

The Japanese School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	307/6070
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Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

The Japanese School opened in west London in 1976, as an independent school for pupils from 6 to 15 years of age. There are currently 448 pupils on roll. It is a Japanese-speaking school that follows the Japanese National Curriculum. The school is part of a worldwide network of Japanese schools and 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 could have a continuous education wherever they were in the world. A key principle is: *'The school aims to educate pupils to be independent citizens (of the world, Japan, and Britain) with broad minds, skills to live robustly, and with humanity.'* Each year, a third of pupils leave the school, to continue their education in Japan and elsewhere and a similar number of pupils join the school. The school has no religious affiliation. This is the school's first published report.

Evaluation of the school

The Japanese School provides a good standard of education. Pupils make good progress because the teaching and curriculum are effective. The school cares well for pupils day-to-day and they enjoy school. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good and the school achieves its key aim of promoting pupils' open mindedness and care for all. The school meets most of the regulations for independent schools, but not all.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. Overall, it meets the needs of pupils and supports them in making good progress through the opportunities provided during the school day and through a range of additional activities. The school provides education based on the Japanese National Curriculum. It is supported by a detailed curriculum policy and range of guidance documentation, which provides effective support for teachers' own planning.

Through the curriculum provided, the school aims *'to ensure continuity in the education of Japanese children living in England for a period of time.'* Although the school follows the Japanese curriculum, which prescribes the required educational experiences and subjects that are taught, within these guidelines the school management has recognised the need to provide a curriculum experience which both

meets the needs of pupils of different ages but which also successfully adds to their experience of living in a foreign country for a period.

The Japanese National Curriculum provides pupils with experiences in all areas of learning required for pupils studying at schools in England. Subjects include: Japanese, fine arts, industrial arts, a foreign language and moral education. Pupils have appropriate access to computers. A good programme of moral education supports pupils' personal development. It is similar in content to the English requirement for personal, social and health education. Although there is no distinct aspect of the Japanese curriculum which refers to careers education, support for pupils' development, which includes work experience for older pupils, is good. Support for the small minority of pupils who are recognised as having special learning needs is good. The learning experience of these pupils is carefully structured and is provided by specialist teachers. Planning to meet the needs of these pupils involves parents, teachers and pupils and aims to build their self-confidence by focusing their learning experience to a considerable extent through their interests and aptitudes.

The good quality of education is enhanced by a wide range of sporting and cultural extra-curricular activities, including visits to places of historical interest in Great Britain. The programme is planned carefully and is used by the school as an effective tool to support pupils' broad intellectual development.

The teaching and assessments of pupils' progress are good. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and teachers plan their lessons in detail, closely following the Japanese National Curriculum. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about their teaching, which rubs off on pupils. Pupils have confidence in their teachers and listen closely to what they are told, and respond enthusiastically. The school is an orderly community because relationships are good. Pupils make the most of what they are offered and enjoy lessons very much. Class management is good; pupils respond very well to the caring teachers and make good progress.

The majority of the planned activities in lessons are intended for all pupils in the mixed ability classes. Teachers do not make enough use of extension activities for the most able pupils to extend their learning further. The arrangement for teaching English is particularly successful for most pupils because more attention is paid to their abilities and to the match of work to their talents. Pupils make good progress in learning English from their starting points. However, for pupils who already have a good knowledge, what is taught in some English lessons does not challenge them enough because it is intended for the many that have less experience of English. Additional English lessons do provide opportunities more closely matched to individual pupils' needs. Resources are adequate and are used effectively to promote learning.

Teachers have a good knowledge of the standards that pupils reach each term. This information is used effectively to ensure that standards are maintained. Pupils have a

clear knowledge of what they have to achieve to move on to the next school of their choice and teachers prepare them well for the move to high schools. Teachers mark pupils' work with varying degrees of thoroughness. In art lessons, the teacher consistently gives pupils comprehensive guidance about how they could improve their work.

Pupils make good progress. Regular testing of pupils' standards of work in all years shows that they achieve significantly better than pupils of a similar age in Japan in all subjects and at all ages.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they have good attitudes to school. Spiritual and moral aspects are integrated into the curriculum and the school places good emphasis on respect of oneself and others and growth of confidence. Pupils and staff show respect for all views and opinions. Attendance is high at 98%, and there are no unauthorised absences, which illustrates how much pupils enjoy school. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils often correct each other in classes if any one of them loses focus on the task. There is a very calm, relaxed but purposeful atmosphere in the large majority of classes.

There is good quality work on display about Japanese culture and curriculum enrichment, such as visits to local places of interest and an outdoor adventure centre. Pupils learn about the British way of life through lessons and visits. There is positive contact with many local schools. During the inspection, an exchange between the school and a local primary school promoted an understanding of each others' cultures, traditions and languages very successfully. All pupils formed positive relationships with their counterparts in an atmosphere of tolerance and harmony. The school has an annual focus on career guidance and integration into international society.

There are two pupil councils, for elementary and secondary pupils. Councils meet every month to talk about a range of topics with teachers and other pupils. Mainly, they discuss school events and discipline and develop their moral and social understanding well. At the beginning of the first term starting in April every year, each Year 6 pupil takes care of one Year 1 child, so that the younger pupils have a friend who can help them when they join the school. All make a positive contribution to the school in different ways.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is satisfactory, although in practice the school pays close attention to the care provided for pupils. The school prepares suitable physical risk assessments and other essential paperwork before embarking on visits away from the school building. The health nurse accompanies pupils on outside visits. The school has procedures for dealing with a variety of

incidents. Although the safety and welfare of all pupils is paramount, many procedures are not produced as written policies and are not available for scrutiny, and hence they do not meet English regulations. The procedures to counter bullying are dealt with under Japanese Ministry guidelines and procedures exist in the case of an incident, but there is no policy that outlines types of bullying, and how to recognise and deal with them. The school does not have a three-year plan to make the building more accessible for staff, pupils and visitors with physical disabilities.

Regular sport and physical education lessons and close attention to healthy eating and drinking contribute effectively to pupils' healthy lifestyles. The school nurse produces a helpful health newsletter every month, which promotes exercise and good diet. All pupils receive an annual health check. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Since the last visit by inspectors in 2002, the school has registered with the Criminal Records Bureau. Staff are appointed by the appropriate department of the Japanese government and the school maintains careful records in a number of respects. However, the school fails to meet the requirements of English law for checking the suitability of staff and those appointed as trustees. It has not established a system for maintaining appropriate records of checks when they are undertaken. The school should modify its procedures in accordance with details received very recently from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are suitable for effective learning. The classrooms are large and allow lessons to be taught in comfort, with furniture suitable for the age of the pupils. The corridors are displayed with colourful examples of pupils' work, celebrating their achievements and interests. There is a good modern computer room. There are zoned outdoor play areas, including very good sports facilities for running, basketball, football and playground games.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents receive a satisfactory range of information about what the school provides. The school has an attractive and informative website and prospectus. The English regulations require many policies to be available to parents. At present they are not. Regular and helpful reports keep parents well informed about their children's progress. The many parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed general satisfaction with the school, but many of them and older students had reservations about aspects of what the school provides.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has procedures for handling complaints but most aspects do not comply with regulations.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets most of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement a written policy to prevent bullying which has regard to the DCSF guidance *Bullying: don't suffer in silence* (paragraph 3(2)(a))
- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in compliance with DCSF guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to DCSF guidance *Health and safety of pupils on educational visits* (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- prepare and implement a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils which sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 3(2)(d))
- have regard to the DCSF guidance *Health and safety: responsibilities and powers* (paragraph 3(4))
- prepare a system for keeping written records of sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious disciplinary offences (paragraph 3(8)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, carry out appropriate checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (paragraph 4(2)(b))
- in the case of any person who is living or has lived outside the United Kingdom, where obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish his or her suitability to work in a school, make further checks as the proprietor considers appropriate having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 4(2)(c))
- ensure that no person supplied by an employment business to the school begins work at the school unless the proprietor has received written confirmation that checks have been carried out in respect of the person's identity, right to work in the UK, qualifications, enhanced CRB clearance or where appropriate, confirmation that he/she does not contravene section 142 of the 2002 Act(a) (Paragraph 4A(1-8))

- ensure that each individual trustee of the school, or where appropriate the chairperson of the proprietorial body, has been subject to an enhanced check by the Secretary of State confirming his/her identity, right to work in the UK, enhanced CRB check, or where appropriate confirmation that he/she does not contravene section 142 of the 2002 Act(a) (paragraph 4B)
- appoint a single responsible person to ensure that checks of trustees are appropriately completed, that is to confirm their identity, right to work in the UK, enhanced CRB check, or where appropriate confirmation that he/she does not contravene section 142 of the 2002 Act(a) (paragraph 4B(4) and (5))
- ensure that for each member of staff in post on or after 1 August 2007, the register shows checks made (and certificates obtained where relevant) of: his/her identity; qualifications (where required); whether an enhanced CRB was obtained, or where appropriate, that he/she is not working in contravention of section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (List 99); the right to work in the UK and, where relevant for those who have lived outside the UK, suitability to work in a school. Ensure the register includes the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(2) and (3))
- ensure that the register shows for supply staff, whether written notification has been received from the employment business that the checks referred to in 4C(2) were carried out, together with the dates when these were completed or certificates obtained. Ensure that the register also shows the date when such written notification from the employment business was received (paragraph 4C(4) and (5))
- ensure that for each trustee in post on or after 1 August 2007, the register shows whether a check was made of: his/her identity; right to work in the United Kingdom; and whether an enhanced CRB check was carried out and certificate obtained, or where appropriate, confirmation that he/she is not barred from working in school under section 142 of the Education Act 2002. Ensure the register also shows the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(6) and (7))
- Ensure that the register meets the requirement that it may be kept in electronic form, provided that the information recorded is capable of being reproduced in legible form (paragraph 4C(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that parents and others are aware that they can request particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h))
- ensure that parents and others are aware that they can request details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- ensure that the complaints procedure is available on request to parents of pupils and prospective pupils (paragraph 7(b))
- ensure that the complaints procedure sets out clear timescales for the management of the complaint (paragraph 7(c))
- ensure that the complaints procedure provides for a formal complaint to be made in writing if parents are not satisfied with the response to an informal complaint (paragraph 7(e))
- ensure that if the parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint there is provision for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 7(f))
- ensure that where there is a panel hearing of a complaint there is provision that one person on the panel is independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 7(g))
- ensure that the procedure allows for parents to attend the panel hearing, and, if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 7(h))
- ensure that the complaints procedure provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and the procedure stipulates that the complainant, proprietors and headteachers, and, where relevant, the person complained about, should be given a copy of any findings and recommendations (paragraph 7(i)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

School details

Name of school	The Japanese School
DCSF number	307/6070
Unique reference number	101958
Type of school	Day primary and secondary school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	June 1976
Age range of pupils	5–15 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 228 Girls: 220 Total: 448
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,740
Address of school	87 Creffield Road Acton London W3 9PU
Telephone number	0208 993 7145
Fax number	0208 992 1224
Email address	sugano-s@thejapaneseschool.ltd.uk
Headteacher	Mr Kenji Uehara
Proprietor/Trustees	The Japanese School Limited
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry
Dates of inspection	26-27 February 2008