

London Bunka Yochien School

307a Horn Lane, Acton, London, W3 0BP

Inspection dates 14–16 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate	4
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings

This school is inadequate because

- The school has not taken all the measures necessary to ensure that pupils are properly safeguarded.
- Managers do not understand the full requirements of the independent school regulations related to pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- Managers also do not understand government requirements to ensure rigorous recruitment procedures.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' academic achievement and personal development are good and the quality of teaching and the curriculum are also good. Some teaching is outstanding in quality.
- The school is a happy place. Pupils enjoy coming to school and they are keen to learn.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

- The school was given one day's notice of inspection. The inspector was accompanied by a translator.
- The full programme of activities for pupils was observed over two days. Pupils were heard reading in Japanese with the translator present. School documents were scrutinised, including the single central register.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and conversations were held with other members of staff including one part-time teacher. Brief conversations were also held with visiting work experience students.
- No staff returned questionnaires and there were no responses from parents and carers on Ofsted's Parent View website.

Inspection team

Paul Armitage, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The London Bunka Yochien School was founded in 1996. The yochien (kindergarten) is located in a single storey, wooden building in Acton, West London. The school rents the building from a company which, in turn rents the land from a national rail company. Outside school hours, the building is used by a sports and social club. The school uses the club's playing field for games and physical education (PE).
- The school moved to its present location about two years ago.
- The school is registered for up to 25 boys and girls aged from three to six years of age. There are currently 15 pupils on roll. Most pupils are from families who are based in London for relatively short periods of time. Most pupils spend two years at the school.
- The school follows the Japanese curriculum for all age groups. Pupils are mostly taught in Japanese, but there is some teaching in English.
- The school does not make use of additional provision outside school.
- There are three full-time teachers who are long-term residents in the United Kingdom; only two of them were present during the inspection. There is no governing body.
- The school was last inspected in April 2010 when it was found to be satisfactory overall.
- The Department for Education has requested that this inspection should assess whether a material change can be recommended. The school has made a material change by moving to its present location.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

The school must meet the following independent school standards.

- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that the arrangements follow the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. In particular:
 - ensure that the format of the single central register allows all the required information to be recorded
 - ensure that the person making each entry on the register initials and dates the entry
 - ensure that the staff personnel files contain the evidence supporting the entries in the register and ensure that the files contain all the information required to confirm that the school has followed the government's guidance set out in chapters three and four of *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education*
 - ensure that all persons having regular contact with pupils have been checked, have the information in their personnel files that supports their entries in the register and that their checked, personal details are recorded in the register
 - ensure that the Designated Person for safeguarding has done the required training at the required level and frequency
 - ensure that all other staff have been trained in safeguarding at the required level and frequency (paragraphs 7, 19(2)(a) to 19(2)(c); 19(3); and 22(3)).
- Ensure that:
 - pupils cannot gain access to the area behind the bar
 - arrangements are made to secure the safety of pupils and others walking down the drive to the school (paragraphs 11 and 23(c)).
- Ensure that there is a policy and procedure for ensuring good quality risk assessments for educational visits (paragraph 11).
- Ensure that suitable accommodation is provided for pupils who are ill and those requiring

medical examination and treatment (paragraphs 23B(1)(a) and 23B(1)(b)).

- Ensure that the school's policy and procedure for undertaking risk assessments on educational visits is made available to parents (paragraph 24(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Pupils' achievement is good overall because of good teaching and the good curriculum. Reflecting the focus of the Japanese curriculum on language rather than literacy, pupils listen attentively and enjoy communicating orally. They are able to express their thoughts well, making good progress and enjoying various ways of expression. They have a good understanding of the words used in everyday life and some pupils go well beyond this by understanding and using more unfamiliar words. This knowledge of vocabulary as well as grammar helps considerably with their reading. The fluency with which pupils read varies, as does the difficulty of the texts they choose but, overall, their skills are developing well and the standard of reading is good. Writing is given very little emphasis in the Japanese curriculum for kindergartens; none was seen during the inspection and no judgement is possible.

Despite the lack of emphasis on numeracy in the curriculum, pupils are very skilled at mental arithmetic, which is used as a start-of-day activity to ensure pupils' alertness. Pupils can manipulate relatively simple numbers well and can also express them in different ways, such as 'second' and 'eleventh'. Pupils' physical development is good. Pupils use equipment in the playground well and play games on the field with enthusiasm and skill. They know what is safe to do physically and what is not. Pupils generally begin school with no English, but they make good progress. They have a good, developing vocabulary and many have sufficient grammar to construct simple sentences with meaning and emphasis when spoken.

Outstanding achievement was seen in a lesson in language when older pupils 'played' an ancient game called '*Hyakun Isshu*'. Pupils carefully listened to excerpts from a traditional New Year poem, read very fast by the teacher; they then demonstrated understanding by selecting from about 100 cards the one that gave the intended meaning of the excerpts. There was also outstanding achievement in the ballet dancing performed by three younger pupils, and in art and design and technology, where pupils of all ages expressed their own ideas in origami and in drawing and crayoning. Pupils were able to explain the thinking behind what they had done and the content of their work reflected subtle understanding.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

The quality of pupils' personal development is good. Using the language of the Japanese curriculum, they can be said to 'enjoy life'. It is clear that they find lessons and other activities fun. Their attitudes are very positive and they create their own learning opportunities within the parameters set by the teachers. A good example of this is the way they use their free time before school starts and during playtime.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The Japanese curriculum aims to cultivate sensitivities and aesthetic appreciation, broadly in line with the English regulatory requirement, to promote pupils' spiritual and moral development. Strong evidence of good and outstanding aesthetic development was seen in work on poetry, language exploring proverbs, singing in assembly, dancing and art. Evidence of good moral development was seen in the way teachers emphasised the importance of fairness, for example in reconciling a quarrel over a toy. They also recognise the need to look after their environment by meticulous tidying up after an activity.

Social development is good. Pupils get on well together; they are respectful of each other and their teachers. They cooperate well in group work and recognise each other's space in boisterous activities such as physical education. The Japanese curriculum speaks of 'manners' rather than behaviour, but both are good. Pupils listen to each other and ask each other for their opinions, for example about the quality of their work or the content of a book. There is no evidence of bullying.

The development of cultural understanding is good. The school uses a calendar of festivals to recognise and explain Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and other religious festivals. Visits have been made to a number of local places to improve pupils' understanding of the United Kingdom. These have included a trip to a local farm and a visit to central London to attend a festival. Pupils learn the flags of different countries and they are given the chance to talk about visits they have made to places such as Paris. None of the material presented to pupils is politically biased.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good. Classes are small and teachers know their pupils very well. They have a good idea of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and enable pupils to achieve well.

For the most part, teachers are able to respond very quickly to provide the help that pupils need to progress. When pupils are taught in ability groups the teaching is very effective, offering pace, challenge and the opportunity for pupils to think for themselves and make choices within the work set by the teacher. When all the pupils are taught together, for example in mental arithmetic and English lessons, this is not so evident. The teaching and the content were not always well suited to the youngest pupils, although they do learn, in part, by listening carefully to, and repeating, older pupils' responses.

The assessment of pupils' work is rigorous and the information from assessments is used by teachers to inform their teaching, particularly of suitable ability groups. The school assesses standards achieved against criteria set by the Japanese curriculum and results are recorded on forms for each pupil. The emphasis of the assessment is on the performance of individual pupils. No attempt is made to collate the information and measure success against that of others in Japan.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The quality of the curriculum is good. It follows Japanese kindergarten education guidelines for pupils aged three to six and enables pupils to make good progress. The overall theme, expressed in the words of a translation of the guidelines, is 'to understand the nature of children and to educate them through their environment'.

There are five learning goals that are successfully woven through what the school provides. The first is health and well-being and covers such themes as exercise, keeping neat and tidy, knowing what is safe and getting used to and enjoying activities. The second goal is relationships. Themes include taking the initiative in making friends, thinking and acting independently, sharing feelings with friends, and knowing the difference between polite and impolite behaviour. The third goal is the environment which includes being familiar with the local environment, cherishing it and making it part of one's own life. This includes being interested in local facilities and their use. The fourth goal is language which focuses on oral delivery and includes listening to others and talking to them so that they understand. The final goal is expression and is about the development of sensitivities and creativity including music, singing, shapes and textures.

This curriculum works very well for the pupils. It is well planned and successful in meeting their needs and is a good basis for ensuring pupils' continuing improvement in standards.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety**Inadequate**

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate overall, for a number of reasons. There is a single central register, but the entries have not been initialled and dated. The register does not provide for the recording of right to work and overseas checks information. Two part-time teachers have not been entered on the register. The personnel files supporting the register do not contain all the information stated in government guidance on safer recruitment and their content varies between staff. There is no personnel file and no supporting information on the two part-time teachers, with no evidence of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Although all teachers have undertaken the local authority's safeguarding training, for one of the staff this is out of date. The Designated Person undertook training in 2012, but it was not at the right level. The Designated Person has now applied for a place on an appropriate local authority course. The school's bus driver has not been trained in safeguarding. The driver has a security check but there is very little information in the supporting personnel file about the driver, in particular, no references. There is no evidence that the part-time teachers have been trained in safeguarding.

The school has all the required policies including those for behaviour, anti-bullying, and first aid. The safeguarding policy makes clear the procedures for reporting to the local authority. Pupils are properly supervised. There is provision for recording sanctions, and admission and attendance registers are properly maintained using a Japanese format. Fire and electrical checks are properly undertaken by outside contractors. Staff have received first aid training including paediatric care. There is a health and safety policy and staff undertake regular risk assessments in the school building, with the findings recorded. However, one risk which has not been properly assessed and acted upon concerns the location in the main school room of the social club's bar: it would be possible, if supervision failed, for a pupil to gain access to alcohol either by using the door, which was not locked at the time of the inspection, or by climbing over the bar using a chair. Access to the school by a secluded, lengthy driveway is also a concern.

There are no school procedures for assessing risks on visits.

Healthy living is encouraged. One teacher spoke of how the school's bicycles strengthen pupils' limbs. The food eaten by pupils is of very high quality, with a good balance of protein and carbohydrate. Pupils bring their own water to drink.

Leadership and management**Inadequate**

The quality of leadership and management is inadequate overall. This is because of the inadequate welfare, health and safety arrangements in the school. Although the headteacher has worked hard with others to try to understand the regulations and has, for instance, produced a newly collated set of policies, there remain some misunderstandings and a failure to implement government regulations and guidance on welfare properly. In some instances, language has proved to be a barrier. Consequently, during the inspection, it was necessary to download relevant documents relating to the regulations, the safeguarding of children and the safer recruitment of staff, and then to explain them through the interpreter.

In contrast, guided by the Japanese curriculum, the school's management has ensured that pupils' achievement, their personal development and the quality of teaching are good. It has ensured that there are also examples of outstanding teaching and learning. Managers have established a warm and welcoming environment in which to learn, staffed with enthusiastic teachers who support and suitably challenge the pupils to achieve good, and sometimes outstanding, outcomes. They provide an interesting, well-planned curriculum and employ teaching methods which ensure pupils learn and have fun. The rigorous assessment system supports well the delivery of a curriculum and teaching that, for the most part, are well suited to the learning needs of the pupils. There is no development plan and self-evaluation of the education provided is informal in that there is no

formal evaluative process. However, the headteacher is fully aware of what works well in teaching and learning and reacts quickly to emerging needs.

Apart from the concerns raised earlier regarding the social club bar and the drive and a lack of suitable facilities for pupils who are ill, the remaining accommodation is good. The main teaching room is spacious and offers opportunities for many different learning activities including PE. It is pleasantly decorated. There is a second smaller room with independent access. The door to this is kept locked. In front of the school there is a play area, car park and then the sports club's very useful playing field.

After minor amendments were made during the inspection, the complaints procedure meets requirements and all but one of the regulations concerning the information supplied to parents and carers meet requirements.

Using the Japanese kindergarten curriculum, the school teaches pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, it has not asked the Department for Education to allow it to be exempt from the English Early Years Foundation Stage statutory curriculum.

It is recommended to the Department for Education that the material change should not be accepted because of the significant welfare failures, including problems with the premises and accommodation. In addition, it is recommended to the Department that there should be a check with the local authority whether running a school in licensed premises is permissible and appropriate.

The proprietor has failed to ensure that all the independent school regulations are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	131755
Inspection number	422733
DfE registration number	307/6079

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Japanese Kindergarten
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	3–6 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	London Bunka Yochien Ltd
Headteacher	Mrs Yukimi Asato
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 April 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,940
Telephone number	0208 992 9822
Fax number	0208 992 4209
Email address	home@londonbunka.com

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