



Report of External Evaluation and Review

Royal New Zealand Plunket Society
Inc

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 14 November 2012

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	4
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	5
Summary of Results	5
Findings	8
Recommendations	16
Appendix	17

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Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Name of Teo:	Royal New Zealand Plunket Society Inc (Plunket)
Location:	40 Mercer Street, Wellington
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered	1 February 1997
Number of students:	Education in Schools: 7,171 Postgraduate Certificate in Primary Health Care Specialty Nursing: 142
Number of staff:	Eight full-time, 46 part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education in Schools• Postgraduate Certificate in Primary Health Care Specialty Nursing• Tamariki Ora Well Child
Sites:	Whitireia Community Polytechnic Schools and practice locations nationwide
Distinctive characteristics:	The Postgraduate Certificate in Primary Health Care Specialty Nursing is the most widely known and used qualification in early childhood care in New Zealand. Plunket's 20-year parenting education programme in secondary schools, once a single standard course, has now expanded into a broadly based Education in Schools programme, with the participation of schools and community polytechnics and declared interest from other

educational organisations, including The Correspondence School and iwi providers.

Recent significant changes: In the last two years, participation in the Education in Schools programme has doubled to more than 7,000 enrolments annually, with the participation of 360 schools. Present challenges include qualified staff retention for an expanding portfolio, and more unit standard-specific professional development for staff. Consent is currently being sought to assess against all unit standards in the National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (Level 3), a significant step in programme development for the Education in Schools programme.

Previous quality assurance history: Plunket was previously quality assured by NZQA by audit in 2009.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the external evaluation and review (EER) included:

- Governance, management, and strategy

This is a mandatory focus area.

- Education in Schools

This rapidly expanding programme is increasingly seen as a valuable part of the secondary school curriculum, continually expanding both in portfolios and student numbers. The programme is also undergoing a shift in day-to-day teaching responsibility from Plunket's employed and trained staff to staff of client education organisations.

- Postgraduate Certificate in Primary Health Care Specialty Nursing

This is the other of the two Plunket education programmes. The programme is a nationwide service long seen as Plunket's signal feature, now closely aligned with Whānau Ora principles of Tamariki Ora and family and community development, and delivered under contract to another TEO.

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

*All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document *Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review* available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.*

The EER was conducted over one and a half-days by a lead evaluator and a team evaluator, who jointly interviewed the chief executive and national office educational and administrative staff, area and regional staff and teachers, and Whitireia Community Polytechnic,. The team also examined board minutes, programme handbooks and documents, evaluation records, analyses, and improvement schedules.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Royal New Zealand Plunket Society Inc.**

Plunket offers two distinct educational programmes, the Postgraduate Certificate in Primary Health Care Specialty Nursing for registered nurses, and the Education in Schools programme with no qualification at present, but offering a range of childcare and awareness courses and skills. The programmes share a common philosophy, Tamariki Ora, or Well Child, used in both cases as instruments for community development and reform.

The postgraduate certificate programme is delivered under contract to a polytechnic, and is taught, monitored, and supervised by postgraduate educators with Master's degree qualifications, clinical educators, preceptors, and area clinical supervisors. The Education in Schools programme is delivered through a similar network of teachers and mentors. This exacting approach has produced excellent outcomes in both programmes, a possible 100 per cent completion for postgraduate students in 2012, and excellent graduate feedback. There is intense and widespread community involvement in the Education in Schools programme, where participation has grown in six years from 2,500 students to more than 7,000, with 2,000 parent and community volunteers, 360 schools, 100 teachers in school employment, and the continual development of new courses and pathways. Feedback from students and volunteers indicates that the programme is effective in changing family and parenting attitudes and practices, and is enhancing skills in the care of children.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Royal New Zealand Plunket Society Inc.**

Self-assessment is simple in concept and comprehensive in practice. Feedback, formal and informal, is sought and received from all active participants and stakeholders. Every employee is subject to intensive training and orientation, and subsequently to peer and supervisory observation and review. All staff engage in professional development activities specifically aimed at improvement in outcomes. This includes the governing body, which has an advisory committee of more than 20 members, whose substantial influence in quality assurance and improvement of outcomes is detailed below in the findings. The TEO's response to self-assessment is pragmatic and proactive. It is discussed in management meetings, recorded, analysed, and translated either into immediate action or future planning. Numerous instances of these actions are recorded in the organisation's self-assessment and evaluation report, perhaps the most conspicuous of which is the

strategic increase of the Education in Schools portfolio between 2010 and 2011, from 206 unit standards to 430, and total student numbers from 2,844 to 7,171.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

Programme completion rates and, more importantly, student and stakeholder feedback on the value of learning in context are the most important sources of evidence for learner achievement.

In the postgraduate certificate programme, there was 97 per cent completion in all courses between 2009 and 2011, and there have been no withdrawals to date in 2012. All students in this programme are already employed and undergo intensive pre-course training before enrolment. Analysis of feedback from students, preceptors, clinical educators, and area coordinators indicates excellent learning outcomes and a high level of satisfaction amongst graduates.

Education in Schools enrolments are made by the school management, often for a variety of reasons not necessarily related to the student's interest in the subject. The consequence, from 2009 to 2011, has been a variable completion rate. A drop from 74 per cent to 69 per cent in 2010, continuing into 2011, has been attributed to confusing redrafts of a unit standard in a flagship programme. Plunket's own redraft of this standard, focussing as needed on basic childcare skills, has been well received so far, and further refinement is planned. Eighty-five per cent of learner feedback in 2011 reported satisfaction with the learning and increased health knowledge. Completion rates are not in themselves indicators of high achievement, and because of the lack of external benchmarks in similar programmes it is not easy to conclude what would count as high achievement. Also, since Education in Schools staff lack a decisive role in the enrolment process, it would be unreasonable to judge performance by the completion rates of students assigned to the programme. Comparison, school by school, with completion rates for other unit standards in the curriculum may of some value in assessing completion rates for the Education in Schools programme.

A more reliable indicator is the explosive growth in demand for the programme, with enrolments doubling in two years to over 7,000 students, and the involvement of over 340 schools. Feedback from all participants, especially students and volunteers, is strongly positive about the utility of the learning, its effect on the outlook of families and communities, and the heightened awareness and care that has resulted, for example a year 9 student advising a relative on the correct way to

¹ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

place an infant for sleeping. Family involvement is a primary feature of the Plunket agenda, and Education in Schools' performance in this respect is clearly excellent.

A number of schools assign Education in Schools teaching to one of their own employees, who receives full professional support, including mentoring and supervision, from Plunket educators, marketers, area coordinators, and other staff, both local and national. Further delegation to schools is planned, with the gradual reduction of 50 Plunket teachers to ten. A teacher review is underway, with particular emphasis on retention of Education in Schools' educators with teaching qualifications and experience for an expanding portfolio. This is an excellent, proactive approach to the aim of disseminating awareness of community health and safety into the community. Six schools are preparing to provide EIS units as the basis of their full-year ECE studies programme.

Feedback from both programmes is recorded and analysed respectively by the EIS national adviser, the education manager, and the Whitireia advisory board, discussed with Plunket senior management, and appropriate action scheduled. Examples of improvement resulting from self-assessment are the redesign of unit standard 10021 *Describe the basic needs of children in an ECE (early childhood education) service*, and preparation for the National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care to begin staircasing to a higher qualification, seen as a desirable option by participants in the Education in Schools programme.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

Sources of evidence for value to stakeholders are: stakeholder feedback, as discussed in the previous section, community support for expansion of portfolios, a positive relationship with Māori educators and iwi representatives (especially in common aims for Whanau Ora and Tamariki Ora), and substantial funding of statutory bodies. Underlying all these is mentorship and endorsement of an advisory committee with more than 20 members representing health, education, and community interests. Of the nine members of the Plunket national board, two represent Māori interests and two are independent. Eighteen regional boards are similarly constituted.

For the postgraduate certificate, a network of postgraduate educators, preceptors, and clinical educators maintains continuous contact with students from first enrolment to their postgraduate practice in the community, and provides ongoing feedback on their performance. Graduates formally evaluate the relevance and utility of their learning in practice, and Plunket's contractual partner writes an annual evaluation report on the programme. The Education in Schools programme

has a similar network of teachers, marketers, area and regional coordinators, and students and volunteers, who feed back on every stage of the programme, from enrolment to community and family outcomes. Feedback is strongly positive, a view confirmed by the rapid expansion of the programme.

The contractual partner and clinical leaders of the postgraduate certificate programme report well on its relevance and value, and graduate feedback in 2011 recorded over 90 per cent satisfaction with the support from preceptors. The education manager and the national advisor, respectively for each of the two programmes, are in constant direct contact both with their networks and senior management, and are able to respond swiftly to perceived and actual needs. In both programmes, negative feedback is actively sought, analysed, and discussed weekly with senior management, and actions minuted.

Examples of many improvements recorded for 2012 are: the introduction of a sustainable family partnership facilitator plan, a renewed professional development plan for expanding portfolios, an online induction programme in organisational and programme detail, increased audio-visual resources for Education in Schools, and development of pre-enrolment 'articulate' (preparation) modules for the postgraduate certificate programme.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

An experimental approach, seeking feedback from delivery networks and from the organisation's own evaluation, produces a continual stream of improvements furthering the Plunket kaupapa. Priorities in the postgraduate certificate programme are that learning be matched with employment situations, and that it be evidence and community-based, with a strong emphasis on praxis in a community setting. Needs assessment focusses on the skills needed for individual career pathways, and their integration into an individual learning plan. Applicants are given a robust orientation, with assessment of students' clinical judgements, ethics, and wellness, their perception of changes in cultures and needs, and research skills. Review of students' readiness in recent years has indicated the need for a four to six-month articulate, or preparation period, prior to enrolment. Plunket has a 'professional development ensuring competence' contract with 33 iwi providers to consult on content, whānau ora, and delivery issues, and there are four, three-day professional development workshops annually for two groups of Māori participants. This represents a continuing concern with the needs and interests of all participants, and the programme's flexibility and responsiveness has strong approval from students and the delivery team that surrounds them. The professional

development contract's value is further confirmed by the completion numbers already mentioned, and a record enrolment in 2012.

The Education in Schools programme continually develops and improves the range of content, delivery, and assessment options. Standards are revised or reformatted and new courses designed for perceived needs, for example a babysitting certificate which is now one of the most popular in the repertoire. There is ongoing communication with Māori providers on contextual needs, and a Māori/English bilingual version of level 1 unit standards is planned for 2013. The introduction of the level 3 National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care and the level 4 National Certificate in Tamariki Ora are steps in a strategy to staircase to the postgraduate certificate, and the career opportunities that will offer.

Feedback from participants, and the rapidly expanding participation of schools, provides ample evidence of satisfaction with these measures. Other improvements include provision of flash drives with all course information, rewritten moderation reports and peer observation records, and an online evaluation facility for teachers, educators, and volunteers.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

For the postgraduate certificate, a team of certificate educators, clinical educators, clinical leaders, and preceptors supports and mentors each student throughout the programme. Students are given comprehensive handbooks on Tamariki Ora and the postgraduate certificate, with detail on background, philosophy, curriculum, and praxis, and on Tiriti o Waitangi commitments. Community and clinical practice portfolios and assessment details and templates are included. The programme comprises two papers, each with three assignments, one practice-based and incremental, the other research and analysis. Re-sits are permitted for incomplete work and, in special cases, resubmission of an entire paper. Feedback indicates that the course is both challenging and rewarding, and an excellent practical and theoretical preparation for the graduates' new role in nursing.

The postgraduate certificate educators are trained in both clinical and theoretical subjects. They must fulfil the requirements of the Professional Development and Recognition Programme, complete a Master's degree and family partnership training, attend parenting educator workshops, and lead staff development workshops and regional professional development days. They must train and sit the assessments of the programme, engage in ongoing peer training and supervision, and complete an individual personal development plan. Preceptors are given 16 hours training as required by the Nursing Council of New Zealand, then intensive six-month support through to the completion of study. They are

employed for three years with peer supervision and appraisal from team members and managers. All staff are required to engage in 20 hours of professional development yearly, and participate in ongoing professional development opportunities, including four annual 40-hour tutorials with a variety of external contributors. This is a demanding and varied professional development schedule, all supported by the Plunket board, and focussed specifically on excellence in teaching.

The academic leader of the contracted partner organisation moderates course design and assessment, and is otherwise closely engaged with the educators. Educators observe, peer review, and mentor each other, and report to the national education manager. In rural areas, regional coordinators moderate delivery and assessment. The programme is moderated by NZQA and audited by the Nursing Council of New Zealand.

A similarly exacting training and evaluation process applies to all Plunket-employed participants in the Education in Schools programme, where the challenges are greater, especially in rural areas, where with the attrition of lone Plunket-employed staff, local schools will be encouraged to deliver the programme. Training and mentoring for school-employed teachers and volunteers is provided by the EIS area teams and the national office team, all of whom give qualitative feedback on all points. Feedback is invited, rather than required, from students and volunteers, and an online system is being introduced to facilitate this. Appointment of school-based teachers is not a Plunket prerogative, so observation, supervision, and training of these teachers will be vital to create and maintain the required standard. The curriculum writer for Education in Schools is the Plunket South Island regional coordinator, and is an educator who contributes to evaluation from personal involvement in delivery and assessment.

The value of this intensive and exhaustive self-evaluation process is demonstrated by programme outcomes, positive feedback from the contracted partner organisation and other stakeholders, and by a strong and growing demand for the programmes. While the contribution of Plunket to the teaching is of high quality, it is likely that the increasing involvement of school staff of mixed abilities and backgrounds will, despite stringent moderation and monitoring, introduce some variability into the quality of the Education in Schools programme. However, ECE teachers in schools will have experience and expertise in this area.

Improvements arising from self-assessment include: increased support for Māori providers, Māori translations of unit standards, provision of online learning and training modules, a new professional development plan for the Education in Schools portfolio, and a requirement for all educators to sit each assessment unit prior to delivery as an ongoing feature of professional development.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

Plunket's approach to student support is simple and comprehensive: to provide supervision and mentorship from enrolment to graduation and, if possible, beyond. Postgraduate certificate students are mentored by certificate educators, clinical educators, clinical leaders, and in particular by preceptors who are the designated mentors throughout the programme. Students are mentored through a demanding orientation, or a six-month pre-orientation period. A student handbook, shared with the contractual partner, outlines and provides working templates for every aspect of the programme, including assessment, postgraduate assessment, and client feedback rubrics. Teachers travel to remote locations, tailor course materials for specific contexts, and try different approaches if required. Learning styles, needs, and barriers are discussed and provided for. As already noted, graduate feedback from the postgraduate certificate programme indicates over 90 per cent satisfaction with the 'quality support' from their preceptors.

In the Education in Schools programme, students' welfare is the responsibility of the school, but personal attention is also available from Plunket EIS area and national office teams. There is an appeals policy, a teaching guide, and a formal requirement that volunteers be present in every class to support, mentor, and share the learning with students.

In both programmes, guidance and support is essentially an 'outreach' activity, with students often in remote locations and already engaged in professional or educational activities. In these conditions, the meticulous approach to guidance and support, and an unwillingness to devolve sole responsibility to students or to their communities, are exemplary.

1.6 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The Plunket national board use the Tamariki Ora Well Child focus as a mechanism for a nationwide policy of promoting family and community health, through education and practical intervention. A priority is working with young people and their communities. The two education programmes spearhead this, one combining professional, parent, and community support for students from year 9 onwards, and the other cooperating with iwi and other regional and local bodies to provide a postgraduate qualification embracing community and family welfare.

The governing board's active involvement in the policy is in discussions and negotiations with statutory and community bodies, and regular consultation with the large advisory board, whose eclectic range of interests and expertise provides a multifaceted but detailed examination and contribution to strategy. The board welcomes and encourages the incremental approach of management to the development of concept, content, and delivery, and the programmes are well supported and resourced.

The management culture is 'flat', with wide autonomy for programme managers, constant discussion and consultation between teachers and managers throughout the delivery network, and between managers and the senior management team who report to the board. This provides a continuous link, both formal and informal, from the board to the 'grassroots', and to the growing army of volunteers at the cutting edge of the organisation's kaupapa.

A culture such as this maximises opportunities for self-assessment and improvement, both for shorter and longer-term outcomes. This is evident in ongoing support for professional development, and a substantial schedule of planned and targeted improvements, large and small, many already achieved. Further evidence of Plunket's success, and of the support it generates, is the growing demand for both programmes, and that 90 per cent of funding comes from statutory bodies concerned with health, social welfare, and education.

Focus Areas

This section reports significant findings in each focus area, not already covered in Part 1.

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management, and strategy

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Excellent**.

2.2 Focus area: Postgraduate Certificate in Primary Health Care Specialty Nursing

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Excellent**.

2.3 Focus area: Education in Schools

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Excellent**.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance by the polytechnic sector, and the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.

The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz).

*Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication *Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review*, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/keydocs/index.html>*

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