

## NZSL@School Project Update No 3 | Term 2 2015

### 1) The NZSL@School Initiative:

#### What's it all about?

NZSL@School was launched in 2014, with the government announcing \$11m of new funding for a package of NZSL programmes for 2014-2018.

NZSL@School is a joint initiative between the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Combined Board of Kelston and van Asch Deaf Education Centres. We aim for a quality education system worthy of Deaf children and young people whose primary, face-to-face language is New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) but are not enrolled at either of the Deaf Education Centres (DEC).

#### NZSL@School Services

NZSL@School provides a range of services for students, parents/whānau and schools. The services are in addition to, rather than replace, other special education services. So this includes funding teacher's aides in schools, providing professional development, resources and so on. NZSL tuition is also available from Tutors employed by the DECs, who teach NZSL to Deaf students, parents/whānau, and school staff/pupils.

#### How many students are receiving a NZSL@School service?

This year, up to 60 students are receiving NZSL@School services. The number of students will be between 50-60 as some of them move between DECs and their local school. We're aiming to support our Deaf children and NZSL@School recognises that one challenge is that for most students, they are the only NZSL user at their school. Over the period of 2015-2018, the number of students receiving NZSL@School services will increase as pre-school children who use NZSL start school. We're currently working out the actual number of students who could access NZSL@School during 2015-2018 so we can make sure services are in place.

#### How to access the NZSL@School Services

In June/July this year we're working on a formal process across both DECs for identifying students and allocating the NZSL@School services (for more information see the back of this leaflet). People will be notified as we go. To know more about KDEC and VADEC NZSL@School processes for accessing NZSL@School services, contact Michael Heeney, Regional Manager, Kelston Deaf Education Centre (KDEC) [michael.heeney@kdec.school.nz](mailto:michael.heeney@kdec.school.nz) or Margaret Anderson, Regional Manager, van Asch Deaf Education Centre (VADEC) [manderson55@vanasch.school.nz](mailto:manderson55@vanasch.school.nz)

### 2) The NZSL@School Project

There is NZSL@School Project team in place for 2014-15 to support the setting up NZSL@School across both DECs. This Project Team reports to a Steering Committee, which has MoE, Combined Board, DEC, Deaf and Māori community representatives. The Steering Committee reports to the Combined Board of Trustees and the NZSL Sector Advisory Group (SAG) chaired by David Wales, National Director of Special Education, Ministry of Education. The Project Team consists of four people (see below).

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## What is the Project Team doing?

The NZSL@School Project Team is working on strengthening Deaf students access to daily, ongoing quality NZSL at school, alongside other Kelston and van Asch staff. The following information provides an overview of the Project Team's work.

### A) Student Criteria and referral process

The current criteria and processes for accessing the NZSL@School services are being reviewed by the Project Manager and NZSL@School Steering Committee. In late July, DEC/MoE staff and SAG members (including the New Federation for Deaf Children) will be notified of the revised student criteria and process for accessing NZSL@School services. The updated criteria will also assist with determining how many students are eligible for NZSL@School services (especially when pre-school children are planning to start school). This information will be used to help with service delivery planning to make sure the right type and level of services are in place to meet student needs. Until then, any questions about access to NZSL@School services please contact Michael Heeney or Margaret Anderson.

### B) NZSL@School Services 2016

Work is being done to set up processes between Van Asch and Kelston for working out and allocating the NZSL@School services (ie. teacher's aides and NZSL tuition) required by students, parents/whānau and schools. Information will be provided by the end of term 2 to Resource Teachers of the Deaf, school and parents involved in NZSL@School in preparation for identifying the services students etc. require for 2016 during term 3.

### C) Service design/delivery

The Project Team is responsible for identifying opportunities to improve what and how services could be delivered so that NZSL Deaf students, achieve academically and socially at the same level as their hearing peers.

## How is we doing this?

### i) Project Team visits to schools

The Project Team, Pollyanna Ferguson and Tracey Witko are visiting the students receiving NZSL@School services, their parents/whānau, schools and the Deaf education professionals (Resource Teachers of the Deaf, Advisors on Deaf Children etc) to discuss their views on what is working well and ideas for improvement. Pollyanna is a Deaf Teacher of the Deaf. Tracey is an Educational Psychologist whose parents are Deaf. The Team will give parents, schools and professionals i.e. the team involved with each student, a summary of the ideas discussed after each meeting. The information collected on what is working, and ideas for improvement will go to the NZSL@School Steering Committee, the Combined Board and the NZSL@School SAG.

The Project Team will work with DEC staff involved in NZSL@School to plan how the team will work with parents, schools, DEC staff etc. The Project Team will continue to work with this group of DEC staff throughout the project.

Thanks to the Resource Teachers of the Deaf (RTD) who are helping organise the visits and to those who have helped with the first series of visits in May with short notice. The Project Team will contact RTDs and schools at least a month before visiting to plan dates and times. The visits will continue during June-September 2015. For any queries on Project Team visits, you can contact Sonya Logan.

### ii) Overseas Models/Research

Many Deaf education providers/governments overseas are also working to improve services for students whose primary language is sign language and are mainstreamed. New Zealand has the opportunity to learn from these providers/governments. The Queensland Department of Education and Training has had a project called "The Auslan Project" operating for over 8 years. It is improving services to 400 students every year who use Auslan and are up to 1000km away from any Deaf education services. We invited Bronwyn Green, the Auslan Project Manager to New Zealand to present information on what advances the Queensland government is making. She presented a two-day workshop (12/13 May) to over 25 DEC/MoE staff and SAG members. We will let DEC/MoE staff know how they can access the information from the workshop.



**Attendees at the 2 day workshop presented by Bronwyn Green**

**Front row from left to right:**  
*Wenda Walton, Rosie Henley, Sarah Freer, Janine Campbell, Sonya Logan, Robyn Neil, Ann Croy, Anita Boon, Bronwyn Green*

**Back row from left to right -**  
*Carl Ross, Daniel Greenwood, Darryl Alexander, Kerry Wood, Denise Powell, Nirvana May, Sarah Cameron, Hilda Baker, James Townshend, Paul Buzzard, Andrew Townshend*

### iii) NZSL Student Assessment Tool

An NZSL student assessment tool is needed in NZ. A standardised tool has been developed for British Sign Language (BSL) and recently taken on by Australia and adapted for Australian Sign Language (Auslan). NZSL@School funds have been used to train DEC staff in the use of the Auslan tool. And a proposal is under development to adapt the BSL tool for us (in the same way that Australia adapted the tool in to Auslan), and supported by a reference group of DEC and Victoria University representatives. We will keep you informed.

### iv) NZSL Adult Assessment Tool

New Zealand also does not have a standardised adult sign language tool which determines adults' sign language proficiency. A reference group consisting of DEC, Auckland University of Technology (Interpreter Training), Canterbury University (Teacher of the Deaf training), Victoria University (Deaf Studies) representatives has been established. A tool known as the Sign Language Proficiency Instrument (SLPI) developed by the National Institute for the Deaf (NTID), Rochester, New York over 30 years ago has been identified as the tool that could be implemented in NZ. Professor Geoff Poor (NTID) came to New Zealand in late May and trained 10 people from a range of organisations in SLPI. As a result, the Reference group is now working the Project Manager to determine if



**The Adult Assessment training workshop attendees with Prof. Geoff Poor**

**Front row - left to right:** *Josje Lelijveld, Sara Pivac Alexander, Dr Geoff Poor, Nicki Morrison, Wenda Walton*  
**Middle row left to right -** *Andrew Townshend, Pixie Neame, Marjorie Rako, Susie Ovens*  
**Back row - left to right -** *Michelle Sinclair, Paul Buzzard*

and how SLPI might be implemented in NZ. Updates will be provided as this work progresses.

## v) Information Technology (IT)

The Project team are assessing IT processes and policies to help make sure Deaf students in NZSL@School are able to easily access the right IT hardware/software at the right time to meet their communication and learning needs at home and school. We are keen to set up ways of identifying changes to IT so we are all able to use the latest IT as soon as it is available. We are also keen to know what DEC staff in particular need to support them use IT to assist Deaf students learning and communication. This work is just starting and we will keep people updated especially when we would like seek people's views on what improvements can be made to the IT identification and allocation processes. If you have any queries, please contact Sarah Freer.

## vi) Project Information

Updates are being provided each term to SAG members and to DEC and MoE staff. If you have any queries or ideas you would like to share about NZSL@School, please do not hesitate to contact Sonya Logan.

For the NZSL video of this newsletter go to [www.seeflow.co.nz/nzslatschool-update-3](http://www.seeflow.co.nz/nzslatschool-update-3)

