to start the year with some credits towards their Level 1 NCEA, however they are not eligible for inclusion in the calculation of a course endorsement, as these must be gained from assessment undertaken in single year.

The Principal's Nominee will ensure the reporting of results assessed in 2018 meets NZQA's requirements this year. With the removal of NCEA fees the school will from now on report results the year they are assessed.

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:

- introduce an end of year checking process so all internal entries made to NZQA have a corresponding result attached or are withdrawn if there has not been an adequate opportunity to be assessed
- ensure results assessed in previous years are reported as unassigned to a course.

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))

Lawrence Area School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive clear physical and digital outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to staff, students and their families using a range of methods
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with assessment and moderation processes.

Lawrence Area School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- the Principal's Nominee talking to the senior students and distributing the student and parent handbook at the start of each year to explain and remind students about assessment policy and procedures
- course outlines including a standardised summary of school procedures, so that all staff can provide consistent reinforcement of them to students
- sending a copy of the student and parent handbook to parents, and presenting NZQA and school assessment related processes in parent meetings and through timely reminders in newsletters
- the staff handbook referencing the student and parent handbook to ensure information is consistent
- the Principal's Nominee sharing and discussing assessment related information through weekly senior syndicate meetings and regular emails.

Further changes required to staff, and student and parent information School publications require some minor additions to give comprehensive information.

In response to the last Managing National Assessment review, information has been added about the derived grade process. This should be expanded to explain what student work will be used to provide evidence for derived grades. The section on privacy should also cover using student work as exemplars.

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:

- make minor changes to school documentation so that it provides fully comprehensive information.