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Report of External Evaluation and Review

North Shore Language School Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 5 March 2018

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Final Report

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:	North Shore Language School Limited (North Shore Language School)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	11 August 2003
Location:	122 Wairau Road, Glenfield, North Shore City, Auckland
Courses currently delivered:	Certificate in TESOL ¹ (Level 4) New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Academic) (Level 3)
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes, since 6 August 2003
Number of students:	Domestic: 71 (38 equivalent full-time students in 2016) Chinese 37 per cent, Korean 37 per cent, Māori 1 per cent Over 25 years of age, 90 per cent International: 72 (45 equivalent full-time students in 2016) Chinese 46 per cent, Korean 38 per cent Over 25 years of age, 92 per cent
Number of staff:	Seven full-time staff
Scope of active	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand Certificate in Language Teaching

¹ Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

accreditation:	(Level 5)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Academic) (Levels 3, 4 and 5) • New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Levels 1 and 2) • Certificate in TESOL (Level 4) • English Language Teaching Course (Level 4) • Certificate in General English (including Preparation for IELTS²) (Level 4) • Academic English Preparation for Primary School Studies • Academic English Preparation for Intermediate School Studies • Academic English Preparation for High School Studies
Distinctive characteristics:	The school teaches English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to both international and domestic students, and trains entry-level ESOL teachers. Over 90 per cent of the students are over 25 years of age. The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) has provided Student Achievement Component funding for domestic students enrolled on the Certificate in TESOL and the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Academic) programmes. Cambridge University has approved the school as a pre-testing centre for IELTS and the Teaching Knowledge Test examinations.
Recent significant changes:	Since the last external evaluation and review (EER), North Shore Language School has gained approval to offer a suite of New Zealand certificate in English language programmes as well as the New Zealand Certificate in Language Teaching.
Previous quality assurance history:	The most recent EER took place in August 2014. NZQA was Highly Confident in the educational performance and Confident in the capability in self-

² International English Language Testing System

assessment of the school.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The lead evaluator reviewed a range of North Shore Language School documents, as well as NZQA and TEC-held data. A scoping meeting took place on site with management. The two focus areas and the reasons for their selection were:

1. International Students: Support and Wellbeing

This is a mandatory focus area for a tertiary education organisation enrolling international students.

2. New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Academic) (Level 3) (NZCEL Level 3)

This recently approved programme offers a national qualification with an academic focus. Both international students and funded domestic students are enrolled in this programme.

The Certificate in TESOL was not selected because a new programme leading to a newly listed New Zealand qualification will replace this certificate in 2018, and the two previous EERs reviewed the ESOL teaching programme. The focus area rating for this certificate in the 2014 EER was 'Excellent' for educational performance and 'Good' for capability in self-assessment.

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.

A team of two evaluators spent one and half days on site at the school and met with: the managing director, the head of studies, two administrative and marketing staff, the NZCEL Level 3 tutor, three NZCEL Level 3 students and two Certificate in TESOL students. The team reviewed a range of documentation and the school's website. A sample of 11 student files was reviewed. A sample of assessments was also examined along with internal moderation. Two agents were phoned after the site visit and an NZQA ESOL qualification developer was contacted. The EER enquiry gathered sufficient evidence to enable the evaluation team to reach credible findings for the key evaluation questions, focus areas and statements of confidence.

Final Report

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud³*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

³ NZQA and the TEC comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Summary of Results

Statements of confidence on educational performance and capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance and **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **North Shore Language School Limited**.

This enquiry found a range of mostly highly effective processes that have contributed to the school meeting nearly all of the important needs of the students. The school has developed a clear, evidence-based self-assessment approach to reviewing performance and informing decision-making across most activities. The quality of the resulting information is generally high.

The school is achieving its clear purpose of providing high-quality English language tuition and ESOL teacher training in a supportive environment. Completion rates for the NZCEL Level 3 and the Certificate in TESOL are consistently very high (between 92 and 97 per cent) and well exceed sector medians. The TESOL Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test results exceed the New Zealand nationwide averages. The majority of the TESOL graduates gain work related to the qualification or go onto further education, which is an excellent outcome for this Level 4 qualification. IELTS students' external examination results closely match their pre-test results. Over 80 per cent of the General English students meet or exceed the academic standard of achieving 60 per cent in the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR) aligned assessments.

Robust internal and external moderation processes and results provide confidence in the educational results achieved. Students are gaining valued and meaningful language and/or teaching skills and knowledge and express a generally high level of satisfaction with their learning experience. The entry-level TESOL qualification is successful in enabling some graduates to gain ESOL teaching roles or related employment and/or progress to related training.

A range of highly effective processes support this high level of performance. There is a robust academic and self-assessment approach informed by ongoing self-review, industry good practice models and research. The school has been actively involved in the ESOL sector, making a valued contribution to the review of the NZCEL Level 3 qualification. There is a clear schedule of in-depth and supportive mid-course and end-of-term reviews of each student's progress. The teacher appraisal process is well structured using industry models. The TESOL teaching programme has enhanced the overall quality of the English-language tuition, by supporting regular and ongoing reflection on what is good teaching.

The school has gained NZQA approval to offer a suite of English language programmes and the New Zealand Certificate in Language Teaching. The latter

programme includes highly relevant New Zealand content for preparing teaching graduates for the local labour market. Four of the five teachers have recently gained a national qualification in adult literacy and numeracy education to better achieve this new strategic direction.

The leadership team of two has supported a high level of achievement over time. The team consists of a managing director with a strong sense of the school's purpose, broad community linkages and sound organisational skills; and a very capable director of studies who has created a clear academic foundation, informed by evidence-based self-assessment. Teaching and assessment resources are well developed. The absence of the director of studies tested the school's quality and self-review systems; the evaluators concluded that these processes were robust and performance remained high with one exception: an application to undertake internal English language proficiency assessment for non-language programmes did not meet the required NZQA standards.

The school has the personnel and systems in place to effectively support nearly all students to stay involved and complete their studies. End-of-term and exit student feedback on the school has been positive, although the quality of this information could be improved and better integrated into overall self-assessment. The review of the Code of Practice (for pastoral care) covers in some detail all key processes, but does not systematically assess the effectiveness of these processes. The school has been generally effective in managing its important compliance responsibilities, and this EER enquiry has not identified any significant compliance gaps.

Findings⁴

1.1 How well do students 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**.

North Shore Language School currently delivers the NZCEL Level 3, the Certificate in TESOL and General English programmes (including IELTS) to international and domestic students. This school effectively assesses achievement using measurable and reliable standards and robustly benchmarks its results, assessment practices and resources with similar tertiary education organisations and recognised standard-setting bodies.

The course and qualification completion rates have been consistently very high for both the above qualifications, with rates between 92 and 97 per cent for the period 2014 to 2016. These rates well exceed the sector medians (74-86 per cent) for similar level qualifications over this period.⁵ The TESOL student results in the Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test exceeded the New Zealand nationwide averages in 2015 and 2016. General English students' IELTS examination results closely matched their pre-test results.

Since the last EER, over 80 per cent of the General English students met or exceeded the academic standard of achieving 60 per cent in CEFR-aligned assessments. There is comprehensive and robust internal moderation, confirmed by strong external moderation results. Therefore, the evaluators have a high level of confidence that the assessments and results are valid and that the students are substantively developing their language ability or TESOL teaching capability.

There is ongoing and nuanced reflection on student achievement. Regular formative and summative assessments support learning on all programmes. Formal and in-depth mid-course and end-of-term reviews of individual student progress provide students with relevant and helpful feedback in one-on-one interviews. The high-quality training of ESOL teachers, informed by research, enhances the organisation's understanding of English language student achievement.

⁴ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

⁵ Currently there is an absence of similar programmes being delivered in New Zealand to enable stronger benchmarking of the results.

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

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 **Good**.

There is strong evidence that most students gain outcomes of clear and significant value. The NZCEL Level 3 graduate profile outcomes specify that graduates will demonstrate specific language ability. This has been well evidenced in Findings 1.1. The school provided good but not comprehensive information and analysis of the employment (30 per cent) and further training (18 per cent) outcomes for these graduates. All the respondents in a survey of 2016 and 2017 graduates⁶ stated the qualification had prepared them well or very well for their future goals. These are very good outcomes.

Nearly all of the Certificate in TESOL students gained the key qualification outcome to 'acquire the necessary knowledge and practical skills to enable them to plan for and deliver teaching sessions to groups of learners' (see Findings 1.1). Detailed tracking of the 2014-2016 graduates shows that 60-70 per cent gained entry-level teaching roles or related work or progressed to further training. Over half of the respondents in a survey of graduates⁷ stated they were very well prepared and 41 per cent that they were well prepared for their their future goals. These are excellent outcomes for an introductory teaching qualification.

The key outcome for the students of the General English programmes was improved language ability (See Findings 1.1). The student feedback on their learning experience was typically positive. However, the feedback collected, its analysis and conclusions were not of the highest quality. For example, the data is not well aligned with the robust self-assessment of the achievement results and programme reviews, and the Code of Practice. It was not clear how the feedback had been used to inform decision-making to bring about improvements.

⁶ Twenty five per cent of the NZCEL and TESOL graduates responded to the survey.

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant 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 **Good**.

North Shore Language School programmes consistently match the important needs of students and key stakeholders.

The school actively engages with ESOL and tertiary education networks, staying current with industry good practice models and research, supporting effective programme design and delivery. The director of studies provided a valued contribution to the sector review of qualifications in English and the teaching of English. The New Zealand Certificate in Language Teaching programme prepares graduates for working in the New Zealand education sector through using the Education Council Graduating Teacher Standards.⁷ The Council's Practising Teacher Criteria have been used for appraising the performance of the employed ESOL teachers for the past four years. This TESOL programme includes other New Zealand-specific content including the TEC Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy. In a related initiative, four of the school's five ESOL teachers have gained the National Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education (Level 5) to build teacher capability. More generally, the teacher training programme enhances the ongoing reflection on ESOL teaching practice. For example, all teachers systematically observe and give feedback to the teacher trainees.

Each programme has a comprehensive curriculum (and learning plans) which clearly articulates learning outcomes. The school uses reputable and commercial texts for its General English teaching, including the CEFR-aligned resource material and assessments. The school is approved to offer Cambridge pre-tests for both the IELTS and Teacher Knowledge Test, providing valuable formative assessment and benchmarking of educational performance.

The school has developed three overarching enquiry questions to embed robust self-assessment practice across programme design and delivery and all activities: 'How do we know we are effective? How do we know these things? Have we used sufficient information sources to demonstrate the likelihood of credible and reliable findings?' This reflective enquiry was evident in practice across various contexts. Initial assessments have been found to consistently place students in the appropriate class level. Each term, structured self-assessment activities are scheduled including: an in-depth mid-course and end-of-course review of student progress, followed by one-on-one interviews; and end-of-course programme review and pre- and post-moderation of all key assessment tasks. The programme

⁷ <https://educationcouncil.org.nz/sites/default/files/gts-poster.pdf>

reviews helped to systematically identify detailed concerns regarding the NZCEL Level 3 qualification. The school was actively involved in the recent changes the sector made to this qualification. After observing a consistency review meeting, the school changed its external moderation arrangements and began participating in a cluster of language schools, to better ensure that the capabilities of its graduates were being regularly benchmarked with other graduates.

Twice each term, internal professional development sessions focus on topics tutors identify as needed, such as assessing students using the CEFR. The school has retained most of its experienced and qualified staff who are regularly observed and appraised using a thorough process. The quality assurance and self-assessment processes were tested when the director of studies was on leave. The evaluators found good evidence that key quality processes were well maintained and no performance gaps were identified.

1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

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**.

North Shore Language School is effective in consistently supporting nearly all students to stay involved and complete their studies. Pastoral care and student wellbeing are core elements of the school's identity, which reflects the owner/managing director being a pastor of a local Korean church. The staff and students interviewed by the evaluators saw the friendliness and family-like atmosphere as the most distinguishing characteristics of this small school.

Student feedback over time rates highly the support from the teachers. The school has high completion rates (see Findings 1.1) and a detailed understanding of its students and the reasons for the few withdrawals that occur. Domestic students are typically Korean or Chinese New Zealand residents over 25 years of age who are living in the North Shore area. International students have similar characteristics and are generally staying with family. The school has developed a clear niche and is meeting well the needs of these students.

The school has clear roles, responsibilities and procedures to support student wellbeing. There is an effective attendance system appropriate for a small school. Students interviewed were aware of the attendance requirements, the assessment schedule and what is required to meet the academic standard. End-of-term student feedback consistently showed that they valued the feedback received from their teachers. The review of the Code of Practice covers all key pastoral areas (see Findings 1.6 for more details). All students have opportunities to practise the skills and knowledge they are learning. The TESOL students have multiple observed

practicums where they apply their acquired knowledge of lesson planning and teaching.

1.5 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 **Good**.

The leadership of North Shore Language School has been effective in supporting high-quality educational achievement since the last EER. The school has kept its focus on its core expertise: teaching English to speakers of other languages and training entry-level ESOL teachers. At the same time, the school has developed a range of approved English language and teaching programmes that lead to NZQA-listed qualifications to meet emerging demand.

The leadership team of two has a mostly clear division of responsibilities: a managing director with a strong sense of the school's purpose, broad community linkages and sound organisational skills; and a capable director of studies who ensures a high-quality academic standard. During the absence of the director of studies, the leadership and the quality systems in place supported ongoing high performance, with one clear exception: the submission of an internal English language proficiency assessment application to NZQA did not meet any of the required six criteria.⁸ The absence of a clear quality assurance procedure contributed to this gap. However, the evaluators are satisfied there was no significant impact⁹ from this mistake. With the director moving back to work, the proposed changes to this role must ensure that the current quality standards are maintained.

The school has mostly retained and developed suitably qualified and capable teaching staff. The school has invested in additional resources including laptops for all teachers, TV screens in all classes and updated course books. There are a range of systems, procedures and processes to ensure consistent and compliant performance.

The leadership has driven and supported a highly reflective culture that is embedded across the organisation. The director of studies has developed innovative and insightful, evidence-based self-assessment. This is evident in the

⁸ This assessment test is only for students who are enrolling on non-English language programmes; currently that is the TESOL programme.

⁹ All of the assessed students were enrolled on English language programmes, and the evaluators remain confident in the validity of the educational results achieved (see Findings 1.1).

review of student progress and programmes. It has also informed the development (and approval) of a suite of English language programmes and a new TESOL programme tailored for the New Zealand ESOL and adult literacy and numeracy sector. The comprehensive self-assessment approach underpins the consistently high-quality programme delivery and educational results being achieved. This report has also identified some areas where self-assessment could be improved: the quality and better use of feedback from students and graduates. However, these are not significant gaps.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

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 **Good**.

North Shore Language School has been generally effective in managing its important compliance accountabilities. The organisation has in place a range of roles, procedures and systems to support consistent and compliant performance. Programme scheduling, along with information about the attendance system, indicates that the face-to-face and self-directed learning programme requirements are being met. There was good evidence of attendance being checked and reviewed, and students being informed if they did not meet the expected requirements.

Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced for their teaching roles. There was comprehensive evidence of a robust assessment and moderation system operating to ensure reliable results. The evaluators also reviewed a small sample of moderated assessments which showed that a sound and systematic approach had been used.

The school has been generally effective in managing its Code of Practice compliance requirements. The international students who enrol are typically Asian, older (over 25) and staying with family. The school's description of the students as being independent is supported by the fact that no students have been placed in homestays since the last EER and none of the 2016 students had been referred by agents.

Eleven student records sampled at this EER confirmed that insurance, visa and English-language entry requirements¹⁰ had been met in these cases. The

¹⁰ NZQA Rule 18 English language requirements do not apply to English language programmes. <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/qa-system-for-teos/english-international-students/>

enrolment checklists and periodic auditing of the student records could be strengthened.

The annual review of the Code of Practice described in some detail the processes being used to ensure the wellbeing of international students. However, the review did not use the school's overarching self-assessment approach to evaluate how effective these processes were in achieving the 10 pastoral outcomes. For example, the school has not asked about the effectiveness of the 24/7 contact number and the emergency information provided in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the students (Outcome 6 of the Code of Practice). How does the school know these things? What, if anything could be changed? This approach would strengthen the self-assessment undertaken. That said, this enquiry did not identify any negative impacts on student wellbeing.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: International Students: Support and Wellbeing

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

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

2.2 Focus area: New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Academic) (Level 3)

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

NZQA recommends that North Shore Language School:

- Strengthen the data collection and analysis of the student feedback.
- Better integrate the feedback collected and the annual review of the Code of Practice with the school's self-assessment enquiry approach.
- Clearly articulate plans regarding the revised academic leadership roles and responsibilities for the school.
- Identify the changes needed to strengthen the assessment and quality assurance policies and practices in light of the English language proficiency assessment application to NZQA.
- Formalise the periodic audits of the student enrolment process.

The school has partly addressed some of these recommendations.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or registration. 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 External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013. 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).

The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.

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