

Managing National Assessment Report

Cornerstone Christian School

June 2021

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Cornerstone 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.

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
- *Cornerstone Christian School Teacher Handbook NCEA 2021*
- *Cornerstone Christian School Student Handbook NCEA 2021*
- *Cornerstone Christian School Secondary Course Booklet 2021*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal
- Curriculum Leaders of:
 - Mathematics
 - Sciences
- Teachers in Charge of:
 - Art
 - English
 - Social Sciences
- Teacher of:
 - Commerce
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy 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

Cornerstone Christian School

29 June 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 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 COVID-19 restrictions.

What the school is doing well

Cornerstone Christian School started offering the NCEA in 2016 and the qualification is now embedded at all three levels. The school has sound systems and processes for ensuring assessment is credible, with students achieving well at all levels of NCEA.

With low numbers at each year level, courses are tailored to groups of students, and sometimes to the individual. Course content and structure is adjusted each year in response to the needs of students in that cohort. The school also supports students at risk of not gaining their qualifications, and those needing extension. This flexibility is a strength that benefits all students.

The teachers use their professional links with other schools to ensure they remain up to date with curriculum and assessment information. Through these relationships they have access to a pool of external verifiers for internal moderation. Consistency of assessment practice is easily maintained, and good practice shared by staff in the small senior secondary school, where teachers in each curriculum area are often sole-charge or in small teams.

The school carefully monitors student progress, using achievement data and predictive modelling to identify those at risk of not meeting their goals. Extra academic support is offered before and during the NCEA examinations to help these students achieve. Specific support for literacy and numeracy is also available.

The Life Lab teachers know their students well and can advise on appropriate goals, pathways and the school subjects required to help them realise their aspirations. Strong links with off-site organisations, such as Universal College of Learning (UCOL) and through the Gateway programme, help students to pursue academic and vocational pathways not offered by the school.

The Principal's Nominee ensures that assessment and moderation processes meet NZQA requirements. She regularly checks internal moderation processes to maintain consistency of practice across the school. External moderation outcomes are discussed with curriculum leaders and agreed actions to address any issues are

monitored for effectiveness. New staff are supported with NCEA procedures and school processes by the consistent messaging in the staff handbook.

Curriculum leaders analyse NCEA data to inform course review and produce curriculum area reports for the Principal and Board of Trustees each year. As low student numbers can skew these results, staff are encouraged to look at overall trends, as each cohort is very different from each other.

There are no agreed action items. Some next steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.



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20 August 2021

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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 13 September 2018 Managing National Assessment Report

Cornerstone Christian School has addressed the two items identified by:

- conducting an annual audit of learning areas to ensure internal moderation processes and procedures are being followed consistently across the school
- updating documentation and informing staff about privacy requirements for student results and use of student work as exemplars.

Response to external moderation outcomes NZQA moderators have identified that overall the school's assessor judgements are consistent with national standards. Each external moderation report is reviewed by the Principal's Nominee and discussed with the curriculum leader, focusing on suitable actions to address the feedback given. The effectiveness of these actions is reviewed to ensure changes have had the desired effect. This is part of the annual meeting with the Curriculum Leader, Deputy Principal and Principal's Nominee.

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)

Cornerstone Christian School has effective processes for reviewing and reflecting on current practices and responding to the changing needs of its growing student body. These are led by the Principal and the senior leadership team, with the Principal's Nominee involved with anything relating to NCEA requirements. Changes are implemented in a measured, step-by-step manner so as not to overwhelm staff, who, due to the size of the school, often have more than one area of responsibility. There is high collaboration and collegiality between all staff and learning areas.

The school maintains effective assessment practices and quality assurance systems for NCEA by regularly reviewing, discussing and documenting these processes. For example, the change to resubmission rules this year resulted in staff discussion about holistic judgements and what this looks like in different subject areas. This has led to consistent practice across the senior school.

NCEA data analysis helps curriculum leaders focus on comparing data and identifying trends, reflecting on the NCEA courses offered. Assessment practice, student achievement, areas of strength and areas to focus on for the coming year are discussed in annual interviews with the senior leadership team. This informs school and departmental goals.

The school has identified the need to grow their cultural competency across the school and have embarked on a Core Education initiative to support this. The secondary school begins this professional development in Term 3 2021. This will see

them reflect on practice, looking at what a contextual, localised curriculum would look like and how this links to the NCEA changes in 2023.

The Deputy Principal has completed a subject audit, identifying any repetition and gaps in learning objectives across the school curriculum. This information will be valuable as the school looks at what their curriculum, both teaching and learning, will look like in the future and how it responds to student needs and their pathways.

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)

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

- tracking student results to identify learners who may need support or extension
- reviewing course content regularly to ensure contexts are relevant and meeting student needs
- ensuring that students who would benefit from special assessment conditions are identified and that school-based evidence is gathered to support their application
- clearly informing staff of students' special assessment conditions and providing appropriate assistance
- assessing when ready through flexibility of timeframes.

Cornerstone Christian School has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring authenticity by conferencing with students to check on their level of understanding
- ensuring evidence for derived grades is available and is standard-specific, valid and verifiable
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020*.

Consistent school-wide practices Students reported that assessment practices were applied consistently across all subject areas and that they would ask the Principal's Nominee if they were unsure about anything. They indicated they knew how to apply for an extension and what to do for a late or missed assessment. The changes to the rules for resubmission have been discussed and are well understood by staff and students.

Extending courses available to students Cornerstone Christian School engages with external providers to support a range of pathways for students. They make use of Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, especially for languages, UCOL, NetNZ, Waikato University, Canterbury University and Massey University to broaden the opportunities available. Students can gain skills and work experience by engaging with Gateway and STAR programmes.

Meeting student needs in STEM At Year 13, 54 percent of students engaged in at least one STEM subject in 2020. The school acknowledges that there is low engagement of Maori and Pasifika students, however this is often related to their pathway goals, rather than avoiding these subjects. The school focuses on individual student pathways and supports them to choose the subjects that will meet their goals. As a result, a combined statistics and calculus course has been created to cater for a wider range of students and their pathway aspirations.

No action required

No issues with the school's internal and external moderation 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 2021 6.4b)

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

- ensuring all new and modified assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists, from within and outside the school, to verify grades awarded on a purposefully selected sample of student work
- documenting the quality assurance process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- retaining and updating work to be used as exemplars for students and benchmarking for future assessor judgements
- monitoring departmental processes regularly.

Cornerstone Christian School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting random samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring student work is stored securely and available for submission to NZQA if required
- reflecting on external moderation feedback to inform changes to assessment tasks and future grade decisions.

Effective monitoring of internal moderation confirms reported results are credible The Principal's Nominee and senior leadership team actively review all aspects of internal moderation at least annually, checking that the expected processes have been completed for all standards. The discussions that ensue are recorded and shared, informing good practice for all teachers of NCEA.

Adequate storage of student work The school has clear expectations for the storage of student work, with physical work stored in curriculum areas and digital student work stored on a portable hard drive. It is timely for a school-wide system for cloud-based digital storage to be developed so that files and folders can be easily shared with the Principal's Nominee and anyone else needing access. This would further support the digital submission of student evidence for external moderation, which the school is committed to doing.

Support for making assessor judgements The Principal's Nominee is helping to build staff capability for making assessor judgements by encouraging all staff to access the familiarisation activities available on the NZQA learning management system Pūtake, a support platform for moderation. This is important for staff who are in sole charge of learning areas and reliant on grade verifiers from other schools.

For consideration

To extend school practice in assurance of assessment quality, the school is encouraged to consider:

- developing a school-wide online system for storage of digital student evidence.

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)*

Cornerstone Christian School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- encouraging students and parents to use the school's online portal and NZQA's Learner Login to monitor progress and check for accuracy of reported results
- analysing strengths and interests of the student cohort each year to offer standards that suit individual students.

Cornerstone Christian School reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting data files to NZQA regularly and on a timely basis
- submitting results for all assessed standards, including Not Achieved
- checking with staff and students that entries into standards are accurate and making any necessary changes by due dates
- holding current Memoranda of Understanding for external providers centrally, reporting results using correct provider codes and reviewing these external moderation outcomes annually.

Effective tracking of student progress Cornerstone Christian School uses data to monitor and track student progress towards their chosen assessment pathway and qualification goals. Life Lab teachers mentor students, supporting them to reach these goals and forming a strong student/home/school relationship for maximising achievement outcomes.

Students who are at risk of not achieving are identified and have interventions implemented as necessary. One example of this is the establishment of a Year 11 Literacy and Numeracy class, specifically for students at risk of not meeting these requirements. Another example is a Summer School, which targeted students attend instead of going on study leave in October and November. This gives students an opportunity to complete the learning and assessment needed to reach their goals.

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))

Cornerstone Christian School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive clear outlines for all courses they undertake
- supporting teachers new to the school with an induction day to familiarise them with the school's expectations for assessment and moderation processes, and a buddy for ongoing support
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

Cornerstone Christian School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- discussing NCEA related processes in curriculum area meetings to ensure consistency and inform good practice
- presenting NZQA and school assessment related processes in parent information evenings and reinforcing these through other interactions with students and parents.

Effective communication and support Interviews with students and staff confirmed they are aware of NCEA processes and procedures, where to find information if required and who to ask if they have questions.

The Life Lab teachers are an important point of contact for parents and students, leading to the delivery of a consistent message about NCEA procedures and expectations. From Year 10 the teacher stays with the same group, developing a strong relationship with the students and getting to know them well. Regular contact with families ensures parents feel comfortable contacting the school and being part of their child's NCEA journey.

The mentoring conversations led by the Life Lab teachers are used to help students monitor their own progress and set goals to work towards the pathways they are interested in. Parents are part of these conversations and able to further support their child meet their goals at home.

This relationship with parents led to feedback regarding the formal written reports, resulting in changes that have made them easier for parents to understand. These now report on curriculum levels as well as NCEA results.

The information in the staff and student handbooks regarding authenticity and misconduct could be further strengthened with clear processes if a breach of assessment rules occurs. This applies to internal assessments and those used to generate derived grades.

For consideration

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- adding to the information about breaches of assessment rules in the staff and student handbooks.

