

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Auckland English Academy (1988)  
Limited trading as Auckland English  
Academy

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 29 July 2014

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MoE Number: 7940  
NZQA Reference: C13821  
Date of EER visit: 12 and 13 February 2014

*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:	Auckland English Academy (1988) Limited trading as Auckland English Academy
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Levels 1 and 2, Chancery Chambers, 2-8 Chancery Street, Auckland
Delivery sites:	There are no other delivery sites, but see the 'Recent significant changes' section below.
First registered:	17 February 2010
Courses currently delivered:	<p>Auckland English Academy (AEA) offers a number of courses under its English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) (Level 3) accreditation. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication English (Beginners to Advanced)</li><li>• English Plus activities</li><li>• J-Shine (a Japanese support programme for learning English for teaching)</li><li>• Kiwikindy</li><li>• Employment Skills English</li><li>• English plus Barista</li><li>• Communication English for Migrants (English for Migrants funding)</li><li>• Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers</li></ul>

of Other Languages (TESOL) for Non-native Teachers of English to Young Learners (level 4)

AEA has a memorandum of understanding with International College of Linguistics (ICL) Education Limited trading as ICL Business School, to deliver the ICL International English Language Testing System (IELTS) programme and the ICL TESOL programme.

Code of Practice (the Code) signatory?:	Yes, including students aged over 18, 14-17, and 11-13 who are not living with a parent
Number of learners:	Domestic: three (English for Migrants)  International: average of 210 each week over the past 12 months. Total student-weeks for the past 12 months equals 10,509 students (approximately 292 equivalent full-time students (EFTS))  Typically, in any given week the ethnicities represented are approximately 44 per cent Chinese, 19 per cent Korean, 13 per cent Japanese, 8 per cent Saudi Arabian, 8 per cent South American, 5 per cent European, and 3 per cent Other.
Number of staff:	12 full-time equivalent permanent teaching staff  Four full-time equivalent fixed-term/casual teaching staff  Approximately eight full-time equivalent non-teaching staff
Scope of active accreditation:	See 'Courses currently delivered' section above
Distinctive characteristics:	AEA is affiliated with ICL Business School and New Horizon College of English (both owned by the owner of AEA). AEA delivers the ICL IELTS programme to an average of 115 students at any given time and a significant proportion of the IELTS graduates enter ICL business courses. AEA's TESOL courses run continuously throughout the year.
Recent significant changes:	A new principal was appointed in January 2012.  A new senior teacher responsible for academic

quality was appointed in June 2013.

AEA moved into the Chancery St premises in January 2013. Communication English, AEA TESOL, ICL TESOL and the ICL National Certificate in Early Childhood Education are delivered in this building.

The ICL IELTS programme is located at 238 Queen Street.

Previous quality assurance history: At its previous external evaluation and review (EER) in 2010, NZQA was Confident in both the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of AEA.

English New Zealand's (ENZ's) most recent audit, December 2013, found AEA to be operating at ENZ's required standard.

Other: NA

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of this EER included the following mandatory focus areas:

- Governance, management and strategy
- International student support

The other focus areas selected were:

- Communication English. This is under AEA's ESOL accreditation (level 3). Approximately 38 per cent of learners enrol in this programme, which is the most popular of a range of communication English programmes provided. Some Communication English learners go on to IELTS preparation classes.
- Certificate in TESOL for Non-native Teachers of English to Young Learners (level 4). The 10-week qualification is made up of five weeks of English and five weeks of TESOL and runs continuously throughout the year. It appeals particularly (but not solely) to Japanese learners as part of the J-Shine programme. As expected, it is very different from the Communication English course.

Together these two programmes provide a fair representation of AEA's delivery of education and training.

IELTS is also an important part of AEA's educational performance as an organisation within the context of the key evaluation questions.

### 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.*

AEA requested that this EER be brought forward to February 2014 rather than August as originally planned.

Self-assessment materials were provided to NZQA in a timely fashion to inform the scoping of this EER, including the 2013 audit report from English New Zealand.

Prior to the scope of the evaluation being finalised, the lead evaluator liaised with the owner/director and the principal of AEA with regard to the focus areas, logistics of the on-site visit, and the relationship of AEA's EER to that of ICL, due March 2014.

The evaluation team comprised three evaluators, including an associate evaluator with expertise in the delivery of English language programmes to speakers of other languages and in the management and operation of English language schools. The on-site visit was conducted over two days. Interviews were held with the owner/director, the principal, the third member of the governance and senior management team, the two directors of studies, counsellors and the homestay coordinator, and other staff dedicated to the guidance and support of international learners, English teachers, learners and stakeholders (including agents) and ICL. A range of documents provided before, during and after the visit was sampled and reviewed.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Auckland English Academy (1988) Limited trading as Auckland English Academy**.

- Communication English, IELTS and TESOL learners complete their courses and improve their knowledge and use of the English language (see Findings 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3).
- Learners enhance their self-confidence and personal growth and, in the case of younger learners – including those who attend short courses in small groups from places such as Tahiti – independence (see Findings 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3).
- Learners have the opportunity when attending English courses at AEA to attend an affiliated English language school at Napier to continue their studies via Study Hopper to enhance their New Zealand experience (see Findings 1.3).
- All teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced in teaching English as a foreign language. Class sizes (maximum 15) and opportunities to teach at different levels are stimulating for the teachers and encourage positive learning relationships among teachers and between teachers and learners (see Findings 1.2).
- The very promising work which the senior teacher (academic quality) has been leading in assessment and moderation within the context of curriculum renewal is developing well (see Findings 1.4 and 1.6).
- AEA is aware that some learners would like access to more AEA-organised activities and is addressing this. Teachers are encouraged to use out-of-the-classroom activities to support the curriculum which can help learners develop their English language competencies. AEA has re-introduced regular Friday afternoon activities, and is continuing to consider how to provide other opportunities for affordable activities.
- AEA and its counsellors provide very strong pastoral care to all the international learners, which exceeds the minimum requirements of the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students (see Findings 1.5).
- IELTS preparation and achievement are sound and learning is enhanced by teachers who are current or former IELTS examiners (and markers). AEA's analysis of internal IELTS test results shows progression rates which compare positively with some international research. Where available, external IELTS test results are recorded.

- The TESOL course develops the learners' English language knowledge, skills, personal growth and self-confidence. Kindergartens, pre-schools and primary schools benefit from the well-structured presentations and activities delivered by TESOL learners who visit these schools. The course has potentially a high value for TESOL learners in their home countries. Almost all of the learners interviewed expressed a genuine intention to teach English when they returned home (see Findings 1.4).
- Governance and management are effective and efficient. The board and management team have consistently shown an ability to respond to constant and ongoing changes imposed on the sector (such as NZQA English language entry assessment requirements and changes to immigration rules, for example recent changes to work rights), and to lead AEA by adjusting its offerings and operations accordingly. AEA's commitment to academic quality rather than cutting costs or student fees is commendable, and its marketing is strong. More relevant information and better self-assessment, including greater clarity around achievement and other outcomes, how they are captured, reported and used, would further support its endeavours (see Findings 1.6).



## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Auckland English Academy (1988) Limited trading as Auckland English Academy**.

- AEA gathers a considerable amount of useful data. It has a good understanding of its market as well as individual learner progress and achievement. The extent to which AEA analyses and uses data to make changes and the impacts of changes made are not always clear. There is room for AEA to further develop its use of findings arising from self-assessment activities to evaluate effectiveness and improve educational performance, including overall outcomes at an organisational level (see Findings 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3.).
- All learners have individual learning plans, and these are reviewed regularly and used to assess learning progression as part of the exit self-assessment. AEA also uses student at-risk processes, and one-to-one meetings to monitor individual progress.
- Management and teacher and teacher-student meetings are regular and purposeful and include discussions of student progress. Meeting minutes are taken and action plans generated with a focus on continuously improving operations and performance (see Findings 1.4 and 1.6).
- AEA has effective review processes to ensure its ongoing compliance with the Code of Practice, and it has sound systems to ensure the well-being, health and safety of the learners. Despite AEA exceeding the requirements of the code, some matters relating to the otherwise strong and supportive homestay programme were not identified as part of AEA's ongoing self-assessment (see Findings 1.5 and 1.6).
- AEA end-of-course evaluations (and snapshots that are completed three times a year and which focus on the course, teachers, premises, student support and arrival procedures) enable AEA to gather feedback which includes areas also covered by the global i-graduate survey. Such self-assessment also helps AEA identify and make improvements to its operation including guidance and support for international learners (see Findings 1.3).
- Drawing on groundwork in assessment and moderation, including professional development, AEA has commenced a longitudinal study into assessment and moderation processes and outcomes, in order to improve the quality and value of their self-assessment. AEA is focused on raising learners' IELTS scores to enable them to gain entry to further education and training. Final IELTS test results are collated, if available, but it is not clear how many learners achieve their goals (for specific IELTS scores and entry to further education). There is limited evidence of analysis of IELTS learner achievement leading to strategies for improvement.

- AEA has further developed its own self-assessment since the 2010 EER. It has addressed or is addressing areas that were identified such as professional development and teacher appraisal to help improve teacher effectiveness, assessment and moderation to help improve assessment and learning, and recording complaints (though AEA has very few) so that they are readily accessible. Although it can be difficult to track educational and employment outcomes for some international learners (especially those who enrol for very short periods and go on to travel or return home), AEA has recently developed and published some case studies. There would be value in AEA further developing its ability to capture and evaluate the valued outcomes for their learners, particularly the TESOL and IELTS students, possibly through existing social media
- AEA has responded appropriately to the previous English New Zealand Audit Report (December 2013). Areas which it has addressed or is addressing include a graded readers library labelled by level to help encourage and support their use, recording complaints so that they are accessible, addressing unclear or missing documentation of educational objectives for out-of-class activities, and non-completion of self-assessment audits (see Findings 1.2, 1.4 and 1.6).

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 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 **Good**.

Communication English learners achieve well by completing the courses they enrol in and making improvements in English. AEA is fully aware of the reasons for the very small number of withdrawals, which are usually personal and/or involve family circumstances – these learners often return to undertake further study on another occasion. Hence, virtually all learners complete the intended period of study they enrolled for, and some extend their study or return at a later time to do so. Other family or friends attend based on the high opinion learners hold of AEA.

AEA considers Communication English learners are successful based on positive satisfaction with their learning experience and improvement in their knowledge and skills in English at the end of their course. Learner end-of-course evaluations confirm a high level of student satisfaction. AEA issues end-of-course reports to individual learners that are based on the descriptors from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which are the foundation of the AEA Communication English curriculum. AEA reports that learners were enrolled for an average of 8.6 weeks (within a five month period in 2013) and on average progressed through 1.4 class levels (in reading, writing, speaking or listening).

Regular weekly tests and teacher and teacher-learner meetings as well as six-weekly testing and the completion of tasks outside the classroom, particularly in TESOL, confirm learner progress. Such information about individual learner progress is used by teachers individually and at staff meetings. Aggregating individual learner results gives an overview of how well classes and teachers are performing and learners are achieving, and identifies areas of strength and weakness – these can be used to make improvements in teaching and learning and hence learner achievement. Further aggregation and analysis of learner data would contribute to this.

Learners reported that AEA emphasises the progress and achievement of the individual learner. The organisation engages learners through effective teaching and regular assessments to gauge their progress against their individual learning plans, with feedback and reports given by way of one-to-one discussions with the English teacher. This learner-focused approach means that Communication English aligns with individual learner needs.

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

For longer-term learners with a specific objective of achieving a desired or required IELTS score for further study or employment, the evidence of their achievement is not always clear. Where targets are known and achieved, they could be recorded, analysed and used more comprehensively. However, individual learners and graduates were able to share with the evaluation team their success, and AEA reported that most IELTS learners improve by 0.6 of an IELTS band every 12 weeks. Understandably, this level of achievement varies for a number of reasons. AEA may benefit from gathering more information about the success of learners in achieving their required IELTS score, and gaining entry into their desired programme of study or employment.

AEA reported that virtually all learners enrolled in the TESOL qualification complete it and improve their English knowledge and skills, boosting their personal self-confidence and their ability to teach English, primarily in their own countries. AEA gains alumni feedback which shows that some TESOL graduates go on to be teachers or assistant teachers, or use their TESOL certificate to gain employment or continue in further study. A fuller understanding of the destinational outcomes for a relatively small number of such focused and motivated learners may provide AEA with information to further enhance student achievement in TESOL programmes.

That learners attend courses for the period of time they have enrolled for, or extend their stay or return later, and individual learner progress, indicate effective learner achievement. However, AEA does not have robust processes in place to self-assess performance across AEA and provide a clearer picture of how well the learners are achieving in their various classes based on this information. However, the work of the senior teacher (academic quality) and the principal suggests AEA could readily develop this facility in the future.

## 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 **Good**.

AEA provides a learning environment where learners experience New Zealand and other cultures. Learners gain varying levels of improvement in their knowledge and use of the English language (partly depending on the length of their course of study), as well as enhanced self-confidence. Younger learners become noticeably more independent through their experience, including those who visit AEA in small holiday groups.

The value of the outcomes to Communication English learners is improved English knowledge and skills for their personal use, including travel. For some, the learning also provides the groundwork for being able to go on and improve their IELTS

score to meet entry standards for further education in New Zealand or in their home country. This value also extends to their current part-time or future employment.

TESOL learners improve their English language knowledge and skills which they share with younger learners when they work with them as part of their study. This also contributes to sharing their own culture with pupils and teachers in New Zealand and from other cultures. The ultimate value for TESOL learners is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and strategies for teaching English in New Zealand or in their own countries. At the time of the evaluation visit, almost all learners in the TESOL class were Japanese participating in the J-Shine programme. J-Shine accredits only two schools in Auckland to deliver their course. AEA's TESOL course learners are approved by the Japanese government to teach English on their return to Japan. The learners were all very genuine about their desire to teach English when they returned home. Their enthusiasm and abilities in many cases were most impressive and infectious.

Individual Communication English and IELTS student achievement and progress are evident, and AEA provides additional free after school IELTS preparation workshops (eight to 10 learners attend at any one time) which support the learners' success. The information is not aggregated which makes comparisons difficult within AEA over time or with other similar English language schools. However, as AEA's English New Zealand audit report states, AEA's course timeframes are 'industry standard', i.e. consistent with a general understanding within the sector that General English learners will progress at approximately one 'level' based on the CEFR every 12 weeks. AEA was able to show that it knows that its IELTS learners achieve their desired band score within benchmarked timeframes based on its statistical analysis of internal information on IELTS focused on entry scores and IELTS formative tests. Information as to external IELTS exam results is less clear because the results are confidential and AEA does not know how successful the students have been. AEA does aggregate other information, such as that gained from student enrolments and evaluations, over time, which enables it to make comparisons in other areas such as student numbers, its demographic profile and student satisfaction.

Student feedback indicates that the learners are highly satisfied with the New Zealand and international experience as well as their learning while at AEA (98 per cent would recommend AEA to a friend). While destination outcomes data is arguably not as relevant to Communication English learners, AEA has some rich anecdotal and informal graduate information about its learners, including from face-to-face, email and social media contact. AEA also showed evidence of the use of external research with regard to IELTS, and internal research of its own. It is not clear how many TESOL learners actually apply the knowledge, skills and strategies they gain to the teaching of English when they return to their own countries. Nevertheless, the value of outcomes to other key stakeholders is considerable. As an example, kindergartens and schools give formal feedback to AEA about the performance of the TESOL learners. Learners were very positive when interviewed on site as part of the evaluation. Schools appreciate the well-structured lessons

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and the cultural value the learners provide when they work with younger learners. AEA learners are also sometimes involved in voluntary work within the community, which is also appreciated.

Referrals and repeat business are used as important indicators of the value of the outcomes to its key stakeholders. For example, 22 Tahitian/French learners have visited AEA more than once, and 12 of those learners more than twice, in holiday study groups, which confirms how much they enjoyed and appreciated their experience. Furthermore, AEA is one of only about 15 language schools approved by the Saudi Mission in New Zealand. It is also one of an even shorter list of schools approved or certified by the Chinese government. Two education agents interviewed by the evaluators were very positive about AEA and recommended it to potential learners. In fact, during the period 2012-2013, when, according to English New Zealand reports, the English language sector in New Zealand declined by 17 per cent, AEA's enrolments grew by approximately 1 per cent.

### 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 **Good**.

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

AEA provides a range of programmes including Communication English and a variety of combinations of English language tuition including courses such as Employment Skills English and English for Baristas, IELTS preparation and TESOL, which well match the needs of learners. Variable timetables help match the different needs of learners on different programmes or courses. AEA is flexible and responsive to learner needs which are identified at the commencement of their studies as part of the placement test, which reliably and consistently determines the initial level of English language proficiency of the learner. Learner needs are reviewed regularly through both formal and informal processes such as weekly teacher and teacher-student meetings, as well as weekly and six-weekly tests. Individual learning plans are regularly reviewed with learners and used to guide them in meeting their goals.

Upon completion and graduation, learners complete an end-of-course evaluation which is a student self-evaluation of their satisfaction with their experience at AEA and what they have learned. These evaluations ask whether learners' initial and reviewed study goals and objectives were met. The learners overwhelmingly indicate that their course has helped them achieve their goals. AEA also has a snapshot evaluation which further supports its self-assessment and is carried out three times per year. AEA benchmarks the student feedback ratings gathered through evaluations against the i-graduate survey, and reports that they exceed the ratings for New Zealand English language schools.

Learners have identified that they would like more external activities provided by AEA. AEA is aware of this and has provided activities in the past with mixed uptake. Learners can currently access external activities through commercial providers, paid for by the learners. AEA currently encourages teachers to take their own learners on educational activities during class time to support the curriculum. It has also re-introduced regular Friday afternoon opportunities for activities for learners. AEA is continuing to consider how to provide such activities, which can also develop learners' English language competencies at low cost.

AEA provides new Communication English learners with the opportunity to start their courses every Monday and to finish every Friday of the calendar year. Communication English courses are designed to help learners develop their English language knowledge and skills, whether for travel or work in New Zealand or their home countries. AEA's Study Hopper programme enables learners to study at an affiliated school in Napier. AEA's courses including Communication English help learners to move seamlessly to IELTS and back again if they wish or need to. IELTS preparation testing and marking are conducted by former or current IELTS examiners and markers, which help learners gain a good idea of their progress and readiness to sit their IELTS exam.

AEA has clearly identified its stakeholders, including agents, and engages with them in an ongoing and appropriate fashion. Ongoing market and student needs analysis helps ensure that programmes are relevant, and this is reflected in a range of programmes offered and changes made where required. AEA's self-assessment of IELTS preparation is focused on information about learners obtaining the required IELTS score which gives them entry to further study or employment. AEA has carried out research into IELTS progression, which shows that progression at AEA is slightly better than some international research indicates. AEA gathers learners' external IELTS test results where it can (the results are confidential to the student), but it is unclear how this is used, for example to compare with AEA's documentation of individual progress using internal tests. AEA is a recently recognised provider of English for New Migrants and is working on how it can best match migrants' needs. For example, AEA explained that these learners are generally elderly or have other commitments that prevent them attending, so it has varied its class times to better suit their needs.

#### 1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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**.

All teachers are highly skilled, experienced and appropriately qualified. The recent appointment of a senior teacher (academic quality) has contributed to strengthening the effectiveness of the teaching, learning and assessment. For example, most recently there has been considerable emphasis on professional

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development in assessment and internal moderation as part of curriculum renewal. AEA has linked its curriculum to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The involvement of all staff in follow-up meetings of Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID) sessions, a structured interview process designed to get valuable information on the effectiveness of curriculum innovations, has been a strength in professional development.

The evaluation team heard evidence that all academic staff members have worked hard and cooperatively on improving teaching, learning, assessment and moderation, and in their SGID meetings. A recent focus has been on external moderation, starting with TESOL, where experience in moderation can be shared with other teachers. The commendation on the work on moderation in the English New Zealand audit report is proving to be well deserved. Professional development includes areas self-identified by staff.

Teachers share their knowledge and practices through peer observation, internal workshops and regular formal and informal meetings. AEA's comprehensive observation programme results in teachers reflecting on their practice, initiating changes and improvements, and evaluating the effectiveness of those changes. Teaching is routinely observed by the senior teacher (academic quality). Staff appraisals are conducted annually and appear to be effective in developing and encouraging a self-reflective culture and contributing to professional development. A maximum class size of 15 contributes to teachers and learners establishing an effective working rapport.

AEA learning environments are planned and structured for the benefit and needs of learners. AEA teachers and counsellors respond effectively to the well-being needs of learners, which in turn supports their learning. Teachers and learners relate effectively to one another, particularly in the TESOL programme. Learners have opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts within the classroom, but would like to have more opportunities to do so outside the classroom. The most recent English New Zealand audit report (December 2013) supported out-of-class activities and suggested how teachers could ensure teachers record clear educational objectives that apply to the activities

AEA self-assessment includes student attendance, which supports high achievement, starting and finishing dates, which show students have completed the periods of study for which they have enrolled, regular testing which monitors individual student progress, detailed end-of-course evaluations which reflect student satisfaction with their AEA experience, and AEA end-of-course reports (based on the CEFR) which state what learners know and can do when they complete their course and leave AEA.

AEA has a wide variety of feedback processes, including peer observation and action research, which help support a self-reflective culture and teaching effectiveness. TESOL learners would like to access their teacher evaluation ratings, but the teachers, while responsive to this idea, are wary of doing so,



especially in the early stages when learners are developing new skills and when positive feedback is important for learner motivation and improvement.

## 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 **Good**.

AEA complies with the minimum legal requirements specified in the Code of Practice. For example, regular reports on learner progress and well-being are communicated in writing to the parents of learners under the age of 18 (via their agent, where applicable). AEA also conducts an annual self-review using a Code of Practice checklist to ensure continued compliance.

AEA provides pastoral support to international learners well beyond minimum requirements. AEA goes out of its way to ensure the safety and well-being of its learners, and not just those who are below the age of 18. (Occasionally, learners can be as young as 13 years old, but more commonly 16-17. At the time of the EER visit, there were six learners aged 16-17 out of a total of over 200 learners.)

AEA has a range of student counsellors who speak the first language of those learners for whom they are responsible. The counsellors meet and support the induction and orientation of all new learners and, with the homestay coordinator, assist those who choose a homestay. AEA provides comprehensive information about the school, its courses and the homestay family to all learners prior to their leaving their home country. AEA conducts police checks on all homestay families and teachers. It re-checks all homestay families at least three times a year. AEA visits homestay families twice a year and regularly communicates with them to see how everything is going and to assure AEA of their ongoing suitability. Emergency contacts and support are available to all learners 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Learners interviewed during the evaluation, including those under the age of 18 years, were generally very happy with AEA and their homestays. Where there is more than one student in a homestay, AEA usually ensures that the students and the host family are of different nationalities, and students appreciate this. This encourages and supports the students' cultural experience and understanding of New Zealand and other cultures.

The guidance and support that counsellors provide to all the learners occasionally extends to situations that may include an element of cultural risk for the learner and/or counsellor. AEA is aware of this, and the principal and school ensure they provide the appropriate support.

Given the extent of the support and guidance AEA provides, the evaluation team unexpectedly heard from the learners of two or three instances where AEA was

unaware that the homestay situations could have been better, and where the situation had an adverse impact on the learners. AEA has recently reviewed and revised its interaction with homestay families, including gathering more timely and comprehensive feedback. It now intends to further enhance its communication with all homestay learners to ensure they are receiving sufficient guidance and support from their homestay families.

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

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**.

Governance and management are clearly separated within the organisation and they are highly effective and efficient in carrying out their distinct functions. Each of the three members of the board brings complementary skills-sets to AEA. The five member management team meets regularly, and meeting minutes confirm that the meetings are purposeful and worthwhile and contribute to actions, which are followed through.

Like all language schools, AEA still faces significant challenges from the global financial crisis and the recent high value of the New Zealand dollar. The board and AEA as a whole, have responded well to these and regulatory challenges. Changes reflect financial reality and cater to the evolving needs of different markets. AEA has shifted its focus within the curriculum so that it includes more academic English strategies and skills in response to its analysis of student goals. Despite the downturn in numbers in the English language sector in recent years, AEA has maintained and slightly increased its student numbers.

AEA's commitment to responding to ongoing changes and providing clear purpose and direction is reflected in its effective leadership. AEA has employed a second senior teacher. This newly created role is a second senior teacher responsible for academic quality while the other senior teacher is responsible for programme delivery. The new role has been established because, as a growing organisation, AEA is committed to ensuring quality as it changes and grows. The new appointment is in addition to the appointment of a new principal at the start of 2012. The organisational structure, roles and divisional responsibilities are clearly defined and contribute to the effective operation of the school.

The recruitment and development of staff is effective. Staff feel valued, which may partly explain why several teachers have been loyal over several years despite ongoing changes. The current blend of full-time and part-time teachers seems to work effectively.

AEA reviews its resources regularly and changes them when required, as shown by the replacement of one textbook at one level with another. AEA is aware of the

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benefits of improving the reliability and consistency of its wi-fi connection and is continuing to develop its technology, which could enhance learning, teaching and achievement. It continues to consider the use of activities outside the classroom as well as within it, and which can also provide a useful means of further developing learners' English knowledge and skills.

AEA gathers quite a lot of useful data some of which it analyses and uses to support marketing and changes of direction. Self-assessment includes a range of information such as evaluations, some evaluation summary reports and data analysis and comparison, action plans, after-action reviews, records of continuous improvement, meetings, meeting minutes, strategic plans, review of performance against strategic plans, relationships with agents and feedback from them, and other stakeholders. Changes and improvements AEA noted include:

- 'English-only' reinforcement
- Separation of marketing and enrolment processes and responsibilities
- More structured meetings for all teams
- Improved 'student at-risk' processes
- A new orientation handbook and improved orientation process and timing
- Upgraded computer facilities for learners
- Upgraded reader library resources clearly labelled by level for learners as suggested by the English New Zealand audit report
- Notebook computers for all permanent teaching staff and some rooms with data projectors.

There are gaps in the analysis, discussion and use of data around learner achievement, outcomes and educational performance at an organisational level. AEA and the evaluation team expect that the senior teacher (academic quality), appointed about nine months prior to the EER to develop initiatives begun previously, and senior management, will strengthen and add to the AEA self-assessment that already exists.

AEA actively liaises with other English New Zealand-affiliated language schools and values the advice and support it receives from them and English New Zealand, including its audit activities. In 2013 AEA conducted a thorough English New Zealand self-assessment audit based on signed-off evidence and comments (although audits were not completed in 2011 and 2012). While not all aspects of the English New Zealand standards are equally relevant to EER, there was evidence that the self-audit, along with other self-assessment, contributed to actions arising, and, in most cases, documentation of the completion of actions.

## 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 **Good**.

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

### 2.2 Focus area: International student support

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

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

### 2.3 Focus area: English for Speakers of Other Languages: Communication English

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

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

### 2.4 Focus area: Certificate in TESOL for Non-native Teachers of English to Young Learners

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 Auckland English Academy:

- Continue to respond to changes in the English language school sector based on AEA's commitment to academic quality.
- Further develop the information it gathers at individual student, course, programme and organisational levels, including:
  - Learner achievement
  - The full range of outcomes and the value of those outcomes
  - Learner activities outside the classroom that support English language learning
  - The homestay experience
- Analyse, discuss and use quality self-assessment information to make appropriate changes that continue to improve educational performance, and evaluate the effectiveness and success of these changes.

# 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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