

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

**Ashburton Christian  
School**

**September 2024**

## FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

### Ashburton Christian School

24-25 September 2024

#### 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 the following action will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. This is to:

Action	Timeframe
<b>Credible assessment practice to meet student needs</b>	
To ensure more effective grade judgements, teachers should access all available assessor support for internally assessed standards.	Immediate

##### For consideration

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

- reviewing its policy on the mandatory provision of medical certificates for absence from assessment events.

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31 October 2024

**NZQA**

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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)*

**This is the school's first Managing National Assessment report.**

**External moderation response to outcomes and processes** The school has effective processes for the follow up of external moderation. The Principal's Nominee reviews all moderation reports and uses these to inform discussions with Heads of Department to develop an action plan to resolve any issues identified by NZQA moderators. Where required, teachers are encouraged to query or appeal external moderation outcomes to further clarify NZQA moderator grade judgements.

In the short time that the school has been carrying out NCEA assessment, external moderation outcomes have improved significantly due to improved connections with external verifiers and subject leaders' improved awareness of available assessor support. More detail on how to access additional assessor support is discussed in the body of this report. External Moderation is valued by school leaders for its professional learning component and where necessary, the school provides professional support for assessors to build their capability.

### Outcome of Quality Assurance Check of SAC applications

As part of NZQA's 2024 quality assurance of designated SAC applications submitted using the trial Notifications Gateway, NZQA's SAC Expert Panel has completed their assessment and has confirmed that the SAC requested for students at Ashburton Christian School is appropriate to their needs based on the evidence uploaded.

### 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)*

Ashburton Christian School is using its own processes of self-review based on data analysis and staff, student and community voice to build teacher capability and implement changes that will continue to improve assessment outcomes for all students.

This school's unique context is reflected in its achievement outcomes, which currently sit below those of comparable schools. Since the school began offering NCEA assessment in 2021, fewer than 50 students have been enrolled each year in Levels 1 - 3 NCEA, including those in Year 10 enrolled in the NCEA co-requisite online assessments. However, it is important to note that the school has a relatively high proportion of students who are on individual assessment programmes because of specific learning needs, health issues or language barriers as new migrants.

Despite the obvious challenges the school faces managing the relatively high needs of more than half of its NCEA students, the senior leadership team aims to provide optimal academic achievement for every student. To this end, the school carries out a higher proportion of external assessment than comparable schools and the majority of its courses are endorsable. Each student is supported to meet their needs, goals and aspirations through an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Most teachers are the sole teacher of their subject and courses are reviewed twice a year with a member of the

Senior Leadership Team to capture how well students have engaged with the assessments and to inform future course design.

Each year, the Deputy Principal/Head of Secondary prepares and presents to the Board of Trustees a comprehensive analysis of the performance of each NCEA course/subject offered by the school, and the outcomes of all students in each of their courses using a rank score process. This methodology enables senior leaders to see how individual students have performed in each of their courses within a year, how well different courses have enabled students to achieve their best and it allows useful comparisons to be made between different cohorts in a subject/course over time. This information is used to inform teachers of the standards selected for courses in the forthcoming school year.

At the time of this review, pending changes to the Senior Leadership Team for 2025 mean that the review of the school Strategic Plan and changes to its future strategic direction have been suspended until the new appointment has been made.

## **Credible assessment practice to meet student needs**

*Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024)*

**Courses modified annually to meet student needs** At the end of the 2023 school year, changes were made to several courses to better meet student needs and qualifications goals, such as, enabling opportunities for course endorsement and removing barriers for students “at risk.”

### **All students tracked to support intended pathway and qualifications goals**

From Year 10, students’ career goals and pathways are recorded and mapped, or later modified, in conjunction with the student and their whānau. All students transferring to the school are interviewed and tested on entry to determine their learning needs and identify any gaps. There are a number of students without a clear school history, including those who have been home schooled, or previously enrolled with specialist schools. The size of the school roll allows each student’s NCEA progress to be tracked and updated continuously through a centrally held spreadsheet. Students and whānau are able to monitor progress themselves through the portal to the Student Management System. The Principal’s Nominee/Head of Secondary holds regular check ins with all teachers of years 11 to 13 to update how students are managing each assessment event in the assessment calendar and to organise interventions, or make additional accommodations, where required.

**Universal Design for Assessment principles applied** The school uses the flexibility of NCEA and assistive technologies to develop student-centred assessments that lower sensory, emotional, and physical barriers to successful assessment. Senior leaders prefer the use of assistive technologies and time extensions over the use of reader/writers for internal assessment, as they believe this creates a more authentic assessment and these tools are readily available to the students in the real world. The school uses a range of assistive tools and technologies to support the high number of SAC students on the school roll.

In addition, priority students in Technology, Pathways and Physical Education courses may be offered skill-based unit standards instead of Achievement Standards to support their qualifications goals. Students are encouraged to present their work in the mode that will showcase their mastery of an assessment standard to their best

advantage, including verbal responses, where a written response may create a barrier to success or limit the grade a student could achieve.

**Robust authenticity checks in place for internally assessed standards** The school places a high value on academic integrity and has extended its repertoire of plagiarism/AI detection software and keyboard tracking tools to combat breaches of authenticity. Regular checks of document version history, as well as mandatory checkpoints for assessment carried out over time, enable teachers to address any malpractice early and redirect the students by clarifying authenticity expectations with them. Consequently, there are very few breach investigations resulting in a Not Achieved grade. All students are taught correct referencing prior to their first NCEA assessment and understand the ethical importance of academic integrity.

**Relax requirement for medical certificates for short term absence** The staff and student handbooks still require a medical certificate to vouch for absence from an assessment due to illness. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, NZQA has relaxed this requirement due to the impracticality of seeing a doctor if one has COVID-like symptoms and because of the difficulty of obtaining a face-to-face consultation at short notice. A written or verbal attestation from a parent or caregiver will suffice in most cases. The school may still require a medical certificate for periods of extended absence, or in other circumstances where school leaders deem this to be appropriate.

**Derived grades are appropriately quality assured** The school sources its external exams from subject associations and administers them in identical conditions to the exams at the end of year. All scripts are put through a verification process similar to that of internally moderated standards and the process is recorded. Results are sent to NZQA as required prior to the exam round.

## **Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results**

*Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024)*

Since 2021, the school's quality assurance processes and procedures have greatly improved, due to the relationships established with other schools and links made with professional associations. Notwithstanding the influence of external factors such as the difficulty finding suitably qualified and experienced teachers, external moderation reports in the past two years that were Not Consistent or Not Yet Consistent commonly point to the need for assessors, and verifiers, to access more of the assessor supports available to them through:

- NZQA's learning management platform, Pūtake, and
- the clarifications and National Moderators' reports, and
- the exemplars published on the relevant subject resources page of the NZQA website.

More robust pre-moderation critiquing will improve the likelihood that results reported are accurate and consistent with the listed standard. In 2024 and following, the Principal's Nominee is advised to follow up external moderation as soon as the external moderation report is received and to provide guidance where the NZQA moderator has asked the assessor to check the available assessor supports mentioned above. Regular reminders of where to go for assessment related matters

will ensure that assessors are looking in the right place for the assessment related information they require. Wider use of the *Request Clarification of an Internally Assessed Standard* form will support teachers at the school who mostly work in isolation in their subject areas.

## **Appendix 1: Effective Practice**

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

**Ashburton Christian 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
- 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
- providing opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- identifying and providing [targeted support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals.

**Ashburton Christian School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- managing missed or late assessment
- 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
- 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**

**Ashburton Christian School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- 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.

**Ashburton Christian 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**

**Ashburton Christian 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.

**Ashburton Christian School reports accurate achievement data by:**

- ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date data
- 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
- ensuring low levels of late external entries, and internal entries with no results
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding.

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

### **Ashburton Christian School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- keeping assessment-related communications current and accurate, and reviewing communications to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- 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.

### **Ashburton Christian 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 Ashburton Christian 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 *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024*.

### 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
- ACS NCEA Achievement Analysis 2023
- *ACS Student and Parent Handbook of Policies and Procedures 2024* (Student Handbook)
- *ACS Teacher Handbook of Policies and Procedures 2024* (Staff Handbook).

### **The School Relationship Manager met with:**

- the Principal's Nominee /Deputy Principal/ Head of Secondary
- Heads of Department for:
  - English
  - Science and Mathematics
  - Technology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Acting Principal and Principal's Nominee/Deputy Principal 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.