

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Seafield School of English Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 7 February 2014

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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:	Seafield School of English Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	71 Beresford Street, New Brighton, Christchurch
Delivery sites:	One site only as above
First registered:	1 February 1991
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General English (beginner to advanced levels)• Cambridge English: First Certificate in English (FCE), Cambridge English Advanced (CAE) and Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) exam preparation• International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam preparation• Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) exam preparation
Code of Practice signatory?:	Yes, for students aged 18 upwards
Number of students:	International only: approximately 18 equivalent full-time students (approximately 130 students enrolled in 2013). Learners are from a variety of countries, including Japan, Switzerland and Saudi Arabia.
Number of staff:	Seven full-time equivalents

Scope of active accreditation:	English Language Tuition
Distinctive characteristics:	Seafield School of English (Seafield) is located in the beachside suburb of New Brighton, Christchurch
Recent significant changes:	Seafield has experienced significantly reduced student numbers as a result of the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 (previously approximately 400 learners per year). In addition, some administrative and learner data was lost in 2010.
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>The previous external evaluation and review (EER) in 2010 recorded the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZQA is Confident in the educational performance of Seafield • NZQA is Confident in the capability in self-assessment of Seafield <p>Seafield met all required standards in the 2012 audit conducted by English New Zealand.</p>

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the EER consisted of the following focus areas:

- Governance, management and strategy
- International students
- English Language Tuition

The first two focus areas are mandatory. All students at Seafield are enrolled for English language tuition.

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

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

The organisation submitted comprehensive self-assessment material to inform the EER, including the 2012 audit from English New Zealand.

The evaluation team of two visited the Christchurch campus over two days. Interviews were conducted with the owner/managing director, the director of studies and associate director of studies, the systems development manager, the office manager, three tutors, the homestay coordinator/registrar and 11 students. Phone interviews were also conducted with three education agents. A variety of academic, planning and review documents and a selection of learner records were sighted, both paper and online.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Seafield School of English Limited**.

The reasons for this judgement are as follows:

- Learners at Seafield are making excellent progress in improving their English language skills. A comprehensive approach to monitoring language acquisition includes regular testing, observation, individual tutorials and the use of learner feedback, which contribute to the final assessment of achievement.
- Seafield reports that in 2012, 98 per cent of learners completed with either an achieved or achieved with merit grade, based on their average weekly test score (where 'achieved' represents an overall score of between 60 and 79 per cent, and 'achieved with merit' represents an overall score of 80 per cent or higher). The use of standard progress tests together with internal moderation of assessment for speaking and writing skills provide assurance of the validity of the learner outcomes reported.
- A small number of students complete Cambridge exams, and in 2012 the overall pass rate for Seafield students was 89 per cent, compared with New Zealand-wide rates of 81 per cent and worldwide rates of 69 per cent.
- Seafield also has good evidence that learners are gaining increased confidence and cross-cultural knowledge and understanding.
- As many of the students enrol at Seafield for personal interest or travel purposes, high rates of satisfaction with their progress and their New Zealand learning experience are an important indicator of the valued outcomes for learners (98 per cent of learners in 2012 reported that they were satisfied and 88 per cent would recommend Seafield). The evaluators also heard about students who had successfully gained admission to New Zealand universities (having achieved the required IELTS scores), and the value of attaining Cambridge results for enhancing study and employment opportunities.
- A wide range of high-quality educational performance data is available. This is closely monitored throughout the year at an individual level, and collated and analysed as part of the annual self-assessment process. Qualitative and quantitative data is used to identify opportunities for improvement in the key contributing processes and activities that underpin educational performance.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Seafield School of English Limited**.

The reasons for this judgement are as follows:

- Seafield is a well-organised and well-resourced PTE, which has comprehensive systems and processes in place to assess and meet learner needs. Feedback is sought on a regular basis from learners and is used to identify their interests and purposes for study, their satisfaction with all aspects of their learning experience, and their well-being. As a result, teachers are making useful adjustments to their teaching activities and materials, and regularly discussing learners' progress with them. Effective learner support is offered for personal or accommodation-related matters as required, and the activities programme is regularly reviewed.
- Processes and practices to support good teaching include regular observations and performance appraisals by the director of study, information-sharing and ongoing upskilling through weekly team meetings, and an annual professional development programme. Teachers are regularly reflecting on their practice in a six-weekly self-evaluation process, identifying areas for improvement and recording the impact of changes made.
- All staff are involved in the annual self-assessment process, which is based on NZQA's key evaluation questions and draws on information from a wide variety of sources. Opportunities for improvement identified during the review of 2012 included a greater focus on monitoring learner progress, increasing the focus on consistency of assessment, and improving the learner questionnaire. Various actions were agreed, and the outcomes of these are now being evaluated.
- Effective processes for strategic and business planning are leading to positive changes. Examples include the recent appointment of an independent advisor to the directors to strengthen governance, an upgrade of the student management system to improve the accessibility of data, and the use of social media to enhance communication with prospective and previous students.
- Self-assessment is well-established at Seafield, and comprehensive records provide strong evidence of staff at all levels being actively engaged in evaluative activities to maintain consistently high standards of education and service delivery.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

Learners enrol at Seafield for a variety of reasons (travel and personal interest, improved work prospects or access to further study). Most learners are making very good progress in English language acquisition. This is largely measured through achievement in weekly unit tests (based on the textbook) and additional assessments of speaking and writing. Ninety-eight per cent of all students in 2012 were successful in completing their study, with an average weekly test result of more than 60 per cent (see Table 1).²

Overall achievement (level)	2011	2012
Overall not achieved	2.5%	2%
Overall achieved	58.5%	75%
Overall achieved with merit	20%	23%
Course not completed	27%	0%

A small number of students complete Cambridge exams. Seafield advises students on whether or not to join a Cambridge class based on their English-language level, but does not restrict their access to the programme. Comparable data for the last three years is available which indicates that Seafield students perform well when benchmarked within New Zealand and internationally (Table 2).

Examination results	2010 (FCE, CAE and CPE)	2011 (FCE and CAE only)	2012 (FCE, CAE and CPE)
Seafield pass rate	83%	79%	89%
New Zealand pass rate	80%	77%	81%
World pass rate	71%	73%	69%

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

² The data for 2011 reflects the impact of the Christchurch earthquakes (27 per cent of students did not complete their course).

Teaching and learning records (such as monthly progress reports from date of arrival, notes of one-to-one tutorials and student files) include evidence of learners gaining confidence and developing their ability to participate in small group and class activities.

Learner progress is monitored very carefully through testing, teacher observations, individual conversations (formal and informal) and learner feedback. During 2012, Seafield made several changes in order to enhance monitoring of learner progress, including the reintroduction of an optional exit test, monthly (rather than three-monthly) written progress reports and improved accessibility of data online. These activities are yielding useful information for staff who use the detailed information on learners' abilities to accomplish tasks and assimilate new information to assess their readiness to move to the next level, and to identify areas requiring more attention.

Seafield is committed to ensuring valid and reliable achievement data. The unit tests are largely standardised (based on the textbook), and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has been adopted as a framework for mapping language levels. Improvements to rubrics for assessing writing tasks, and the formal timetabling of internal moderation sessions for assessments of writing and speaking, are examples of useful activities that are improving the accuracy and consistency of assessments.

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

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

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

Seafield has been engaged in international education for many years and has a good understanding of the expectations of the learners and key markets and is successful in delivering valued outcomes. For the majority of learners who enrol at Seafield to improve their English for travel and personal reasons, the key valued outcomes are satisfaction with their progress in language acquisition, and their New Zealand learning experience.

Seafield's success in these areas is reflected in the consistently high levels of learner satisfaction, as measured by the leaving questionnaire (98 per cent in 2012), and the PTE's rating among the top English language schools in the world by a large Japanese study-abroad organisation.³ Students and agents also report

³ The Ryugaki Journal Inc. has placed Seafield among the top language schools over the last four years (first place in 2010 and 2011, sixth in 2012, and third in 2013). The award is based on feedback from 500 learners in relation to teaching and administration support, lessons, facilities, accommodation and environment.

that learners have valued the opportunity to learn about New Zealand culture and to experience the New Zealand way of life in a beachside location.

The evaluators sighted feedback from previous learners on social media and in emails which confirmed that learners value their improved ability to communicate in English, which has enabled them to travel and gain employment in New Zealand. A small number of students complete exam classes (IELTS, TOEIC or Cambridge) which enables them to access further study or to improve their employment prospects in their home country. Some Seafield graduates have gained entry to New Zealand universities.

The use of social media is a relatively new initiative for Seafield, and management recognises that there are opportunities for further development that would enhance their communication with prospective and past students, and facilitate the collection of information on which to base improvements.

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

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

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

Learners at Seafield benefit from small classes and a very high level of individual attention, which enables their specific interests to be accommodated and their learning needs to be met. Fortnightly individual tutorials are particularly useful in this regard and are focused on topics or questions identified by the learners. Examples include speaking practice, progress towards study goals, clarification of key points of grammar, and helping with travel plans. Records of these sessions are maintained on the student file for reference. A more recent initiative is the written monthly progress report (previously three-monthly) providing test scores and feedback on progress. Learners interviewed during the EER reported that they want to know how well they are progressing and they particularly appreciate receiving advice on how to improve. This new approach represents a more appropriate timeframe for the many students who enrol for less than three months.

Seafield continues to offer all six levels of language learning, despite small student numbers at present. The curriculum is based on standard texts and supplemented by teaching activities and materials incorporating topics or activities of particular interest to the learners, including New Zealand content. This includes use being made of digital technologies (including smartphones, CDs and online resources), and a well-resourced library. As a result, students are motivated and engaged with their learning.

The evaluators found that Seafield is also effective in meeting the needs of students with learning difficulties (for example, a hearing impairment), and meeting other pastoral needs. Evidence of this was found in staff meeting minutes and

written student feedback. Seafield is highly responsive to feedback, and staff provided examples of making changes (such as revising handouts to improve comprehension) as a result of feedback. An activities programme, incorporating a variety of after-school and weekend activities, is provided which fosters friendships, enhances well-being and provides opportunities to experience New Zealand culture and countryside. Teachers regularly ask about activities and pass feedback to the organiser so that improvements can be made.

Seafield's effectiveness in meeting learner needs is confirmed by the consistently positive learner feedback and is also reflected in the confidence expressed by study-abroad organisations.

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 **Good**.

Seafield is providing a highly effective learning environment which ensures consistently strong learner achievement and positive feedback. Qualified and experienced teachers use a variety of teaching approaches to encourage participation and enhance learning, while meeting the needs of learners at different levels within their classrooms. Six-weekly self-evaluation encourages teachers to reflect on their practice and to identify opportunities for improvement. The records sighted by the evaluators confirm that teachers are monitoring outcomes to evaluate the impact of changes made.

Students benefit from regular assessment which informs teaching and learning. Seafield relies heavily on the progress tests associated with the textbooks. During 2013 Seafield has focused on improving the accuracy and consistency of assessments for speaking and writing, and the CEFR descriptors are being incorporated into assessment practice. A regular timetable for internal moderation has been re-established. The director of studies reports that there is some evidence of improved consistency in assessment, and further sessions are planned to continue the process.

Teachers are collegial, meeting weekly and openly sharing ideas for improvement and resources, some of which arise from their self-evaluations. Funding is provided for individual upskilling, and an annual professional development plan is developed based on key strategies for improvement, as well as issues identified through individual reflective practice or routine processes such as performance appraisal or learner feedback. The 2012 English New Zealand audit commented on the 'remarkably healthy professional development programme'. New staff are carefully inducted and supported. All teachers are regularly observed by the director of studies (both scheduled and impromptu) and receive written and verbal feedback. In these ways, teachers are constantly focused on improvement, which is reflected in the positive assessments of their effectiveness by learners and other

stakeholders. Seafield meets all the English New Zealand standards relating to teachers, curriculum and assessment.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Seafield has an organisational culture focused on meeting the needs of each individual student, both pastoral and academic, and feedback from stakeholders indicates that a very high standard of guidance and support is consistently achieved. Learners have easy access to staff. Services and processes are well established and resourced, and regularly reviewed for their effectiveness. As a result, while the overall framework reflects a good understanding of the needs of international students, changes are regularly made to suit the specific needs and interests of current learners. Key sources of information for this process include the fortnightly individual tutorials, the monthly progress report, staff observations, and feedback from agents, learners and homestay families. The evaluators heard examples of how this information is shared and used to refine the activities programme, address homestay issues, provide additional encouragement and learning support (for individuals or groups of learners), include topics or activities of particular interest into the classroom programme, or support learners to access community activities. Learner feedback, past and present, confirmed the effectiveness of this approach in providing a stimulating and positive learning experience, which is a key factor in excellent outcomes for learners.

Seafield has thorough processes for ensuring compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students, and a number of staff are involved in the annual review and subsequent actions, which are fully documented. A well-organised homestay service with an established group of families has been maintained – despite the impact of the earthquakes on the local housing stock – which enables learners to learn about and enjoy a New Zealand lifestyle. Care is taken to ensure all new students are given a comprehensive orientation to the school and New Zealand, and ongoing access to counselling support, if required, in their own language. Regular reviews of the student handbook and other student information ensures it is up-to-date and accessible. Taken together, student needs for information, support and guidance are very well met.

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

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

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

Seafield has a range of effective management, academic and administrative processes for supporting learner achievement, which are well documented, regularly reviewed and consistent with the organisational culture. An annual management review calendar has recently been compiled which sets out the organisational self-assessment programme, a key feature of which is the annual self-assessment and evaluation process, structured around NZQA's six key evaluation questions. This process involves all staff, a wide range of valid data (quantitative and qualitative) from a variety of sources, and results in ideas for improvement. Regular discussions, in monthly management and weekly team meetings, ensure actions are followed up and outcomes are reviewed.

This organisational process is underpinned by organisation-wide commitment to continuous improvement, a good example of which is the six-weekly individual self-assessment by management, teaching and administrative staff to identify improvements. The written records indicate that useful changes have been made as a result of these reflective activities, which are leading to improvements. Examples include the trialling of a new textbook to be adopted, teacher discussions on classroom practice, and subsequent professional development activities and more efficient administrative processes.

Effective leadership of the PTE is provided by the managing director and a three-person management team. The organisation is characterised by open communication practices and collegiality, where staff report feeling valued and well supported. The organisation has undergone significant changes and downsizing in recent years. Strategic and business plans are focused on ensuring the organisation's sustainability while ensuring high academic standards and excellent levels of pastoral care. Seafield has continued to invest in staff development and school resources. Upgrading of the student management system is beginning to deliver benefits, such as greater access to student information and the ability to generate more useful reports, which are supporting the organisational improvement strategy for better monitoring of learner achievement.

Self-assessment is well established in Seafield. It is evident from records that processes to collect, collate and analyse data have been in place for a number of years. Staff at all levels of the organisation are genuinely engaged with review and improvement processes, both as individuals and team members. These processes are leading to worthwhile improvements which contribute to consistently strong educational performance.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

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

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

2.2 Focus area: 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 **Excellent**.

2.3 Focus area: English Language Tuition

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).

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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