

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Worldwide School Limited
trading as Worldwide School of
English

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 7 March 2012

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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. Worldwide School of English in context

Location:	The Strand Arcade, Levels 3 and 4, 233 Queen Street, Auckland
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1991 (founded 1989)
Number of students:	Domestic (TEC-funded): nil International: 180 (average); 142 at the time of the EER
Number of staff:	17 full-time teachers, 11 full-time permanent teaching staff (all on contract); five counsellors
Scope of active accreditation:	General English at seven levels, Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE) and Cambridge Advanced English (CAE) Exams, Business English, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), the Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT), International English Language Testing System (IELTS) preparation and the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) preparation.
Sites:	The school is sited in a heritage building; it has been at the current site since 2008.
Distinctive characteristics:	Worldwide School of English (WWSE) is an inner-city English language school. It is a limited liability company purchased by the current owners in 1996. The owners/principals manage the organisation; one is primarily responsible for marketing and the other for the day-to-day

management of the school. A director of studies and an assistant director of studies report to the owners/principals. Seventy per cent of the students at WWSE are General English students; 30 per cent are Academic English students studying for international exams. Some students progress from General English to Academic English but the numbers are small. The majority of students spend an average of around nine weeks at the school, followed by travel around New Zealand for up to a year. The school uses a system of language levels based on the Common European Framework.

Previous quality assurance history: WWSE met all the requirements of the previous NZQA quality assurance audit standard. It is a member of English New Zealand, which every three years audits member schools against management and academic standards specific to the English language industry. English New Zealand also conducts spot audits without prior notification. It is also a member of Quality English.

Other: WWSE is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The mandatory focus areas selected were governance, management, and strategy, and international student support. The other focus areas selected were the Academic English programmes (FCE and CAE) and the General English programmes. The majority of students are enrolled in these programmes.

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-eeer/introduction/>

The EER team was made up of one lead evaluator, one external evaluator, and an additional lead evaluator observing the EER for training purposes. The evaluation was conducted over two days. The team met with the two owners, the director of

studies, the assistant director of studies, accommodation manager, academic staff, counsellors, and students studying across the focus area programmes. The team sighted extensive documentation including the self-assessment report, strategic plan, student satisfaction surveys of tutors and courses, student and tutor handbooks, curriculum development schedules over several years, and the student management system containing records of student attendance and academic progress.

Worldwide School Limited trading as Worldwide School of English has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received have been fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

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

Students achieve well against their goals of English language acquisition and travel in New Zealand, or passing Cambridge International Examinations. General English classes are small (ten to 12 students), ensuring that individual tuition can be provided. There is an initial placement test, including a listening test and a grammar test and interview. General English has seven class levels and students progress on average one level every 12 weeks of full-time study, meeting the internationally accepted standard for progression. There are tests at two-week intervals, and when students reach a score of 75 per cent on three of the four skill levels of listening, writing, reading, and speaking they are eligible to progress to the next class. Academic English students participate in mock assessments to help them gauge whether they are sufficiently prepared to sit the Cambridge exam. Students also achieve well in Cambridge International Examinations courses. Mock assessments are provided to help students gauge whether they are sufficiently prepared to sit the exam. Internal benchmarking undertaken by the school has shown that Academic English pass rates for Cambridge exams have fluctuated between 80 and 90 per cent over the last few years.

Student satisfaction surveys are comprehensive and indicate very high levels of student satisfaction with the teachers, course content, resources, campus facilities, and activities. Word-of-mouth referrals and extending the time of study reflect the value to students of the learning experience at WWSE. The school has robust support systems for the pastoral care of its students, including a comprehensive induction process and full-time counsellors of different nationalities who are available to support students around the clock. The cultural mix at the school leads to shared understandings and a positive multicultural experience. Student satisfaction levels and acceptance of the quality of WWSE's graduates by other tertiary organisations demonstrate the high regard in which the school is held. The school's active involvement in the wider English language sector contributes to this community and helps the school to gauge its contribution to key stakeholders, including learners.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

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

Educational achievement is supported by a detailed analysis of the experience that international students are looking for in New Zealand. Students' goals and motivations are identified when they enrol and are regularly reviewed by staff and students. The organisation has a customised student management system which is comprehensive and collates data and information on the students. It is accessed and updated regularly and used to inform ongoing reviews and improvements to teaching practice and delivery of both General English and academic programmes. For example, a pre-IELTS course was developed recently to accommodate students who needed extra preparation to be successful with their chosen study options.

WWSE's self-assessment has a clear organisational purpose and direction. It ensures that learning activities and resources are effective in engaging students and that students have opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts. Programme planning and professional development for teachers and other staff are informed by ongoing needs analysis which is part of a culture of self-assessment, involves most staff, and has been practised for some years.

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**.

Students achieve well against their goals of balancing language acquisition and travel in intensive General English courses, allowing them to develop a level of English language skills sufficient to arrange and undertake travel in New Zealand. There is a system of rolling Monday enrolments. All students are tested on entry and their progress measured regularly by way of tests. General English students progress on average one level every 12 weeks of full-time study, meeting the internationally accepted standard for progression. WWSE is able to show the starting level and subsequent achievement for all students in listening, speaking, reading, and writing through its student management system which is regularly updated. This data shows that overall student progress meets international guidelines. The student management system also contains information on attendance, which is tracked closely to meet immigration requirements and because WWSE recognises that poor attendance has a negative impact on student achievement levels.

There is a system of skills tests every two weeks: listening and writing one fortnight, and reading and speaking the following fortnight. Once a student reaches 75 per cent on three of the four skill-level tests, they are eligible to progress to the next class. Staff, both academic and administrative, meet each week to discuss student progress and reach agreement on those students who will be moving up a class. Tutors discuss the skill test results with all students each month. A report of these results is also sent to the agents involved with the students' enrolments.

Students also achieve well in Cambridge International Examinations courses. Mock assessments are provided to help students gauge whether they are sufficiently prepared to sit the exam. Internal benchmarking undertaken by the school has shown that Academic English pass rates for Cambridge exams have fluctuated between 80 and 90 per cent over the last few years. These results are being tracked closely for any emerging trends that might usefully inform changes to teaching practice or programme delivery. The director of studies undertakes audits on behalf of English New Zealand, providing informal benchmarking information that can be used to compare WWSE's performance with similar providers. These informal comparisons indicate that WWSE is achieving very well.

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

The organisation has a customised student management system which is comprehensive and collates data and information on the students. It is accessed and updated regularly and used to inform ongoing reviews and improvements to teaching practice and delivery of both General English and academic programmes.

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**.

General English students reported that they were confident that they were making good progress with their English, evidenced by the regular feedback from skills tests, tutor feedback, and their increased confidence in everyday conversations.

Students appreciated the school's policy of a mix of nationalities, as it ensured exposure to different spoken English accents and to people from different cultures. This cultural mix was considered an advantage by all key stakeholders, including staff, management, agents, and homestay parents, as it was hoped that the deliberate focus on cultural and ethnic diversity would lead to shared understandings and a positive multicultural experience. This outcome was confirmed by the conversations and interactions between the evaluation team and both students and staff.

Student satisfaction levels, including word-of-mouth referrals and extending the time of study, are a reflection of the value of the learning experience. The school provided evidence from a 2011 survey of feedback from 165 students, representing 84 per cent of the then total student population. The survey covered a range of issues: lessons, teachers, and school staff; the most useful class activities; most-used school facilities; school activities with the highest rate of participation; and activities most liked at the school. This enabled both quantitative and qualitative information to be collated and analysed. Suggestions for improvement were recorded and, where practicable, actions, such as providing a wider range of out of school activities, were introduced to address these issues.

The survey indicated very high levels of student satisfaction:

- 85 per cent of students enjoyed the morning classes
- 81 per cent enjoyed the afternoon classes
- 93 per cent agreed that their morning teacher was well prepared
- 84 per cent agreed that their afternoon teacher was well prepared
- 82 per cent agreed that they were happy with the language and skills practice in the morning classes

- 79 per cent agreed that they were happy with the vocabulary/speaking/listening practice in the afternoon class
- 74 per cent agreed that their English was getting better.

WWSE provides pathways to other tertiary organisations such as Auckland University of Technology and the Academic Colleges Group. Destination records of students who stay in New Zealand are kept and many graduates who return home maintain contact through email and Facebook. The organisation also keeps a scrapbook with testimonials, letters, and feedback from learners, showing the positive learning experiences enjoyed by WWSE students. The school website, which is updated weekly, also includes positive student testimonials.

Student satisfaction levels and acceptance of the quality of WWSE's graduates by other tertiary organisations demonstrate the high regard in which the school is held. The school's active involvement in the wider English language sector contributes to this community and helps the school to gauge its contribution to key stakeholders, including learners.

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**.

Students' goals and motivations are identified when they enrol and are regularly reviewed by the staff and students. There is an initial placement test, including a language assessment, listening test and interview. Students enrol in General English classes knowing that they will receive individual tuition if necessary and that their individual language acquisition and fluency goals can be met in the small classes of, on average, ten to 12 students. An analysis of where students used their English, their English strengths and areas for development (across listening, reading, speaking, grammar, and writing), goals for studying English, and what each student hoped to achieve by the end of the course are discussed with classmates and provide a baseline for each individual to measure the achievement of goals. Students of Academic English are able to gain qualifications that will help them with further study in New Zealand or overseas, for example, IELTS and Cambridge FCE and CAE.

Students have other opportunities for language and cultural enrichment through an extensive programme of visits and activities, including interschool sporting activities. Students spoken to by the evaluation team rated the activities programme as very important for developing interpersonal communication skills and friendships, and for language acquisition.

WWSE's self-assessment emphasises a clear organisational purpose and direction. It ensures learning activities and resources are effective in engaging students and

that students have opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts. Programme planning is informed by ongoing needs analysis that is part of a culture of self-assessment evident across the school.

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**.

There was clear evidence of effective teaching practice at WWSE. Teachers are well qualified, and many have long service at the school. They impressed the evaluation team as organised, collegial, and supportive of each other. They share and create new resources, develop teaching and learning plans, and welcome opportunities for peer observation and feedback. Staff teach different programme levels morning and afternoon to provide variety. New teachers are allocated a senior teacher as a mentor to help them with teaching ideas and the location of resources and facilities. The director of studies or assistant director of studies supports new teachers by observing them at one-month, three-month, and six-month intervals, or more often if there are complaints. All teachers self-appraise and are evaluated by the director of studies or assistant director of studies every six months. Included in this evaluation is feedback from students and other staff and an evaluation of the performance of both teaching and administration.

Professional development occurs every two months and additional professional development is sometimes scheduled as part of the regular compulsory weekly staff meetings. External professional development opportunities and further study are encouraged and, if successfully completed, may be rewarded with increased pay. Teachers commented that they would like more professional development as well as more time between finishing one class and starting another, in order to update resources and reflect on their practice. This issue was raised with management who showed the evaluation team curriculum development schedules from 2007 to 2011, indicating the areas for development, staff allocated to each area, and the tasks that had been completed. However, this difference in perception between management and staff might benefit from further investigation and discussion.

WWSE seeks feedback from across the school to inform teacher performance and practice, including self-appraisal by the teachers, prior to external observation. The information gathered provides teaching and management staff with valuable information which is used to identify improved teaching and learning strategies.

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**.

WWSE has robust support systems for the pastoral care of its students. All written information, such as the student handbook and Code of Practice information, is checked and updated regularly. Induction is comprehensive and includes an explanation of the complaints process.

There are five full-time counsellors of different nationalities who are available to support the students. All students meet the counsellors during induction and many will have been contacted by phone by their native language counsellor the night before attending classes. Students commented that it was both surprising and reassuring to hear a friendly voice in their own language when they had just arrived in New Zealand and were so far from home. Teachers and counsellors meet each week and work together to provide the most appropriate support for the students.

If a student wishes to stay with a New Zealand family, the homestay accommodation manager will initiate a process of close matching between the student and the homestay family prior to the student arriving in New Zealand. All the families are carefully checked and monitored regularly to ensure they are suitable. Those providing accommodation for under 18-year-old students are visited every three months, as required by the Code of Practice. WWSE has a number of long-term homestay families and has not needed to advertise for new families for several years. These families enjoy the diversity of cultures offered by WWSE students as it broadens the cultural experience for their family. Homestays also provide a range of naturally occurring opportunities for students to practise the use of everyday English. To facilitate this, students are not permitted to stay with a homestay family from the same culture.

The on-site facilities at WWSE were purpose-built for a previous language school and the physical environment is exceptional. Students enjoy free, fast wireless internet, a well-resourced library which has been recently reorganised, and a small movie theatre which is used for academic and recreational purposes. Resources are updated on a regular basis, for example the current move to MP3 players.

WWSE is proactive and attempts to pre-empt any issues that might arise for students. For example, cultural needs are met by the provision of a prayer room and by connecting students with relevant community services, such as their local church or mosque or information on where to buy halal meat. The evaluation team was impressed by the friendly, inclusive atmosphere at the school. Students interviewed by the evaluation team confirmed that the school was well resourced and welcoming and open to suggestions for improvements.

While management has overall responsibility for ensuring the Code of Practice requirements are met, it did not appear that relevant staff had recently attended the professional development offered by the Ministry of Education's Code Office. Also,

while the organisation periodically self-reviews its compliance with the code, it was not aware of the self-review tool provided on the Ministry of Education website.

The evaluation team was satisfied that the school understands and is meeting all Code of Practice requirements. However, any resources or professional development opportunities that are available to upskill staff, streamline compliance requirements, and link relevant WWSE staff with people in similar roles from other organisations could assist WWSE to provide even higher quality guidance and support.

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**.

Governance and management at WWSE are highly effective. The school has a strategic business plan with a clear purpose, a vision statement, targets, and resource requirements. One director focuses on marketing and is overseas for a large part of the year, while the other director focuses on the day-to-day operation of the school. The directors also have a contingency plan and insurance cover if either wishes to leave the business.

Both directors have been educators. Staff spoken to by the evaluation team commented that this was a big advantage as the directors understood teachers' requirements and issues. There is high staff retention, the majority of teachers are on salary, the school is well resourced, and teachers are required to teach across the curriculum to maintain interest levels and meet new challenges that may arise with different student groups and programmes. Progression within the staff salary bands is transparent and tutors receive contracts for the following year at the end of each year. An added incentive for staff is the provision of free health insurance.

Educational achievement is supported through a detailed analysis of the experience that international students are looking for in New Zealand. This analysis has led to recruiting students from diverse countries, developing good working relationships with agents, responding quickly to Immigration New Zealand changes (for example, visa requirements), and taking into account seasonal variations in overseas markets. Other initiatives developed by the school are the Combo Course (where students can study and travel at four different locations around New Zealand), partnerships developed with other tertiary providers that provide further study options for students, and the pre-IELTS course that was developed recently to accommodate students who needed extra preparation to be successful with their chosen study options.

WWSE has adopted the self-assessment process and is using it effectively. Records sighted by the evaluation team indicate that self-assessment is well

embedded across the school, has been practised for some years, and allows the organisation to balance innovation with continuity and maintain and grow a vibrant, viable business.

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 **Good**.

2.3 Focus area: General English

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

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

2.4 Focus area: Academic English

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, other than those expressed or implied within the report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses 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 policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.

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).

*Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication *Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review*, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eeer/introduction/>*

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