

# Finchley and Acton Yochien School

6 Hendon Avenue, Finchley, London N3 1UE

## Inspection dates

3–5 October 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The proprietor and school leaders have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Pupils do not make good progress in English or mathematics from their starting points.
- The teaching of reading and writing in English is variable, including in the early years. Some teachers lack sufficient knowledge of phonics and do not help pupils build well enough on their early writing skills.
- Teachers do not use assessment well in English and mathematics lessons to provide a good level of challenge for pupils, considering their starting points.
- Teachers do not expect enough of the oldest pupils in mathematics lessons.
- Leaders have missed potential risks posed by the premises, despite drawing up a risk assessment policy.
- The proprietor has not supported or challenged leaders well enough to ensure that the school has improved enough to become good.

### The school has the following strengths

- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Teachers support pupils' personal development well. Most pupils demonstrate skills in cooperation and teamwork which exceed those typical for their age.
- Pupils make good progress in their physical, scientific and creative development. Pupils new to the English language make strong early progress in speaking and listening.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy learning.
- Safeguarding is effective.

### 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?

- Ensure that the proprietor acquires and uses information effectively to provide strong support and challenge for school leaders.
- Take prompt action to improve the quality of teaching so that the independent school standards in Part 1 of the regulations are met.
- Review arrangements for assessing risks so that they are picked up promptly and action is taken to minimise them.
- Ensure that arrangements are made to fulfil duties under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 by drawing up and implementing an accessibility plan for both school sites.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is good by:
  - ensuring that teachers use assessment information well during lessons to help pupils of all abilities make good progress in English and mathematics
  - providing training to improve the subject knowledge of some teachers in English and in the teaching of phonics
  - insisting that teachers have high expectations of what the oldest and most-able pupils can achieve in mathematics.

### The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 3 and 3(a)).
- The proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3 and 3(d)).
- The proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught (paragraph 3 and 3(e)).
- Ensure that the welfare of the pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy (paragraph 16 and 16(a)).
- Ensure that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16 and 16(b)).
- The proprietor ensures 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) and 34(1)(a)).
- The proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1) and 34(1)(b)).

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The proprietor and senior leaders have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. Senior leaders have not tackled weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment rapidly or effectively enough to ensure that teaching is typically good.
- The school manager has introduced additional checks on the quality of teaching. She has identified priorities for improvement that are sharply focused on weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. As a result, pupils have more opportunities to read and write in English. The outdoor area in the early years is more effectively used. However, the decisions leaders have made about training for teachers have not led to sufficient improvement, particularly in the teaching of English.
- Leaders do not challenge teachers robustly about their expectations of what older and the most able pupils can achieve in mathematics. As a result, children and pupils do not make good progress, particularly in their final year.
- Leaders' arrangements for the management of the performance of staff and staff training are systematically organised and well understood by teachers. However, some teachers have limited subject knowledge and understanding of schemes of work for English and mathematics.
- The broad and balanced curriculum promotes pupils' personal and social development well. It is particularly effective in developing pupils' physical, creative and scientific development. The curriculum is linked closely to the Japanese kindergarten curriculum. Teachers are less successful in implementing aspects of the curriculum related to English and mathematics. Their expectations of how much pupils can achieve are limited.
- Leaders have been effective in ensuring that the small number of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. They identify needs promptly. They ensure that specialist professionals are included in the evaluation of how to support the learning and social development of these pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils make substantial progress in understanding the school's values and learn to cooperate with one another. They enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities to help them learn about the way others live their lives. British values are promoted well. Pupils learn how these are relevant to their own lives and how they link with values in Japanese culture. There is a wide array of visits and cultural activities on offer, including museum trips and theatre visits, which deepen pupils' understanding.
- Leaders make regular checks on the safety of the premises and on activities undertaken by pupils. They have created a risk assessment policy which sets out expectations of all staff. Despite this, a number of potential risks were noticed by inspectors, which had not been picked up by leaders. Although these were not posing an immediate risk to the safety of pupils the implementation of the risk assessment procedures is not effective enough to meet the requirements of the relevant independent schools standards.
- The school manager has put in place rigorous systems to monitor the progress of pupils. Detailed assessment information is collected and meticulously organised. However, this

information is not used well to decide on next steps in learning for individual pupils in English and mathematics.

- Leaders are very successful in nurturing and maintaining positive relations with parents.

## **Governance**

- The proprietor is the sole governor. He was not available during the inspection. The proprietor does not provide effective challenge or support to school leaders to ensure that all of the independent school standards are met. He has not ensured that leaders draw up an accessibility plan to meet the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equalities Act.
- The records of recent meetings between the proprietor and leaders show that there is little discussion about outcomes for pupils or safeguarding arrangements.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Parents' comments in children's assessment records are typically positive about the work of the school to keep children safe. Checks on the suitability of staff are recorded thoroughly and recruitment checks are well understood. Leaders are particularly rigorous in ensuring that all of the checks on the right to work of staff are made.
- Leaders sustain strong links with parents, which help them pick up any concerns and address them at an early stage.
- Training is well considered and includes opportunities for staff to learn about particular risks, such as those posed by radicalisation and extremism.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- The teaching of English and mathematics has not improved sufficiently to ensure that pupils make good progress in these subjects, particularly when they move into the final year of the school. Teachers typically do not use assessment information skilfully enough to plan activities which meet pupils' needs. This is particularly the case in mathematics and English.
- Teachers' knowledge of phonics is variable. Teachers sometimes do not pick up on pupils' mistakes when pronouncing words. Some also make mistakes when demonstrating phonics skills to pupils. As a result, pupils do not develop secure reading skills, particularly after they have left the early years.
- Pupils typically have too few opportunities to develop their writing skills in English. Teachers pay close attention to helping the youngest children develop physical skills related to writing. They are also particularly effective at helping the majority of pupils who arrive at the school with little or no knowledge of English make systematic progress in speaking and listening. For example, teachers' work ensures that pupils quickly learn to say English words for common features in classrooms and around the school. However, teachers do not build on this to help pupils become confident in early writing skills.
- Teachers of the oldest children do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics. As a result, many pupils, including the most able, do not

effectively build on the progress made in the early years.

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge across a wide range of subjects. They use this to provide intriguing and engaging activities, which challenge and motivate pupils.
- Teachers are particularly effective at helping pupils develop secure social skills. They work well with additional adults to challenge and encourage pupils in their creative and physical development.
- Teachers and other adults have high expectations of pupils' progress in using the Japanese language. However, opportunities for pupils to develop writing in their first language (i.e. Japanese) are less evident than those aimed at developing their reading and speaking skills.
- Teachers are effective at promoting strong working relationships between pupils and develop productive partnerships with parents. They ensure that learning at home and school go hand in hand.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils demonstrate confidence and self-assurance when working with one another and their teacher. They become immersed in their learning and cooperate well with their peers.
- Pupils benefit from many opportunities to learn how physical activity can benefit their well-being.
- Pupils learn to value and respect differences, and understand the importance of courtesy when listening to and responding to the views of others.
- Leaders have made sure that parents and pupils have been provided with guidance on how to use the internet safely. However, the extent of e-safety education is rather limited.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to lessons only slip occasionally, when the quality of teaching declines.
- Leaders have only undertaken limited analysis of the attendance of pupils over time. The vast majority of pupils attending the school are below statutory school age. The information available to inspectors indicates that pupils' attendance is below that typical for similar schools.
- Pupils' respectful and caring behaviour is consistently good, both in and out of class. Lunchtimes are happy and sociable occasions.
- Very few instances of poor behaviour are recorded. Leaders have ensured that discriminatory behaviour is seldom, if ever, part of school life.

- Parents' comments in assessment records demonstrate that they are typically positive about pupils' behaviour. Members of staff unanimously agree that behaviour is well managed.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics from different starting points is not good. This is particularly the case for the oldest children, who do not build successfully on their prior learning in the early years.
- The most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to develop their skills further in mathematics.
- Pupils are given insufficient guidance and support to help them make good progress in developing their writing skills.
- Pupils enjoy reading books and are making better progress because of improvements to the teaching of phonics. However, the quality of this teaching remains too variable to ensure that progress is consistently good.
- Pupils make systematic progress in learning to speak and listen in English when they arrive with very little knowledge of this language. Leaders' work to introduce English words across the whole curriculum has been successful.
- Pupils make sustained and substantial progress in their personal and physical development.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in investigating scientific topics are strong. Consequently, they make good progress in learning about the world around them.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- The majority of children enter the early years with skills and abilities, which are typical for their age in most areas of learning. However, nearly all children arrive with very little knowledge of English. Their first language is almost always Japanese.
- Teaching staff demonstrate the ability to identify children's progress in the early stages of learning to speak and listen in English. As a result, children make marked gains in their knowledge and quickly learn to use which words in their speech to describe things around them.
- Teachers do not provide effective enough support for children to develop their reading and writing skills. They do not build well on the strong progress children make in speaking and listening in English.
- Nearly all of the children make good progress in their physical, creative and personal development. This leaves them well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders have been effective in making improvements to the outdoor setting since the last inspection. Opportunities for pupils to learn outdoors are much improved. For example, children were observed during the inspection using hand lenses to explore the natural environment outdoors. However, resources and activities to support children's development of writing and mathematics in the outdoor area are not used as effectively.

- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and the progress of children vigilantly. Records of children's work are rich in examples, which illustrate assessment decisions made across most subject areas. However, attempts to set objectives for learning for children often do not take into account of their prior learning.
- Children share equipment and play together well. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and behave well indoors and outdoors. Parents are typically delighted with the work of early years staff to promote their children's personal development.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have provided helpful opportunities to work with other schools in order to share good practice and develop the early years environment.
- The supervision of children is vigilant and robust by well-qualified staff who are trained effectively in important areas such as first-aid. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements in the early years are effective and welfare requirements are met.

## School details

Unique reference number	131128
DfE registration number	302/6107
Inspection number	10035789

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	Kindergarten school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 6
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	129
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Eikoku Maeda Gakuen Group
Chair	K Maeda
Headteacher	J Tanabe
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,000
Telephone number	020 8343 2191
Website	<a href="http://www.maedagroup.co.uk">www.maedagroup.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:account@maedagroup.co.uk">account@maedagroup.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	17–19 June 2015

## Information about this school

- Finchley and Acton Yochien School is a non-selective kindergarten school for boys and girls. The school primarily serves Japanese families temporarily living in London. It follows the Japanese curriculum as a basis for much of the learning because many pupils return to Japan to continue their education.
- The proprietor has ensured that since the last inspection that some teachers specialising in English have been appointed. However, most teachers speak Japanese as their first language. The main language used in lessons is Japanese.
- The school occupies a property in Finchley and a modified sports pavilion on a large



sports site in Acton. The sites are several miles apart.

- There are 46 pupils on the Finchley site and 83 on the Acton site. No children are in receipt of government funding on the Finchley site. However, most receive funding on the Acton site.
- Children of Nursery and Reception age all attend full time. Pupils are taught in four classes on each site.
- A very small number of pupils have SEN and/or disabilities. None of these pupils have education, health and care plans.
- Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school has a sole proprietor. It is part of a group which includes a pre-preparatory school in North London and a language school in Brighton.
- The last inspection took place in June 2015, when some of the independent school standards were not met.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors carried out observations in lessons at both school sites, many alongside the school manager.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' assessment records and examples of their written work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, manager and the school administrator to discuss the school's safeguarding arrangements and plans for improvement.
- Inspectors took account of nine responses to the staff questionnaire. There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to consider. However, inspectors looked at parents' comments in assessment records and met a small number of parents at the Finchley site.
- Inspectors observed pupils during breaks and as they moved around the school sites. They looked at a range of school documents, including those related to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and pupils' learning.

## Inspection team

Andrew Wright, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Maureen Okoye	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Wagstaff	Her Majesty's Inspector

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