

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Kiwi English Academy Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 1 August 2014

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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

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| Name of TEO: | Kiwi English Academy Limited (Kiwi English) |
| Type: | Private training establishment (PTE) |
| Location: | 27 Davis Crescent, Newmarket, Auckland |
| Delivery sites: | As above |
| First registered: | 1991 |
| Courses currently delivered: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General English• General English plus Conversation• General English plus IELTS Preparation• General English plus Examination Preparation (TOEIC/Cambridge)• General English plus High School Preparation |
| Code of Practice signatory: | Yes for ages 11-13, 14-17, and 18 years and over |
| Number of students: | Domestic: nil International: numbers vary between 30 and 90 at any one time |
| Number of staff: | 6.2 full-time equivalents, and 3.2 administration full-time equivalents |
| Scope of active accreditation: | http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=885482001 |
| Distinctive characteristics: | Kiwi English provides English language programmes to school-age children (11-17 year- |

olds) and adults (18 years of age and over). The programmes for school-age students are delivered at Auckland Grammar School under a memorandum of understanding (these students are enrolled at Auckland Grammar),, and at Kiwi English for the PTE's own enrolled students under 18 years of age.

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| Recent significant changes: | Three long-serving staff members have recently left, and appropriately qualified and experienced staff have been appointed in their place. |
| Previous quality assurance history: | Kiwi English was most recently quality assured in 2009 by NZQA under the quality audit standard. At that audit, Kiwi English did not meet one requirement of the standard. The requirement not met related to external moderation. More recently, in 2011 national moderation identified that the national standard was met, and in 2012 the national standard was met, but the one mathematics unit standard reviewed required some modification before reuse. Moderation for 2013 showed that Kiwi English met the national standard. |

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

This external evaluation and review (EER) included a review of General English programmes, including International English Language Testing System (IELTS) preparation. In effect, the evaluation included all programmes currently offered.

Governance, management and strategy and international student support were included as mandatory focus areas. Programmes offered at Auckland Grammar School were not included because these students are enrolled with the high school and are reviewed by the Education Review Office (ERO).

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 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.

A team of two evaluators visited for one and one half days at the Kiwi English site in Newmarket, Auckland. The evaluators interviewed the two directors, administration and student support staff, tutors and all students present, and spoke with one agent on site and three external stakeholders by phone. A wide range of the organisation's documents and records were reviewed. These included the electronic database, attendance records, survey data, student progression data, test results, communications to parents of younger students, feedback from past students, international exam results (e.g. IELTS), high school preparation achievement data, student goals, individual learning plans, homestay data, student files and Kiwi English's reviews of how well it complies with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students (Code of Practice), meeting minutes, performance appraisal and professional development data, student handbooks, staff handbooks, and operation manuals.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Kiwi English Academy Ltd.**

- Between 75 and 80 per cent of students progress one English language level at approximately 12-weekly intervals. This progress is benchmarked against the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and is on a par with CEFR descriptors.
- Kiwi English sets high standards (minimum test results of 80 per cent across all skills) for students to move from one level to another.
- A majority of students preparing for the IELTS examination achieve their target score.
- Almost all students stay for the period of study they pay for, and there was no evidence that students move across to other PTEs, indicating they are satisfied with their Kiwi English experience and their progress.
- Kiwi English is collecting a growing body of evidence showing that graduates are achieving outcomes of value, for example moving on to higher education or training such as entry to secondary school in New Zealand, university in New Zealand or in their home country, or gaining employment.
- Students studying for a few weeks show improvement in English language competence and confidence as recorded in teachers' records, student surveys and testimonials.
- Teachers are long-serving, and have appropriate academic and English language teaching qualifications and experience.
- Kiwi English has strong processes to monitor staff performance, including through self-reflection and observations, and professional development is supported by management and is relevant to staff roles.
- Assessment of learning is valid, reliable and consistent, as evidenced by assessment tools being moderated prior to use, and assessment judgements moderated post-assessment.
- Kiwi English provides a high level of support and care for its international students, ensuring they are well-prepared and safe during their study in New Zealand. This includes information prior to and during enrolment as well as during their time of study. This information is provided on the PTE's website, through printed student handbooks, noticeboard information, 24/7

emergency phone contact, visiting support speakers including the New Zealand Police, and first language counsellors on staff.

- The organisation has good processes to monitor educational performance, including initial needs assessment, supporting students to establish goals, and monitoring student progress through individual learning plans.
- The organisation is in the process of implementing further information technology to support students' learning and to provide greater access to interactive electronic learning strategies.
- Kiwi English receives high student satisfaction ratings through student surveys and positive feedback from its stakeholders, including local high schools and agents, as well as from parents and designated caregivers of young students.
- Overall, Kiwi English is providing consistent and reliable, well-established and well-planned and delivered programmes. Students are achieving at a good educational level and are enabled to achieve valued outcomes subsequent to their study.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Kiwi English Academy Limited**.

- The organisation has a range of processes that are consistently applied to monitor and the review how well its programmes are matching students' and other stakeholders' needs, supporting students to achieve and gaining outcomes of value.
- Students and homestays are surveyed regularly. Kiwi English's analysis of these shows a high level of satisfaction from students in the support they receive from homestays.
- Approximately 80 per cent of IELTS graduates share their IELTS examination scores with Kiwi English. This provides the organisation with a strong indicator of their success.
- Staff receive information about graduates' outcomes through various sources, such as unsolicited emails, Facebook posts and face-to-face visits in students' home countries. This information indicates that the students are achieving outcomes of value, for example entry to high schools or universities within New Zealand or in their home country, or gaining employment. Staff said there were 'very few students they did not know about'.
- The managing director leads overseas marketing trips which include staff from other tertiary education organisation and high schools. These trips

provide good networking opportunities with other educational organisations and build strong relationships in overseas markets.

- Kiwi English has comprehensive processes that review its compliance with the Code of Practice, and ensuring the spirit of the code is met. Students are well supported and safe studying in New Zealand.
- Annual programme reviews are regular and show that teachers and management are taking appropriate care to ensure the courses remain relevant, current and meet students' needs.
- Kiwi English is in the process of updating its data management processes to ensure all relevant information is readily available and considered in its self-reviews.

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 **Good**.

Most students, commonly between 75 and 80 per cent, progress through the English language levels in approximately 12-week blocks. The organisation references its programmes and student progress against the CEFR, providing an international benchmark and showing that Kiwi English students' achievements are on a par with this standard. Kiwi English has set high standards for students to meet in order to move from one level to another, with an 80 per cent test mark required across all skills.

Students' progress is monitored through six-weekly tests, and these are appropriately checked to ensure they are fit for purpose prior to use. Students interviewed commented that they received good feedback on their progress during class and following the six-weekly tests.

Kiwi English sets an internal target of 95 per cent for students completing the courses. General English students and high school preparation students exceed this internal benchmark by 4 per cent, and IELTS students all complete their courses. These are very good targets and achievements.

Students' level of satisfaction is surveyed at six-weekly intervals, and the organisation's analysis of these shows a consistently very high level of satisfaction with the teachers and students' own achievements. Nearly all students stay for the full number of weeks they pay for, further indicating that they are satisfied with their experience at Kiwi English.

While students of differing ages enrol, currently the majority of students are young and preparing for entry to high school. School preparation students achieve well. The young students commonly achieve NCEA credits in mathematics, science and English which contributes to their NZQA record of achievement and prepares them well for entry to New Zealand high schools. In 2013 for example, 72 per cent of these students achieved their target English levels. In the same year, 67 per cent of students achieved NCEA, many with merit or excellence. This is a good level of achievement,

Kiwi English is able to track examination results for approximately 80 per cent of its students preparing for IELTS examination. Most of these students achieve their target score, and over the three years 2011-2013 the average IELTS scores have

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

lifted by approximately 0.5 per year from an average of 5.5 in 2011, indicating a good level of improvement over this time.

Kiwi English uses a recognised English language placement test at enrolment to assess students' starting English language levels to establish their starting class level. Students' satisfaction levels are high and indicate that this process is working satisfactorily.

There is a good level of self-assessment data collected and reviewed over time. However, this is held in different formats and places, limiting to some extent the organisation's agility in reviewing and analysis of its educational performance.

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 **Good**.

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

Most student enrolments are for short periods of time, for example from a few weeks to approximately six months. Students gain considerable value in relation to their short periods of study. Kiwi English currently monitors the value of outcomes through a variety of sources, for example unsolicited emails, Facebook posts, and staff meeting graduates in their home country during marketing visits. This information indicates that students are gaining a range of outcomes of value such as entry to high school in New Zealand, and a high level of success completing NCEA, entry to higher tertiary education in New Zealand or overseas, or employment. Currently, this information is not collated in its entirety in a central location, or in a manner that is comprehensive and easily shared, which limits the organisation's ability to track and monitor the extent of the value of outcomes. However, the school has a small roll, 30-90 students at any one time, and staff noted that 'there are very few students we do not know about'. This process is largely fit for purpose for the organisation's current size. However, as noted, it could be more complete or improved.

Most of the younger students enrol for just a few weeks, in order to settle into New Zealand before enrolling in a New Zealand high school. One agent interviewed at this evaluation noted that this process was of high value, allowing students to settle, and start to become familiar with Kiwi routines, food and culture. This was noted by the agent as contributing to students settling well at their high school, compared with other students entering directly into high school who often experience some difficulties.

Kiwi English uses student exit surveys, high school partner surveys, and homestay surveys to monitor students' satisfaction with the academy, and this is supplemented as noted with unsolicited feedback following students' graduation. Feedback from these surveys indicates that students and graduates are very

satisfied with their enrolment with Kiwi English and how this has prepared them for subsequent success at high school or in IELTS examinations.

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 **Good**.

Students' and other stakeholders' needs are very well matched, and Kiwi English is working to extend its practices to continue to match needs. For example, the PTE has been trialling BYOD (bring your own device) in the junior students' maths classes to increase motivation. For lower-level senior students, it was identified that more community engagement would benefit the students, for example real-world English language practice such as visiting banks, shops or the library.

Evidence of student needs being matched by the programme content and activities was evidenced in part through students' achievement rates, as well as consistently high student satisfaction survey ratings. All stakeholders contacted during this evaluation noted that their needs and students' needs are well matched and met.

Kiwi English assesses students' English language levels on entry using a recognised entrance test to place them in appropriate class levels. This process is essentially working well, but the organisation is supplementing these tests with follow-up interviews and individual learning plans for its longer-term students. This is providing additional assurance that students' needs are being matched on an ongoing basis.

Staff interviewed at this evaluation discussed specific student needs being addressed on an individual basis. In one case, this involved accessing specialist learning-needs assessment where this was required. A range of other examples of tailored solutions to meet unique learner needs was also provided.

The organisation's self-assessment processes include surveys and networking opportunities provided through regular international marketing trips, as already noted, providing face-to-face meetings with families and agents. Gaps in self-assessment are as noted, and relate to the collation of data across different formats, which is being reviewed and addressed by the organisation.

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**.

Learning and teaching at Kiwi English, and the ongoing monitoring and reviewing of teaching, are strong. This was evidenced through the organisation's self-assessment processes for staff appointments, staff performance appraisals, provision and support for professional development, programme reviews, monitoring of students' individual learning plans and achievements, and the internal moderation of assessment tools and decisions.

Many staff are long-serving, and teaching staff have appropriate academic and English language teaching qualifications and international experience. These include Master's degrees, CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and teaching diploma qualifications. National external moderation of assessments by NZQA shows that Kiwi English is assessing at the national standard, with occasional modifications required to assessment tools.

The organisation is in the process of completing the alignment of course curricula and tests with CEFR, as an internationally recognised benchmark. This is common across English language PTEs, and adds validity to Kiwi English's internal processes.

Kiwi English uses a range of commercially available English language texts and supplements these with other locally relevant learning materials. The PTE is also exploring the use of information technology-based interactive learning. Management is in the process of upgrading information technology in the classrooms. As noted, junior classes have been trialling BYOD with some success. These strategies are intended to continually innovate and meet the changing needs of students and their expectations for technology-supported learning.

Students' individual learning plans are a key tool used by Kiwi English to support students setting goals and achieving their personal targets. The organisation's self-assessment indicates that this is an effective strategy, and this was confirmed during interviews at this evaluation with students and teachers.

Self-assessment processes are effective and include programme reviews, student surveys, regular student access to counsellors, six-weekly tests and reviews of results, and the informal monitoring of student outcomes, as noted.

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**.

Kiwi English provides comprehensive student-centred pastoral care. Students have easy access to staff members who speak their first language, and where this is not available the organisation has access to first language speakers in the community. Students receive relevant information via the organisation's website about studying and living in New Zealand, and also receive a student handbook.

Student survey results indicate a high level of satisfaction with the support provided, and students interviewed said the best things about Kiwi English are the teachers and the friendly atmosphere. Several students have returned three years in a row for further English language study, further evidencing their satisfaction and appreciation of the support and value they receive.

Staff provide extra support for students such as with their applications to university, or supporting them outside the classroom, for example for shopping or setting up bank accounts. Homestay accommodation is arranged for students who need it. All indications are that homestays are well selected and monitored to ensure students are happy, safe and comfortable.

Kiwi English has visiting speakers to support the students, and the PTE encourages students to engage with the wider community. For example, two 'student ambassadors' are engaged in a mentoring programme run by the New Zealand Police with specific goals around keeping students safe. Previously, the organisation coordinated recreational activities outside of school hours. More recently, with small student numbers, this sort of activity has been provided through commercial operators, but the school still supports students to participate in activities of interest.

Kiwi English has strong processes that monitor how well it continues to meet the requirements of the Code of Practice. This evaluation included interviews with staff responsible for the code, and a document review, which confirmed that staff have a good level of knowledge of the code requirements and that the organisation continues to meet the code. Phone interviews with external stakeholders further confirmed this.

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**.

The organisation has a clear focus on student achievement. Staff are focused on and effective in supporting students to achieve their educational goals. Examples include appropriate teaching and administrative staff appointments, updating the teacher induction manual in 2013, changes to academic counselling schedules from 12 weeks down to six weeks to more closely monitor and track student achievement, and aligning of course curricula with the CEFR.

Kiwi English is a small tertiary education organisation with one owner-director who governs and manages the organisation. It has appropriate documentation, operating manuals, staff appointment procedures and monitoring processes for a private training establishment of its size. As noted, the owners have identified the need to further develop their data management processes, which currently include paper-based and electronic files. This is intended to improve the availability of data and to facilitate its analysis to improve self-assessment processes.

The owner has effective processes to delegate authority and leadership roles to their staff. This provides for continuity, for example when the managing director is overseas on marketing trips. The evaluators observed that staff and management have a very collegial and respectful relationship, with some staff noting that 'this was the best place they had ever worked'.

The organisation uses a combination of self-assessment practices that are informal as well as structured, and are appropriate for a small private training establishment. There is an open working environment and culture where staff and management frequently meet and discuss issues, identifying areas for improvement or change, as noted. This also facilitates quick responses to any issues or concerns that arise. The owners continually identify areas where they can improve educational resources and systems to better support student achievement.

While current student numbers are low, limiting to some extent the ability to acquire further teaching resources such as information technology upgrades, the organisation has reviewed and is aware of where it needs to grow and develop to continue to meet students' and other stakeholders' needs. Significant recent investment has occurred to upgrade and modernise infrastructure in the student areas.

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 programmes including IELTS

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Kiwi English:

- Investigate how it might further track students' 'distance travelled', for example; gains in English language capability and confidence to use it, or improvements reflected in students' IELTS examination scores.
- Integrate or combine the various self-assessment strands for more effective use by all staff.

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/>.

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz

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