

The Japanese School

87 Creffield Road, Acton, London W3 9PU

Inspection dates

4–6 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The proprietors and governors have insufficient understanding of the independent school standards to ensure that they are consistently met.
- Leaders and governors have not been rigorous enough in evaluating the school's effectiveness to identify its strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders do not ensure that staff routinely receive training on safeguarding and that the safeguarding policy is updated according to the current government requirements.
- Leaders do not provide teachers with sufficient training opportunities to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further.
- There is insufficient support for a small number of pupils who sometimes find the work too challenging, particularly in mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching is good and pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' attainment in the Japanese national curriculum is above average in all subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and their personal development and welfare is good.
- There is a range of extra-curricular activities, including sporting activities, to keep pupils physically active.
- Parents are supportive of the school's leadership and said that their children are safe, happy and well cared for.
- Pupils said they feel safe and enjoy coming to school. As a result, their attendance is high.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the proprietors and governors have a secure understanding of the independent school standards to ensure that they are consistently met
 - the school evaluates its strengths and weaknesses effectively to bring about improvements
 - staff routinely receive training on safeguarding and that the safeguarding policy is updated to take into account the current government guidance
 - teachers are provided with sufficient training opportunities to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further
 - there is additional support for a small number of pupils who sometimes find the work too challenging, particularly in mathematics.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietors must ensure that the quality of education provided on personal, social, health and economic education encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act (paragraph 2(2), 2(2)(d) and 2(2)(d)(ii)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the school complies with the standard about pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by ensuring that principles are actively promoted which encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act (paragraph 5, 5(b) and 5(b)(vi)).
- The proprietors must ensure that the school's safeguarding policy is updated and have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7, 7(b)).
- The proprietors must ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy (paragraph 11).
- The proprietors must ensure that appropriate checks are carried out and completed on the suitability of staff:
 - to confirm in respect of each person's medical fitness (paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(ii))
 - before a person's appointment (paragraph 18(3)).
- The proprietors must ensure that:
 - suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(c))
 - toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have

an adequate supply of hot and cold water (paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(b))

- cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked as such (paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c)).
- The proprietors must ensure that the written formal procedure on the manner in which complaints are handled where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietors and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 33, 33(f)).
- The proprietors must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a))
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(b)).
- The proprietors must ensure that arrangements are made to fulfil duties under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership over time has not been effective in ensuring that the independent school standards are consistently met. This is because leaders, including governors and proprietors, have insecure understanding of the independent school standards.
- Leaders do not have checks in place to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses. Improvement plans are, therefore, not sharp enough to address areas of weaknesses, including those identified in the previous inspection, to bring about improvements.
- The frequent changes in senior leadership, including the headteacher and staff, affects continuity, consistency and school improvement. New leaders and staff receive insufficient induction training when they join the school from Japan. For example, the recently appointed senior leaders have limited understanding of the independent school standards.
- The curriculum is based on the Japanese national curriculum, covering a wide range of subjects and promoting skills in numeracy, literacy, speaking and listening. There are numerous extra-curricular activities, including sporting activities to keep pupils physically active. Moral education provides pupils with opportunities to discuss issues to do with health, mental health, keeping safe and respect. Pupils participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical and cultural activities. The broad and balanced curriculum is enriched by school journeys and exchange visits to and from schools, including Spanish, French and German schools. Pupils have opportunities to improve their English through conversational classes taken by English-speaking staff. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.
- Although pupils are encouraged to respect people from other backgrounds, they have limited opportunities to learn in depth about some of the equality and diversity issues highlighted in the Equality Act 2010. These include, in particular, gender and race equality, sexuality issues and the religious diversity represented in modern Britain.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is promoted well through learning about elections, parliament and the rule of law.
- Although leaders ensure that pupils' welfare, health and safety are promoted well through the school's vision and aims on developing pupils' 'physical health' and 'providing a safe and hygienic educational environment', there is no specific written policy on health and safety.
- Leaders ensure that all the fire safety checks and risk assessments are carried out, including fire-extinguisher tests. There are emergency procedures, fire alerts and fire drills in place.
- Although the school has a 'safeguarding, welfare and child protection policy' available for parents, leaders have not updated the safeguarding policy by taking into account the current government requirements. Staff have received training on safeguarding, but this training is not regularly updated.

- The headteacher and senior leaders have high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. Pupils are assessed frequently with end-of-term tests, in line with the requirement of the Japanese national curriculum. This helps teachers in planning and to ensure that pupils achieve well. However, there is insufficient additional support for a small number of pupils who occasionally find work too challenging, particularly in mathematics, to ensure that they consistently make the same good progress as their classmates.
- The headteacher, and sometimes the deputy headteacher, monitor the quality of teaching and provide feedback to teachers to support improvement. Teachers' objectives for improvement are closely linked to the Japanese national curriculum. However, teachers, including English speaking staff, have insufficient training opportunities to continually improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The school has good links with parents and carers and the headteacher typically meets parents and children at the start of the school day. Parents are kept informed about their child's progress through regular reports and termly parents' meetings with teachers. There are also regular newsletters informing parents of various events and pupils' achievement.
- All parents that responded to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and those who spoke to the inspectors were supportive of the school's leadership.
- At the school's previous full inspection in October 2014, leaders, including governors, were effective in meeting all of the independent school standards. However, leaders have not ensured that all of the standards continue to be met. The unmet standards are not such as to have had a negative impact on pupils' welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development, including the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Governance

- Governors and trustees have not ensured that the school continues to meet all the independent school standards.
- Governors and trustees have not worked with senior leaders closely enough to evaluate the effectiveness of the school. For example, they have not challenged senior leaders sufficiently to ensure that the areas for development from the previous inspection are effectively addressed.
- Governors and trustees have not ensured that there is smooth transition for new senior leaders coming into the school from Japan and that all the policies are kept updated.
- Governors and trustees meet the headteacher, senior leaders and the 'secretary' regularly. The 'secretary' works closely with the headteacher and on the day-to-day running of the school and manages financial resources well on behalf of the governors and trustees.
- The main focus of the governing body meetings is to do with management of financial resources, the building and pupils' achievement. Governors and trustees demonstrate

high expectations of pupils' outcomes in the Japanese national curriculum.

- Governors and trustees attend the school festivals, graduation day and other special events.

Safeguarding

- Although there are particulars in the independent school standards relating to the safeguarding policy and staff training that are unmet, the school's practical arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff ensure that pupils are well cared for and kept safe. Staff know how to spot signs of abuse and procedures for reporting if they have any concerns about a child's safety. Staff have had training based on the school's policy on 'safeguarding, welfare and child protection'. Leaders are planning further training with an update of the safeguarding policy in line with the current government guidance, particularly in relation to 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016).
- Leaders ensure that there are good links with parents and local authority designated officers to keep pupils safe. There are no current concerns from the local authority on the safety of pupils at the school.
- All staff are vetted to make sure that they are suitable to work with children.
- The parents that the inspectors met had no safeguarding concerns and stated that their children are well cared for and kept safe by the school.
- All parents responding to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, stated that their children feel safe, happy and well looked after at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders monitor the teaching frequently and provide feedback to teachers on how to improve. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- A strong feature of learning in lessons is the very positive relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff, based on mutual respect. As a result, pupils are motivated and keen to contribute, and apply themselves in lessons.
- Pupils' work is assessed regularly so that teachers know how well they are achieving and use this information to plan learning and address any gaps in understanding. In lessons, teachers check pupils' progress to pick up any misconceptions. Teachers ensure that no learning time is lost.
- Teachers use questioning well to test and extend pupils' understanding. This, together with the feedback that pupils receive on their work from teachers, help them to make progress and improve their work.
- The most able pupils are challenged well and provided with tasks that extend their thinking. The most able pupils are encouraged to help their classmates when they have

completed their tasks. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson, some of the most able pupils who finished their work supported other pupils who found some of the calculations too challenging.

- The teaching of mathematics is strong. Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and set pupils work that is typically challenging. Pupils use their thinking and reasoning skills well to solve a range of mathematical problems. Pupils are keen to use the classroom blackboard to write and explain to others the steps involved in their calculations.
- The teaching of music is a strength. For example, in a Year 5 class, the specialist music teacher used her expertise extremely well to engage pupils and to improve their skills in playing a range of musical instruments. Pupils successfully used recorders, xylophones and tambourines to follow the musical notes that the teacher played on the piano.
- Effective science teaching gives pupils plenty of opportunities for practical experiment. For example, Year 5 pupils made progress with their understanding of how food travels in plants by placing a plant in a dye. A day later, they dissected the stem to see how the dye has travelled up the plant. Pupils followed safety instructions carefully when using a craft knife to cut the stems.
- Teachers make effective use of new technology. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson, pupils used electronic devices and dictionaries to write poetry and to extend their vocabulary and deepen their understanding of poetic language.
- Pupils are encouraged to be involved in debates. For example, in a Year 7 lesson on morality, pupils discussed 'what is education?' after watching a video clip of speeches, including from Malala, at the United Nations. Pupils used a wide range of resources, including newspaper cuttings, video clips and booklets in both English and Japanese, to present their ideas.
- Pupils' work is well presented and they take pride in what they do. Pupils are eager to help and share their learning with each other. They have exceptional attitudes to their work and display a thirst for learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, including high standards of behaviour.
- Homework is set regularly, in line with the school's policy, and builds on pupils' work in class.
- Leaders know that displays in the some of the corridors and classrooms could be improved, particularly in the way they are presented, so that they are more engaging for pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have exceptional attitudes to work. Pupils present their work well and are proud of their school.

- Pupils are resilient and confident learners. Their exceptional attitudes to learning have a strong impact on their progress. They show high levels of concentration.
- Older pupils help younger pupils with their work, listen to them read and lead the singing session before registration. In lessons, some pupils help their classmates with their work when they have completed their own tasks.
- Pupils enjoy a range of responsibilities they are given; these include, for example, being members of the elected school council, library monitors and looking after resources. Pupils are also timetabled to clean their own classrooms and to ensure that there is no litter in classrooms or around the school.
- Staff help pupils to settle in quickly and integrate well with each other when they first arrive at the school from Japan. This helps pupils to learn the routines quickly so that they are ready for learning.
- Pupils said that they always feel safe at school and that if they have any concerns they would tell a member of the staff, and trust them to listen to and act on their concerns. Pupils know about road and fire safety. A majority of pupils, particularly the older pupils, know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Parents are very positive about how safe their children are at school.
- Pupils know that bullying can take different forms, but they do not see as an issue for the school. They recognise the importance of healthy eating and keeping fit. Pupils' participation in sporting activities is high. For example, the gym is packed with pupils doing various sporting activities in the morning before the start of the school. Many pupils regularly attend a range of after-school sport clubs.
- Pupils learn about respecting others, including those from different cultural backgrounds. However, pupils' understanding of the different religions represented in Britain is limited.
- The school's values of developing pupils' independence, promoting 'richness and strength of spirit' and enabling pupils to 'live in global society', contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are rich opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they are learning and think more deeply about life.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and behave impeccably in lessons and throughout the school. Pupils are highly considerate and respectful to each other. They show extremely good manners to visitors and greet them warmly to the school.
- Expectations of how everyone should behave are high and are understood by pupils.
- Pupils say that behaviour is always good and that incidents of poor behaviour are rare. This is backed up by the very few incidents of poor behaviour or bullying recorded by the school. There are no cases of exclusions or records of any discrimination.
- Although some pupils have to travel a long distance to the school, their punctuality is good. Pupils love coming to school and their attendance is high.

- All parents responding to the Parent View and all those that spoke to inspectors agree that pupils' behaviour is good and that their child is safe, happy and well looked after. All the staff who responded to the staff questionnaire agreed that pupils' behaviour is good.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders and staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' outcomes. Improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment ensure that pupils make good progress throughout the school and in a range of subjects across the curriculum.
- The school's information and pupils' work in their books show that pupils in the junior and senior school make good progress in English, Japanese, mathematics and all other subjects. Pupils' progress is monitored regularly and their end-of-year results in the Japanese national curriculum are high.
- Pupils read well in Japanese and they are provided with a range of challenging texts to strengthen their reading. Pupils' progress in reading in Japanese is strong across the school and they attain well above the level that is expected for their age.
- Pupils in the junior and senior school make good progress in Japanese writing. Pupils show resilience in their writing and they present their work well. They enjoy Japanese calligraphy, which is evident in the display work on the classroom walls. Pupils' attainment in Japanese writing in the junior and senior school is well above the Japanese national average.
- In English, readers in Years 7 and 8 used their phonics skills well to read unfamiliar and difficult words in English. While their reading ages in English are overall below those that are typical for their age, they are making good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. Pupils apply their mathematical skills and knowledge well in a range of challenging and problem-solving activities. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is strong and above the Japanese national average across the school.
- The most able pupils achieve highly across the subjects. They respond exceptionally well to challenging work and additional tasks to help them think more deeply about their learning.
- In conversational classes in English, pupils make good progress overall with their speaking and listening skills. However, sometimes pupils find the reading too challenging and are not always secure with the meaning of the text.
- Overall, pupils make good progress in their academic and personal development. This prepares them well for the next stage in their education.

School details

Unique reference number	101958
DfE registration number	307/6070
Inspection number	10034364

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 15
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	356
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Japanese School Ltd
Chair	Kazuo Abe
Headteacher	Tsuyoshi Nerome
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,040
Telephone number	020 8993 7145
Website	www.thejapaneseschool.ltd.uk
Email address	ron-nichi@thejapaneseschool.ltd.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 September–2 October 2014

Information about this school

- The Japanese School opened in 1976 as an independent, mixed primary and secondary day school for pupils from six to 15 years of age. The school moved to its current premises in Acton, West London, in April 1987. The school is one of the largest Japanese schools in Europe.
- 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.
- There is a high turnover of the school population. The majority of the staff, including the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, are seconded from Japan for a period of time of between two and three 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 no subject leaders.
- No pupils attend off-site provision.
- There are no disadvantaged pupils or pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school has no religious affiliation.

Information about this inspection

- The school was informed of this inspection on the day before the inspection started. Three inspectors carried out the inspection.
- The new headteacher was appointed April 2016 and the new 'secretary' joined the school in April 2017.
- The inspectors observed learning in lessons in all of the classes. Most of the observations of learning were joint observations with either the headteacher, 'secretary' or the deputy headteacher.
- All the staff teaching the Japanese national curriculum and the headteacher are Japanese-speaking. An interpreter in Japanese helped the inspection team communicate with the staff and the headteacher and translated the documents and policies from Japanese into English.
- A meeting was held with pupils to discuss their learning and views about the school. Inspectors listened to pupils read in English in Years 7 and 8 and discussed their reading with them.
- Inspectors looked at books, checked the single central register of employment checks on staff, looked at pupils' attendance and behaviour records, and examined documents and policies on the curriculum, safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the 'secretary', deputy headteacher and the English-speaking staff. Governors, including the chair of governors, were not available for a meeting during the inspection.
- A telephone discussion was held with the local authority designated officer for safeguarding who had knowledge about the school in relation to safeguarding and child protection issues.
- The inspectors took account of the 13 responses received from parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire survey, Parent View. In addition, inspectors spoke to 26 parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the 25 responses to the survey for staff.

Inspection team

Avtar Sherri, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lucy Nutt	Ofsted Inspector
Dennis Canty	Ofsted Inspector

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