

The Japanese School

87 Creffield Road, Acton, London W3 9PU

Inspection dates

30–31 October 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and trustees have not ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards. They have not ensured that arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders rarely evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses; nor do they plan for improvement.
- Pupils have insufficient knowledge of people with protected characteristics. This restricts their understanding and preparation for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders provide little training for teachers and rarely hold them to account. Further, teachers do not set challenging work for the most able pupils. As a result, pupils do not routinely make the substantial progress of which they are capable.
- Primary pupils' behaviour during transition times and when left unsupervised is unruly.
- Leaders do not do enough to ensure pupils' mental health and emotional well-being.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils work diligently in lessons and are keen to succeed. Their attendance is high.
- Relationships between pupils are good and bullying is rare.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subjects. They regularly test pupils to check on their progress. They plan activities that help pupils learn well and make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress across the wide range of subjects in the Japanese curriculum. In addition, pupils make good progress in learning English as an additional language.
- The variety of enrichment opportunities, visits and visitors enhance the formal curriculum. They make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

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 effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that leaders and trustees:
 - update, as a matter of urgency, the single central record of all statutory checks, including for newly appointed staff and trustees
 - provide effective support and induction for newly arrived leaders from Japan, particularly in the requirements for leading and managing an independent school in England
 - keep up to date with the latest Department for Education (DfE) guidance, and make sure that the school meets all the independent school standards and other requirements
 - routinely evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and use this information to plan for improvements
 - create opportunities for teachers' professional development and hold them to account for their pupils' progress.
- Improve teaching by teachers setting more challenging work, especially for the most able pupils.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - developing the curriculum so that pupils have opportunities to learn about and respect people with protected characteristics
 - establishing links with any external professionals to support pupils who might have emotional and mental health difficulties
 - setting high expectations for primary pupils' behaviour and increasing staff supervision during transition times to make sure that pupils behave safely.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- There is a high turnover of staff coming from and returning to Japan every two to three years. Consequently, there is little stability and continuity in the school's leadership. The processes for handing over information and inducting new leaders to the requirements of the English school system are ineffective. As a result, leaders, including trustees, have not ensured that the school meets all independent school standards relating to safeguarding, welfare, the curriculum, and complaints procedures.
- Leaders do not systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the schools' work. They do not have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve the school so that all aspects are at least good.
- Leaders mostly recruit experienced and competent teachers from Japan. Teachers offer each other peer-to-peer support and agree on targets for improvement. This helps teachers to sustain strong teaching and learning. Leaders, however, provide little training for teachers and have no formal procedures for holding them to account for their pupils' performance. As a result, teaching, learning and assessment are good overall rather than outstanding.
- Most members of staff who responded to the inspection survey felt that there are some weaknesses in school leadership. These included concerns about leaders' support of staff professional development and for managing pupils' behaviour. Staff raised anxieties about leadership. They say that leaders do not respond and deal effectively with alleged incidents involving other adults. This has left them feeling vulnerable and unsafe.
- The curriculum follows the Japanese national curriculum. Pupils study and take tests in Japanese, mathematics, science, music, art and design, social studies, physical education and English. The curriculum is planned in such a way that, as pupils progress, they build upon their prior knowledge and deepen their understanding. The planning in the Japanese curriculum does not, however, specifically make adaptations for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Leaders make sure that pupils benefit from a range of enrichment activities that make a good contribution to their learning and personal development. Pupils visit museums, have exchange visits with maintained English schools and a German school, and recently spent three days in Scotland. Such visits make a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Visitors who speak about a variety of professions and work experience help older pupils in considering their future career options.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have a good understanding of democracy and British institutions. They fail, however, to teach pupils and help them to understand, tolerate and respect people with protected characteristics as defined in the 2010 Equality Act. This limits pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain.
- There has been a change in chair of the proprietorial board. Leaders have not fulfilled the requirement to notify the DfE of the change since the previous incumbent returned to Japan and the new chair took up his post.

Governance

- Governors have not ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- Governors do not support new leaders by making sure that they have an effective induction on arrival. New leaders, therefore, do not gain an understanding of how to comply with the English independent school standards and other requirements.
- Governors' meetings mainly concentrate on financial matters. They do learn about the quality of teaching, pupils' progress and other aspects of the school's work from the headteacher's oral reports. They do not, however, challenge leaders about making improvements. Further, governors have not made sure that the school is meeting regulatory requirements on safeguarding, welfare and complaints procedures.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- All members of staff and trustees have had a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. However, the school is in breach of its statutory duty to ensure that the chair of the proprietors has an enhanced criminal record check, countersigned by the Secretary of State.
- On arrival, inspectors found that the new leaders were not aware of the requirement to maintain a single central record of employment checks. Although leaders later found an old version, it did not record all the statutory checks and does not include newly appointed staff and trustees. Leaders were unable to show inspectors any evidence demonstrating how previous leaders had dealt with safeguarding cases.
- At the beginning of the term, leaders arranged for an external consultant to train all staff on the latest safeguarding guidance. Staff are aware of how to identify behaviours and signs that suggest a pupil might be at risk and know they should report any concerns.
- There is a poor culture in the school when it comes to the leadership of safeguarding. Leaders have not established any links with the local authority's safeguarding board. They have not found out about typical local safeguarding issues and have no links with external agencies and professionals to support vulnerable pupils. Leaders have an underlying belief that there are no real potential safeguarding issues in the school community. They say that some of the issues that young people might face in England are irrelevant to the Japanese community. They understand, for example, that pupils in England might be bullied for being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). They said that in Japan it is not the culture to be LGBT; therefore, they maintain, this is not a relevant potential safeguarding issue for the school.
- In the curriculum, pupils learn about safety when using the internet and other general safety issues. They do not, however, learn how to avoid some of the specific prevalent dangers in London, such as gang culture.
- The school publishes its safeguarding policy on its website. The policy is out of date and does not have regard to current government requirements.
- Overall, leaders are not effective in ensuring that pupils' safety and welfare are assured.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is strong across the school. As a result, pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers have sound knowledge of their subjects and of the requirements of the Japanese curriculum. They have high expectations for pupils' work and have established clear routines. They plan well-structured activities that help pupils build on their prior knowledge to gain a deeper understanding and apply their skills.
- Teachers draw on a range of good-quality resources that help pupils to learn effectively. Through ongoing questioning during the lessons, teachers pick up any misconceptions that pupils have and address them.
- Teaching makes a positive contribution to helping pupils consider current events. This was demonstrated, for instance, in an upper school English lesson. The teacher encouraged debate about Brexit through helping pupils to interpret the nuances of a related caricature in a local newspaper.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning through regular testing. Teachers in each of the primary and middle school phases meet with senior leaders to discuss any pupils falling behind. They plan extra support to help those pupils catch up. They do not, however, routinely set more difficult work for the most able pupils. This reduces the chances for the most able pupils to reach the highest standards of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development requires improvement.
- Leaders do not pay enough attention to supporting pupils' emotional well-being and mental health. When issues arise, they expect teachers, parents and carers to resolve them. This is not always appropriate, as sometimes pupils need expert help. Leaders have not established links with any external agencies and professionals to support pupils who might be suffering from emotional stress and other mental health problems.
- Leaders have not ensured that the independent school standards are met relating to paying regard to the protected characteristics, as set out in the 2010 Act. Pupils have some understanding of different faiths, gender equality and old age. The school's curriculum does not, however, provide enough opportunities for pupils to learn about people with disabilities or who may be LGBT.
- Pupils benefit from three physical education lessons a week and can choose to participate in a range of sporting clubs. The school has an extensive outdoor area, including a running track and other apparatus for physical exercise. Pupils use these during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils learn about and are knowledgeable about healthy eating. These opportunities make a strong contribution to pupils' physical health.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare. They are confident that adults would deal with any problems that might arise.
- Pupils enjoy contributing to the community. Pupils clean their classrooms and the school's

common areas. They take pride in ensuring that the school is kept neat and tidy. They raise funds for charities and visit senior citizens in care homes. All pupils participate in the annual school festival day. Pupils perform plays, deliver musical recitals, sing and dance. These opportunities make a good contribution to building pupils' confidence and helping them develop a sense of responsibility to society.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders do not make sure that young pupils are properly supervised by adults. When pupils enter the building first thing in the morning, after breaktimes and at lunchtimes, they go to the classrooms and wait for their teachers. Inspectors observed that it took up to ten minutes for staff to arrive. There were no adults in the corridors. While observing learning, inspectors also saw teachers leave classes in the middle of lessons to go to the photocopier, leaving the pupils alone. On these occasions, primary pupils engaged in boisterous behaviour, including play fighting.
- Older pupils are self-disciplined and behave sensibly even when there are no adults present.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming.
- Pupils mostly have very positive attitudes to learning. They work hard and are keen to succeed. Occasionally, there is some disruption, such as calling out. Pupils mostly respond immediately when their teachers call them to attention, and learning can proceed.
- Pupils generally behave well during social times and they move around the school sensibly.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. As a result, attendance is high.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders check pupils' progress each term against the standards expected for their age according to the Japanese curriculum. In the summer, pupils take tests similar to those taken by pupils in Japan.
- Over time, the school's monitoring information shows that, across the subjects and year groups, pupils attain higher standards than the Japanese national averages. This represents good progress.
- Current pupils are making similarly strong progress. This is also the case in English.
- Pupils do not routinely make outstanding progress, especially the most able, as teachers do not regularly challenge them with more difficult work.
- Pupils are keen and avid readers. They read during 'homeroom' time and many make use of the well-resourced library to read at breaktimes and to borrow books to take home.
- Most of the pupils return to Japan after spending a few years with their families in London. With their above average academic outcomes, they are well prepared to continue with their education on their return.

School details

Unique reference number	101958
DfE registration number	307/6070
Inspection number	10055397

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	Japanese day school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 15
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	363
Proprietor	The Japanese School LTD
Chair	Horoshi Nagamine
Headteacher	Tsuyoshi Nerome
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,130
Telephone number	020 8993 7145
Website	www.thejapaneseschool.ltd.uk/
Email address	takenaka-s@thejapaneseschool.ltd.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–6 July 2017

Information about this school

- The Japanese School is an independent day school. It is a Japanese-speaking school that follows the Japanese national curriculum and receives some of its funding from the Japanese government.
- Pupils are typically the children of expatriates on secondment from their employers in Japan. Most staff are seconded from Japan.
- There is a high staff turnover. The deputy headteacher joined the school in April 2018. A new temporary business manager joined the school in September 2018 to cover the secretary general's current absence. The designated safeguarding leader was promoted to this post in September 2018.

- 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. The current chair took up his post within the past year. It appears that the DfE have not been notified of this change.
- The school's previous full standard inspection was in July 2017. Subsequently, the school has had two monitoring inspections, in January and June 2018.
- The school makes no use of alternative provision.
- There are a very small number of pupils with SEND.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The headteacher was not present during the inspection. He was not available for a telephone conversation.
- Inspectors spoke with the deputy headteacher, the business manager, other middle leaders and teachers. Inspectors had formal discussions with two groups of pupils, and various informal discussions with pupils during social times and in lessons.
- None of the trustees were able to meet with the inspectors and none attended the final feedback.
- Inspectors observed learning in 29 classrooms.
- Inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' work. They checked the school's information about pupils' progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 26 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents and parents' additional written comments. Inspectors considered the 29 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors checked documentation, policies and all aspects of the school's work for compliance with the independent school standards.
- An interpreter in Japanese helped the inspection team communicate with the staff and pupils and helped translate some documents and policies from Japanese into English.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Matthews	Ofsted Inspector
Gerard Strong	Ofsted Inspector
Vanessa Love	Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if:
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work:
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are:
 - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which:
 - 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor:
 - 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which:
 - 5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if:
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
 - 18(2)(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person:
 - 18(2)(c)(i) the person's identity;
 - 18(2)(c)(iii) the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph

(4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.

- 20(5) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual who is the Chair of the school if:
 - 20(5)(a) the individual:
 - 20(5)(a)(ii) does not carry out work, or intend to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction; and
 - 20(5)(b) subject to sub-paragraphs (7) and (8), the Secretary of State makes the following checks relating to the individual:
 - 20(5)(b)(i) where relevant to the individual, an enhanced criminal record check, countersigned by the Secretary of State where an application for such a check is made under section 113B(1) of the 1997 Act;
 - 20(5)(b)(ii) checks confirming the individual's identity and their right to work in the United Kingdom; and
 - 20(5)(b)(iii) in the case of an individual for whom, by reason of the individual living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining an enhanced criminal record certificate is not sufficient to establish the individual's suitability to work in a school, such further checks as the Secretary of State considers appropriate.
- 20(6) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual ("MB"), not being the Chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register, if:
 - 20(6)(a) MB:
 - 20(6)(a)(ii) does not carry out work, or intend to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
 - 20(6)(b) subject to sub-paragraphs (7) to (8), the Chair of the school makes the following checks relating to MB:
 - 20(6)(b)(ii) checks confirming MB's identity and MB's right to work in the United Kingdom; and
 - 20(6)(c) subject to sub-paragraph (8), where the Secretary of State makes a request for an enhanced criminal record check relating to MB countersigned by the Secretary of State to be made, such a check is made.
- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is:
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007,

whether:

- 21(3)(a)(i) S's identity was checked;
- 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
- 21(3)(a)(vii) a check of S's right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and
- 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which:
 - 33(f) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e), makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
 - 33(g) ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school;
 - 33(i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is:
 - 33(i)(i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
 - 33(j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and:
 - 33(j)(i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
 - 33(j)(ii) action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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