

Managing National Assessment Report

**Cornerstone Christian
School**

May 2025

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Cornerstone Christian School

23 May 2025

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
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Ensure results reported to NZQA as derived grades have been quality assured.	For 2025 examinations and ongoing.
Moderation to ensure assessment quality	
Develop a process to monitor the completion of internal moderation.	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:

- implementing a more timely response to external moderation feedback.

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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 29 June 2021 Managing National Assessment Report There were no action items identified in this report.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes

While there is systematic and robust review of feedback from external moderation, the school may benefit from implementing a timelier response process to maximise the opportunities for assessors to apply improved understanding to subsequent assessment opportunities. Currently, external moderation reports are forwarded to the relevant teacher and/or Head of Department as they are received. Teachers read and review the reports, then create action plans to address issues raised. However, these responses are not reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team until the following year, as part of the annual NCEA review cycle. This approach previously worked well when the majority of external moderation reports were received towards the end of the year, following the school's submission month. Now, under the current system, this can mean there is a significant delay between receiving feedback and Senior Leadership Team oversight and support. As NZQA now requires external moderation to be completed as soon as results are published throughout the year, it would be more beneficial for the review, response and implementation of support to occur within the immediate assessment cycle to maximise the opportunity to apply recommendations and learning throughout the year.

The response to external moderation section in the annual document asks teachers to reflect on any issues identified by the moderator and note how these will be addressed. The section is positioned directly before the review of internal moderation processes within each subject area. This sequencing is good practice as it supports understanding of the link between efficient and effective internal moderation being reflected in external moderation outcomes.

Outlier report The school provided a detailed response to outlier reports received in one subject area which highlighted statistical disparity between derived grades and student achievement in external standards, and between the internal and external results reported. The next step is to review why the disparity occurred and the extent to which the differences may warrant further investigation, and action, particularly in the areas of teacher practice and/or course design. As discussed further in this report, the outlier report supports the importance of undertaking effective quality assurance for all standards, including derived grade assessments.

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)

Since the last Managing National Assessment review, the importance of the Principal's Nominee role has been formally recognised with the Principal's Nominee now included as a member of the Senior Leadership Team. This inclusion has strengthened shared understanding and oversight in the following areas:

- managing and monitoring credible assessment

- tracking and supporting students towards their identified pathways
- identifying areas where additional support may be required.

Extensive data tracking supports student achievement Regular meetings with key personnel and the use of extensive data to track individual students is central to supporting student achievement progress towards their pathway goals. The data review group including the Principal's Nominee and Deputy Principal, meet early in the year, then fortnightly following. The school's ethos and small size enable a relational approach, where every student and their individual pathway is known and supported. Extensive data collection and visual tracking tools support academic mentoring undertaken in Homeroom, allowing for early identification of students at-risk of not achieving in the next academic year and the implementation of targeted support strategies on a case-by-case basis. The data review team utilises predictive modelling to identify students who may require additional academic support at the end of the academic year. Additionally, the Annual Analysis of Variance reporting helps determine students who are at risk. The academic progress of every student is known, communicated to whānau through termly academic summaries, and supported.

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 2025)

Responsive timetable implemented to address identified needs The school has reviewed its timetable and introduced initiatives and programmes to better cater for student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations. Since the last Managing National Assessment review, several key developments have been implemented:

- introducing The Learning Centre (TLC) which supports identified students in a co-ordinated approach with a dedicated teacher supporting achievement in alternative qualifications
- extending of the school's Consent to Assess to broaden the learning and assessment opportunities available for students
- running a literacy and numeracy classes for students who may otherwise be at risk of not gaining Level 1 literacy and numeracy
- encouraging participation and involvement in the Gateway programme and with other off-site organisations which enable students to pursue vocational pathways
- utilising a variety of assessment methods and a range of methods to collect evidence across subject areas to better meet individual student needs
- supporting students with their Homeroom teacher moving forward with students throughout their senior secondary journey.

Results used for derived grades must be quality assured The school is required to ensure all grades that are submitted to NZQA for potential use as derived grades are subject to robust quality assurance processes. This review identified inconsistencies in both understanding and implementation of these requirements. Like internal moderation, grades from practice exams must be quality assured, using either the verification or justification process. This process must be clearly documented with evidence and monitored to provide senior leadership with

assurance that all grades submitted to NZQA are credible. Further guidance and supporting documentation can be found on the NZQA website.

Moderation to ensure assessment quality

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 2025)

Develop a process to monitor the completion of internal moderation The school needs to strengthen its processes for senior leadership to monitor the completion of internal moderation before a result is reported to NZQA. While this review has confidence that internal moderation is being completed for every standard, there is currently no formal process to monitor this. A number of approaches were discussed during the review visit, which could be investigated by the school. These include:

- utilising an online tool within the school's Student Management System
- developing a centrally held spreadsheet to provide visibility of the process, progress and its completion
- having Heads of Department and/or Teachers in Charge provide an attestation of completion.

Monitoring internal moderation completion should be supported by the Principal's Nominee continuing to review the efficiency and robustness of the internal moderation process undertaken. This review sighted a number of internal moderation cover sheets showing good practice, including:

- ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued before use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- utilising subject experts from within or outside the school as appropriate to verify grades awarded on a strategically selected, sufficient sample of student work
- recording verification discussion on the internal moderation cover sheet for use as future reference.

Access available assessor supports Teachers across a number of subject areas have made effective use of the NZQA Learning Management System, Pūtake, to support teacher understanding and assessment judgement through the Assessor Practice Tool. This is a resource where teachers can practise making grade judgements against student samples and receive feedback on the accuracy of their grade judgements. This good practice should continue to be encouraged as the number of standards and levels for which resources are available, continues to grow. In addition, teachers are encouraged to utilise other supports to assist in their assessment practice and in meeting the requirement of standards including:

- using the *Request for clarification of an internally assessed standard* form to ask a specific question prior to delivery of an assessment
- undertaking additional short courses and tutorials on Pūtake, such as the online training module *Teachers New to NCEA Standard-Based Assessment* designed to support new and returning teachers

- utilising the *Query* function in the External Moderation Application to clarify understanding of the standard and its grade boundaries through two-way communication between the assessor and the moderator.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

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

Cornerstone 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
- 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

Cornerstone 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 clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment judgements
- 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.

Cornerstone 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

Cornerstone 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.

Cornerstone 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 about assessment

Cornerstone 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, such as the recognition of endorsement and Academic Colours.

Cornerstone 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 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.

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 2025*.

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
- *Cornerstone Christian School NCEA Information Evening - Summary Sheet*
- *Cornerstone Christian School Senior Secondary Handbook and 2025 Course Booklet*
- *New Zealand Qualifications Framework Cornerstone Christian School 2025 Student and Parent Handbook of Policies and Procedures*
- *New Zealand Qualifications Framework Cornerstone Christian School 2025 Teacher Handbook of Policies and Procedures.*

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal
- Heads of Department for:
 - English
 - Science
- Teachers in Charge of:
 - Careers
 - Social Science
- 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.