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# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Ashburton Learning Centre  
Incorporated

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 7 September 2018

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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:	Ashburton Learning Centre Incorporated
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	14 March 2008
Location:	71 Park Street, Ashburton
Delivery sites:	As above and off site as required
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adult and Community Education – Digital Literacy (29 learners), Driver Education (11 learners), Literacy and Numeracy Upskilling (51 learners), Financial Literacy (15 learners), Work Readiness (24 learners), Poupou Programme (32 learners)</li><li>• Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) Workplace Contract; Workplace Literacy with Literacy Aotearoa; Intensive Literacy and Numeracy with Literacy Aotearoa; Modern Apprentices – Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation, Motor Industry Training Organisation; BOOST Child Literacy Programme; English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)</li></ul>
Number of students:	Domestic: 479 (Adult and Community Education 162; BOOST 122; ESOL 135; other contracts 60)  Māori 10 per cent, Pasifika 11 per cent
Number of staff:	Two full-time, 24 part-time

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Scope of active accreditation:	Health and Safety Training Scheme: Introduction to Health and Safety in the Workplace (unit standard 497)
Distinctive characteristics:	The preponderance of dairy farming in mid-Canterbury means a large workforce is required in farming and agricultural support services. Much of this workforce comprises new migrants who seek Ashburton Learning Centre support. While literacy and numeracy is the primary focus of Ashburton Learning Centre, it responds to community needs by offering ESOL courses for new migrants and targeted programmes for specific learner groups. Most students are migrants from countries such as Samoa, the Philippines, Tonga, Russia, Korea, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Japan, China, Nepal, Kenya, Portugal, Vietnam, Egypt, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Italy, South Africa, Malaysia and Uruguay.
Recent significant changes:	Student numbers have grown significantly since 2014, when there were 194 students. The BOOST programme accounts for much of this growth, but other initiatives since the last EER include: Formosa restaurant learners, driver licences for rural women, an Ashburton College Gateway learner for foundation literacy, a Benevolent Trust funded learner, Literacy and Numeracy NCEA Level 1, Filipino community support, women's wellness group, the 20/20 Trust, and Spark Jump. In 2017 Ashburton Learning Centre resigned from membership of Literacy Aotearoa and decided to use the Open Polytechnic to deliver the New Zealand Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education (Vocational/Workplace) (Level 5) for staff.
Previous quality assurance history:	At the most recent NZQA external evaluation and review (EER) in 2014, NZQA was Highly Confident in both educational performance and capability in self-assessment. Ashburton Learning Centre has met NZQA external moderation requirements over the last three years.
Other:	Ashburton Learning Centre is an incorporated society and registered charity which has operated since 1979. Prior to 2000 all services were offered

by volunteers. Since 2000, services have been provided by paid staff and volunteers. Ashburton Learning Centre receives funding from the TEC and several community trusts.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The focus areas agreed were:

- TEC workplace contracts (37 places for 2018)
- Work and Income contract (14 places for 2018)
- BOOST primary school initiative (145 places for 2018, up from 122 places in 2017).

These programmes were selected as they include core provision of literacy and numeracy and a programme (BOOST) that has shown significant growth since 2014.

## 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.*

Two evaluators conducted the EER over one day at the Ashburton site. The team met with the chairperson of the governing advisory committee, the Ashburton Learning Centre manager, the recently appointed IT manager, the BOOST coordinator and four students plus one students' partner. BOOST is a teacher-referred primary school initiative. Students are visited twice a week by a volunteer who is overseen by the BOOST coordinator.

Stakeholders contacted by phone included an ACC manager, an employer and the chairperson of a community trust that funds the BOOST programme.

Documentation sighted was extensive and comprehensive, ranging from individual student documents to strategic plans. These documents were organised in a way that enabled quick reference to the evidence for each key evaluation question.

### *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*

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*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 fraud<sup>1</sup>*
- *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.*

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<sup>1</sup> 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 **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Ashburton Learning Centre Incorporated** for the following reasons:

- Learners' diverse needs are consistently met through a holistic approach that includes a welcoming, non-judgemental environment and attention to each individual's educational and social needs. Enrolment is followed by thorough needs assessment and induction.
- Highly effective education is enabled by a suitably qualified, experienced and stable team of educators and volunteers who work collaboratively to ensure the best outcomes for each learner or group of learners. This includes individual learning plans that are developed and regularly reviewed with each learner.
- Stakeholder engagement is purposeful and accountable. Ashburton Learning Centre is part of the community and functions as both a service and resource for mid-Canterbury. The centre continues to receive increased government and private funding because it meets and often exceeds respective stakeholder targets.
- The many initiatives since 2014 indicate that the organisation is innovative and responsive to community needs. The centre contributes socially and economically by assisting its diverse stakeholders to integrate into the community through a range of programmes targeted to their personal and employment needs.
- Self-assessment is comprehensive, structured and leads to change and actions for improvement. These actions are reviewed for effectiveness. Governance and management structures and processes are robust and ensure that the organisation manages its compliance activities proactively.

# Findings<sup>2</sup>

## 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**.

Learner achievement is closely tracked and consistently demonstrates that Ashburton Learning Centre enables people to move forward in their lives, irrespective of the starting point. Each learner completes a 10-step individual learning plan. It includes a pre-enrolment interview and development of a comprehensive plan that includes health and safety, confidentiality and signing a computer user document. After the initial interview, learners are tested for literacy and numeracy and matched with the most appropriate tutor to meet their needs. The learner then meets with the tutor to discuss the programme of learning.

Achievement measures are holistic. They encompass academic and social progress and learners' progress at their own rate of competency. Learners identify goals at enrolment and progress as their confidence grows. At the completion of their programme, the learner re-sits the literacy and numeracy test to measure any gains made. The most common gains are:

- soft skills
- literacy and numeracy credits
- increased reading age
- greater confidence with spoken English
- IELTS<sup>3</sup> exam success to meet residency requirements
- development of support groups
- attaining driver licences
- health and safety training for employment.

Comprehensive records clearly demonstrate the learners' progress both educationally and socially.

Tuition is monitored by monthly reports from tutors and discussed at weekly staff meetings. Clear goals are set (through the individual learning plans) and reviewed

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<sup>2</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

<sup>3</sup> International English Language Testing System

regularly. Convincing evidence demonstrates that learner progress is discussed across all relevant staff and actions taken and reviewed to ensure ongoing and meaningful self-assessment of learner achievement. Ashburton Learning Centre does not formally aggregate learner achievement because individual progress against specific targets is a more meaningful and complete measure of progress. Learners do not participate in programmes of study that have specific assessments or completion dates. However, detailed record-keeping demonstrates that learner progress is consistent and any learners not progressing are quickly identified and given appropriate assistance.

## 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 **Excellent**.

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

Unconditional support and regard for each learner, irrespective of their presentation or background, leads to valued outcomes for individuals, their families and the local community. Intergenerational benefits include the ability to assist children and grandchildren with homework and fill out documents at work. The value to learners is in meeting their goals, both educational and social. The PTE provided numerous examples of success, including individual testimonies where learners described how their lives had changed for the better.

The value to workplaces is safety-conscious workers, better pay and promotion, increased confidence and greater independence from improved literacy. Many learners gain their first qualification. Numeracy skills open up job opportunities, and computer skills enable learners to participate in social media. Tutors also gain immense job satisfaction as they see life-changing outcomes for the learners.

The BOOST programme is highly successful, both in growth and educational outcomes. It began in 2014 with three local primary schools and now delivers to 45 schools and reaches 145 children, years 7-9. Students are referred by teachers as needing extra help with literacy. Students are tested at the beginning and end of the 40-week programme. Children make significant literacy gains as measured by a standardised test which shows spelling age gains.

BOOST has 43 volunteers (all police checked) and three part-time paid staff. Volunteers deliver to two students at a time. The programme coordinator monitors the programme, supports new tutors, and visits people at the schools. The growth and demand for this programme is due to enthusiastic and ongoing support from governance and management.

Funders include government agencies and local charitable foundations who show their support for Ashburton Learning Centre by funding and grants. Ashburton has a generous community which has allocated substantial funds to promote literacy (in

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particular), and Ashburton Learning Centre is able to successfully bid for these funds. Funders were highly complimentary about the quality of the funding applications, timely reporting on the outcomes, and the difference that Ashburton Learning Centre makes for individuals in their community. This partnership enables funders to efficiently meet their mission statements.

### 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 **Excellent**.

Ashburton Learning Centre reduces barriers to learning by providing the necessary learning environment and programme of learning to bridge the gaps in learners' skills and knowledge. Delivery has diversified from literacy and numeracy to include ESOL, te reo, child literacy, support to the unemployed, driver licence support, foundation learning, digital literacy and workplace upskilling. The development of individual learning plans involves direct negotiation with the learner. Listening closely to the learner at the enrolment stage and reviewing learner progress systematically and regularly leads to tailor-made solutions for each individual.

Learners come from a variety of backgrounds – migrants, local farmers and school-age students. Specialist tutors accommodate this diversity. ESOL-trained tutors, IT specialists, tutors trained in recognising learning difficulties and tutors with vocational qualifications in adult education ensure that each learner is closely matched to the tutor with the best skill match. Evidence of this includes significant gains in literacy and numeracy test scores, NCEA literacy and numeracy credits, digital literacy gains (where some learners have completed Business Administration and Computing Level 2), and the benefit from an ESOL tutor who prepares learners for IELTS exams (seven passes since 2014). One learner who attended up to 10 hours per week in the off-season (from the meat works) has achieved NCEA literacy credits, and another learner is now at step 4 of the literacy test. He could not write his address when he enrolled.

Learner interventions are very successful. The TEC increased funding from 24 to 44 places in 2018. Ashburton Learning Centre has met all Literacy Aotearoa contract requirements. The BOOST programme in primary schools has grown substantially and has ongoing demand for places. Migrants are helped to integrate into the community and gain residency and citizenship, providing essential skills, particularly to the dairy industry.

Ashburton Learning Centre understands and is closely connected to its community. It reviews its internal structures and staffing for opportunities to improve stakeholder engagement and responsiveness.

#### 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**.

Ashburton Learning Centre creates a safe environment where learners develop a high degree of trust in the staff. This means they do not hide any deficits, such as learning difficulties. The centre's advocacy role is an integral part of the learner/tutor relationship. This role includes accompanying learners to government agencies to help them receive appropriate assistance. A range of individualised support can include specialist assessments to identify learning disabilities and the use of specialist tutors in ESOL and computer and digital literacy.

Appropriate support often requires allowing learners to express their feelings. This may include anger about bullying, embarrassment at school, or feelings of dispossession by migrants. The patient, highly professional approach taken by staff is essential before any learning can occur. One learner needed eight hours of 'debriefing' before learning could begin. This person has been attending Ashburton Learning Centre for four years and is now a supervisor at his job and passing leadership courses at work.

Ashburton Learning Centre also provides a social hub for migrants. ESOL learners are put in small groups to enable social networking. This also builds fluency in English language skills. Ashburton Learning Centre continued working with apprentices in 2016 when the Motor Industry Training Organisation no longer funded them. This was appreciated by the apprentices. Computing and digital literacy phone apps are used effectively as lots of repetition is required before skills are grasped. Learners can access these apps in their own time as required.

Pasifika learners engage intensively at Ashburton Learning Centre in the off-season (from the meat works). Ashburton Learning Centre has excellent links with churches, and a local marae member is represented on the governing advisory committee. This person provides support to learners and also teaches te reo at evening classes. Weekly meetings and monthly tutor reports identify learners who need extra support. Any support offered requires agreement from the learner as to its appropriateness. Learner involvement is encouraged to build greater independence and development of life skills.

## 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 **Excellent**.

Ashburton Learning Centre is highly effective at accessing government and private funds to support its learners and tutors. Dual funding from government and private sources, in combination with a values-driven philosophy, enables Ashburton Learning Centre to 'never turn a person away'. These successful bids for funds enable Ashburton Learning Centre to meet a wide range of learner needs. If the PTE concludes that they are not the most appropriate organisation to benefit the person, they will refer on.

Professional development for tutors is generous and targeted to areas that will support educational achievement for the learners, such as two tutors who are studying with an organisation that specialises in education for people with learning disabilities. Ashburton Learning Centre ceased affiliation with Literacy Aotearoa in 2017 to pursue their own contracting. A review of tutor training led to a move away from Literacy Aotearoa to the Open Polytechnic for training in adult education. These changes have opened up contracting opportunities for Ashburton Learning Centre, and staff feedback on the Open Polytechnic programme is very positive.

Ashburton Learning Centre's contracts with Work and Income and/or ACC include providing work-readiness skills such as how to apply online for jobs, CV writing, interview techniques, car licences, specialist learning disability support, computing courses and helping people build self-esteem. The PTE provides CVs for learners working towards gaining employment.

## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

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**.

Stakeholder feedback from funding organisations, employers and government agencies shows that Ashburton Learning Centre has a highly professional yet inclusive approach that meets and usually exceeds requirements. Ashburton Learning Centre has robust processes to ensure accountabilities are well managed.

The governing advisory committee is alert to any gaps in the skills and knowledge of committee members and these are filled quickly. Careful management of finances ensures that the centre always has a year's running revenue. Ashburton Learning Centre meets various reporting requirements, for example TEC quarterly reports, Literacy Aotearoa monthly reports, and charity and trust fund reporting.

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Compliance with educational rules and regulations is informed by checking the NZQA and TEC websites, calendar reminders and attendance at upskilling workshops. Governance and management takes a proactive, principled approach that seeks to test systems and processes for their effectiveness and make changes accordingly.

## Focus Areas

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

### 2.1 Focus area: TEC workplace contracts

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: Work and Income contract

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: BOOST primary school initiative

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

*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](http://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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