

The Japanese School

87 Creffield Road, Acton, London, W3 9PU

Inspection dates 30 September–2 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management	Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings

This is a school that requires improvement.

- The quality of teaching across the curriculum does not always allow pupils to make consistently good progress in lessons.
- While senior leaders carry out formal checks on teaching, this action has not yet resulted in consistently good teaching throughout the school.
- Pupils have too few opportunities develop their speaking and listening skills in interactions with the teacher and with each other.
- In discussion, senior pupils reported that they would like more challenge and to be more active in lessons.
- Information from assessments is not always used well to plan lessons to meet the needs of different groups of children.
- Teaching staff have no opportunities for sufficient further training to meet their needs.
- The senior leaders and governors do too little to promote the development and improvement of the school.

The school has the following strengths:

- The school is orderly and, as a result, the behaviour of the pupils is good in lessons and around the school.
- Some teaching is good and pupils make good progress in some lessons.
- Pupils say they mostly enjoy school, feel safe and enjoy many lessons. In discussion, parents and carers agree that their children are safe and well looked after.
- The pupils are safe in this school because senior leaders have ensured all regulatory requirements for welfare, health and safety are met.
- The provision for outdoor play and physical education is good.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets 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.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was unannounced as the school was closed the day it was due to have the call before the inspection. There was no response to telephone calls or emails sent.
- The inspectors observed lessons and looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning and information about pupils' progress.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teaching staff and parents and carers.
- School policies and other documentation were examined.
- The inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers through discussions. No staff questionnaires were produced.
- There were too few responses to the online Parent View questionnaire for these to be published.

Inspection team

Flora Bean, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Zahid Aziz	Additional Inspector
Susan Rogers	Additional Inspector
Roger Garrett	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Japanese School, located in West London, opened in 1976 as an independent, mixed primary and secondary day school for pupils from six to 15 years of age.
- The school aims to educate pupils to be independent citizens of the world, Japan and Britain, with broad minds and skills to live robustly and with humanity.
- It is a Japanese-speaking school that follows the Japanese National Curriculum. The school is part of a worldwide network of Japanese schools. It receives financial support for staffing and other subsidies from the Japanese government.
- The school was created to provide for the children of expatriates on secondment from their companies in Japan so that they can have a continuous Japanese education. All of the children return to Japan when the family secondment is complete.
- The majority of the staff, including the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, are seconded from Japan for a period of time between two and four years to work in the school. Staff employed for the teaching of English conversation are recruited locally. The 'secretary' who holds the role of bursar and school manager is the sole permanent member of the senior management team and board of governors.
- Proprietors representing the companies in Japan who own the school and board members of the school change according to who is living in the United Kingdom at the time.
- Each year, over a third of pupils leave the school and a similar number of pupils join the school.
- There are currently 430 pupils on roll.
- No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has no religious affiliation.
- The school was previously inspected in June 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the teaching in order to raise levels of achievement, especially in the senior school, by:
 - ensuring teachers make better use of information from assessments to plan lessons which better meet the needs of all groups of pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in interactions with the teacher and with each other
 - ensuring that teachers check pupils' progress and understanding during lessons
 - ensuring teachers' marking provides comments so pupils know how to improve their work.
- Improve the impact of the proprietor, board members and senior leadership of the school by:
 - providing opportunities for training for teachers to improve the quality of teaching
 - ensuring governors are more involved in bring about improvements to the school
 - providing a better induction for new senior leaders so they understand the requirements and responsibilities of their new roles in England
 - providing further training for senior leaders so that they improve the quality of the teaching
 - seeking more stability in staffing to bring about and sustain improvements.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management require improvement

- Although the headteacher and senior leaders have high expectations for the behaviour and safety of pupils, the quality of teaching is not managed as well as it might be. The regular changes in senior leadership, with the exception of the 'secretary' who is responsible for the bursary and operations, limit the ongoing development of the school and improvements in teaching and learning. There is too little induction training for new senior leaders when they arrive from Japan to work at the school. Senior leaders would benefit from further training so that they can improve the quality of teaching.
- Planning to bring about improvements, including in the quality of teaching, is undeveloped. Teachers have too few opportunities for further training to meet their needs and to improve the quality of their work. Although leaders make checks on the quality of teaching this action has not yet led to consistently good teaching across all subjects. The high turnover of English speaking staff also hinders the process of making ongoing improvements in the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum is well planned in line with the Japanese curriculum and covers an appropriate range of subjects for all the key areas of learning, including for literacy and numeracy and additional English lessons. It includes planning for personal, social and health education.
- The safety of the pupils is a priority and the school meets the statutory requirements for the welfare and safeguarding of pupils. All of the regulatory requirements are met. All health and safety policies and procedures are in place and are effectively implemented.
- Senior leaders ensure that teaching promotes respect and tolerance for all, along with equality and harmony, in keeping with the aims and ethos of the school and regulatory requirements. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is suitably and actively promoted.
- Assessment procedures include end-of-term tests and results are suitably recorded and analysed but the information gained is not always used well by teaching staff to inform the planning of learning.
- The school refurbishes the premises as required but the learning environment is not appealing or stimulating. For example, there are few displays in classrooms to enhance learning. The outdoor play and physical education provision is good.
- There is limited support for some pupils with learning difficulties, such as the provision of one-to-one teaching, to help pupils who find learning more difficult to make good progress.
- The school provides appropriate times for parents and carers to meet teaching staff and for termly parents' meetings. Parents and carers receive regular reports on the progress of their children.
- **The governance of the school:**

The board of governors meet monthly with the headteacher and senior leaders. Minutes of meetings show their support for the school and the safety of its pupils but there is little evidence of discussions about ways to develop and improve the school. Governors have limited close involvement in the work of the school. Checks on safeguarding procedures are carried out appropriately by the 'secretary' on behalf of the board. Proprietors and board members attend special events such as culture day and graduation day. The school's financial resources are suitably managed by the 'secretary'.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is the case in lessons and throughout the school. From the junior school through to Year 9, pupils demonstrate high levels of respect and consideration towards each other. They have positive attitudes to learning and listen well. There is little disruption in lessons. Pupils work well and achieve well when given good opportunities to do so.

Safety

- All the safeguarding and welfare requirements meet statutory requirements. The school has robust systems in place for the premises to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils at all times.
- Pupils are keen to learn. Across the school pupils demonstrate increasing levels of social and personal skills. In physical education and at playtimes they play well together and ensure new pupils join in and can easily make new friends.
- Parents and carers report that their children are well looked after and are safe in school. They say that their children enjoy coming to school and settled in well when they are new to England and to the school. Teachers work hard to ensure that all pupils integrate quickly and feel accepted. With a large turnover of pupils, staff ensure they show respect towards each other.

- Pupils say that they mostly enjoy school. They take part in a suitable range of activities, trips and visits and regularly go out for games and for physical education. In some lessons they say that they would like more challenge and more interaction with the teacher.
- Pupils say there are rarely instances of bullying and that teachers deal with any problems should they occur. This reflects the school's effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they are safe at school and are learning about staying safe both in and out of school and when using computers.
- Pupils gain a good understanding of British values and institutions, including the values of democracy and the rule of law and of different faiths, for example, through educational visits. All pupils have increasing opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness in preparation for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement as it is not consistently ensuring that pupils make the good progress they could. For example, some teachers fail to regularly check pupils' understanding and progress during lessons and then adapt the work when necessary.
- The majority of the teaching is conducted in Japanese to meet the requirements of the Japanese National Curriculum. In some lessons pupils have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and they enjoy actively participating in their learning which they say helps them to make good progress. However, this is not regular practice. For example, they have too few opportunities to ask questions, especially in the senior school. In some lessons work is not always at the right level or with suitable challenge for pupils with different levels of ability.
- Pupils have additional smaller group classes in English with locally recruited English staff. However, pupils make varying progress in English when the learning is not well planned by making effective use of information from assessments to meet pupils' varying needs. In the best lessons good planning and suitable activities ensure pupils make good progress, for example, with the use of interactive linguistic team games. Weaker planning in some lessons results in a lack of motivation and more limited learning or progress.
- Most teachers have high expectations for their pupils and expect high standards of behaviour. Teachers ensure that junior pupils have good opportunities to play and to develop good social, physical and creative skills. Although the school has two computer rooms and up-to-date technology, in the senior school teachers do not take enough advantage of these facilities to promote pupils' technological skills to aid their learning.
- The quantity of written work produced is variable. Work is marked but not always marked well and there are few comments from teachers to help pupils know how to improve in their work.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The overall achievement of pupils requires improvement. Senior leaders and teachers have high expectations for pupils. However, leaders do not ensure that teaching enables pupils to do consistently well and so reach these high expectations.
- Pupils join the school with knowledge and skills that are mostly at the expected levels or above expectations for their age. They settle well into school.
- In the junior school pupils' work in literacy and numeracy shows that they often make good progress. Pupils are eager to learn and work well. The school provides some support for pupils who find learning more difficult and identified pupils often make good progress from their starting points. The majority of pupils read well in Japanese. In English the majority are making good progress. Pupils have good opportunities for music, art and physical education to develop age-appropriate artistic, creative and physical skills.
- In the senior school progress is slower across subjects; their progress is not regularly checked in class. In English lessons and in conversation classes progress is too slow. Pupils do not make the progress they could because teaching does not challenge pupils well enough in English lessons. They do not have enough opportunities to develop their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.
- In the senior school especially, information from assessments is not used well enough to plan learning. Work is not always marked with helpful comments so pupils know how to improve their work.
- By the end of Year 9 progress in English and mathematics and across all key subjects is too variable. Pupils in the senior school with special educational needs make varying levels of progress because they are not well enough supported.
- Pupils throughout the school have limited access to information and communication technology.

- Pupils make good progress in music, art and physical education as a result of the school's emphasis and good provision.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement
	Grade 1	Outstanding
	Grade 2	Good
	Grade 3	Requires improvement
	Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	101958
Inspection number	447186
DfE registration number	307/6070

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted 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	Day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6–15 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	430
Proprietor	The Japanese School Ltd
Chair	Mr Shoji Nakano
Headteacher	Mr Ryuichi Hirokawa
Date of previous school inspection	June 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,980
Telephone number	020 8993 7145
Email address	sugano-s@thejapaneseschool.ltd.uk

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