

# Finchley and Acton Yochien School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	302/6107
Unique Reference Number	131128
URN for registered childcare and social care	EY240936 /EY303773 / EY304230 / EY303993 / EY307135
Inspection number	329731
Inspection dates	30 September–1 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended. The inspection of childcare was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of registered provision<sup>1</sup> was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.

## Information about the school

The Finchley and Acton Yochien School opened in north London in 1993. The school operates on two sites, in Finchley and Acton. The school provides a Foundation Stage education for 2 to 5 year olds initially, which continues for children up to six years old, based on a blend of the Japanese national curriculum and the English Foundation Stage curriculum. There are currently 167 full and part-time children on roll. The school aims to help children learn the skills and knowledge they require to be successful and to grow into happy, healthy, well-behaved, kind and considerate young people. The school prepares children for their futures in Japanese schools in England, Japan and around the world.

Japanese is the main language and children learn English as an additional language. Virtually all staff are Japanese. There is considerable movement of children in and out of the school throughout the year when families relocate. The school was last inspected in 2004 and the childcare provision was inspected in September 2006.

## Evaluation of the school

The Finchley and Acton Yochien School provides a good education for its children. They make good progress because the teaching, assessment and curriculum are effective. The school cares well for children day to day and they enjoy school very much. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the school achieves its key aim of preparing children for their futures in Japanese schools effectively. The school has made satisfactory progress with completing the recommendations from the 2004 inspection. The school meets most but not all of the regulations.

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<sup>1</sup> Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

## Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. It meets the needs and aspirations of older children and younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and supports them in making good progress in lessons. The school provides an education based on a successful blend of the English Foundation Stage curriculum and the Japanese National Curriculum. Termly plans provide effective support for teachers' daily planning.

The curriculum provides children with coherent experiences. Music, singing and art are strengths and children learn to express themselves in many creative ways, using their own interpretations of lesson themes. Support for the small number of children who find learning difficult is good. The small class sizes and detailed knowledge that adults have of children's academic and pastoral needs mean that children make good progress. The Japanese element of the curriculum extends children's understanding of, for example, tolerance for all others and good manners very well. Adults on both sites are well aware that the curriculum needs to broaden in some areas. These include more outdoor activities, greater use of visits to places of interest, and greater access for children to information technology to meet the requirements of the EYFS.

The teaching and assessment of children's progress, including in the EYFS, are good. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and so children listen well. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly following meetings at the start of each day with all their colleagues. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about their teaching, which they communicate successfully to children. Relationships are very good. Children and parents have confidence in the teachers and children try hard to do well. The school is an orderly community and children enjoy lessons very much.

Activities in lessons were intended for all children in the mixed ability classes. This approach worked well as children had opportunities to use their own ideas, such as in art. However, the most able children are ready for activities that extend them further, such as in reading, writing and mathematics. Resources generally are adequate and are used effectively to promote learning. Adults are very skilful in the way they use, for example, basic paper and card in so many ways to develop children's skills. During English lessons, drama is used effectively. The oldest children acted out the story of 'The Three Little Pigs' enthusiastically, complete with dialogue. In this way, children make good progress towards becoming bilingual.

Teachers have a good knowledge of the individual progress children make over the year. Each child has a folder of work that has been completed, which shows examples of something new that has been learned. There is an assessment record in which children's key knowledge and skills are graded. This approach is used for each Early Learning Goal. Adults gather this information effectively to ensure that children's standards and progress are maintained and that no one falls behind. Adults regularly give children verbal guidance about how they could improve their work and make encouraging comments to give them confidence.

Children throughout the school make good progress because the curriculum, teaching and assessment are effective. Children's records show that they make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals up to the age of five. By the time they leave the school, the majority have reached standards higher than those expected of Japanese and English children generally. Regular assessments of children's knowledge and skills show that they achieve well in learning English as an additional language. In lessons, children typically made good progress, such as in art and music activities.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a harmonious, friendly feeling in the school and staff and children get on well. Behaviour and attendance are good. Relationships are positive at all levels. The children know the difference between right and wrong and follow the simple school rules well. They are growing in self-confidence and self-esteem as they become familiar with the daily routines, such as getting themselves ready, or helping to put toys away when asked. The children say that they like their school. Comments from several included, 'I like playing outside' and 'It is really, really fun here'. The Finchley site makes effective use of the outside play area and the children were busy collecting conkers and enjoying other games.

There is a proper emphasis on Japanese culture and festivals. The Japanese summer festival and New Year's Day are celebrated. The school acknowledges that there are some non-Japanese children in the school and celebrates festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Halloween. The children take part in the Christmas celebrations and take an active role in productions, usually based on Japanese folklore. All the children play well with each other in all situations.

Music is very important in the school. Most staff play the piano and songs are used effectively, for example, at the beginning of lunch to help children prepare themselves. Teachers use musical sounds effectively to indicate a change of activity. The older children are taught the Japanese art of tea making and some older children also learn the martial art of Japanese fencing. Overall, the provision for teaching English language is good, but the school does not give the children sufficient experience or understanding of English institutions or services, appropriate for their ages.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school makes satisfactory provision for older children's welfare, health and safety and for children in the EYFS. The school has many well written policies and procedures to minimise risks. Staff make general checks on the accommodation daily and record them. The school has applied for a fire risk assessment but does not have evidence of a current assessment. No obvious dangers were noted and there is clear evidence of attention to safety matters, such as emergency exit signs. Staff receive

relevant training, such as in child protection and first-aid procedures, but have not received training in paediatric first aid. Nappy changing facilities are not adequate. The school does not keep a record of punishments given for serious wrongdoing. The school does not have an up-to-date three-year plan to fulfil its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act, such as by showing how it will improve access to the buildings.

Regular outdoor physical activities, more common at the Finchley site, and close attention to healthy eating and drinking contribute to children's healthy living effectively. Children have a growing understanding of how to stay safe and avoid unnecessary dangers.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school makes thorough checks on the suitability of all staff to work with children of all ages, including staff in the EYFS. The school holds this information on a single central register. However, the records of medical checks that are required before the appointment of Japanese visiting staff are incomplete.

### School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation at both sites enable children in the EYFS and older children to learn effectively in a safe environment. The buildings are clean and well maintained. They are sufficiently spacious for the size of the groups of children. The rooms are attractive and stimulating learning environments. However, there are insufficient technological resources, such as computers, which could be used by children to enhance their learning.

The Finchley site is better equipped than the Acton site. There is an enclosed area of a suitable size for the children to use outdoors, whereas at Acton the open space is too large and is not zoned into useful spaces in which children can learn. Too little use is made of the outdoor space there. Neither site has a suitable place for looking after children when they are ill. Hot water is not available in one toilet block on the Finchley site.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a satisfactory range of information for parents of children in the EYFS and older children. There is an informative prospectus and a website, along with good booklets that parents receive when their children join the school. However, some regulations are not met. It is not clear to parents how they can contact the proprietor directly. The school does not provide parents with particulars of the school's policies on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions. Parents have the opportunity to speak to staff about their child's progress verbally twice a year, but they do not receive a written report. A significant minority of parents commented that they do not know about the complaints procedure.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clear set of procedures for handling complaints fairly and promptly.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The school makes good provision for meeting the needs of children in the EYFS. The staff are both confident and competent in their delivery of the Foundation Stage curriculum but have not had training for the EYFS approaches to learning. The requirements of both the EYFS and the Japanese curriculum are effectively integrated. The children are helped to learn and develop at their own pace and make good progress in their learning in relation to their starting points.

The children play well on their own and with others and learn to communicate in both Japanese and English. They are happy at school and enjoy the planned range of activities. The children behave well and are enthusiastic in their learning, especially when singing in both English and Japanese. They have the opportunity to choose their own resources from a suitable range, which are easily accessible. There is a good balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities, which help to meet all the children's needs well and keep them actively and purposefully engaged. There is a sufficient emphasis on acquiring skills in communication, language and literacy and mathematics, which helps the children to learn and develop.

The staff carefully record the children's progress and development, which is then reported verbally to the parents. The parents report that they are pleased with the provision and positive relationships exist between staff and parents. The children are well known and cared for by the staff in an attractive, supportive and safe environment. The provision is well led and managed by the deputy headteachers in the absence of the headteacher.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (standard 2) and must:

- improve children's knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph 2(d)).

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

- ensure that the school maintains records of current fire safety risk assessments (paragraph 3(5))
- provide staff training in paediatric first-aid and ensure that the first aid policy is amended to include safer procedures for changing children's nappies (paragraph 3(6))
- maintain written records of sanctions imposed upon children 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 staff, details of the medical checks made should be recorded and filed for all Japanese visiting staff (paragraph 4(2)(a)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide hot water for the sinks in the ground floor toilet block on the Finchley site (paragraph 5(a))
- provide appropriate facilities for children who are ill: a place where they can lie down comfortably, where there is hot and cold running water, toilets nearby and where children can be supervised at all times (paragraph 5(l)).

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

- provide particulars of the proprietor's address for correspondence during both term time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which he may be contacted at all times (paragraph 6(2)(b))
- provide particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- provide parents with an annual written report of the progress and attainment of each registered child in the main subject areas taught (paragraph 6(5)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended (DDA) the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.



## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- develop outdoor play facilities for all children, particularly at the Acton site
- provide additional training for all staff to clarify how the curriculum can meet the needs of a Japanese school and those of the EYFS curriculum.

## Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	Good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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### The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?		✓		
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?		✓		
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?		✓		
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?		✓		

## School details

Name of school	Finchley and Acton Yochien		
DCSF number	302/6107		
Unique reference number	131128		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	EY240936 /EY303773 / EY304230 / EY303993 / EY307135		
Type of school	Kindergarten		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	20 April 1993		
Age range of pupils	2–6 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 61	Girls: 65	Total: 126
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls: 2	Total: 4
Number of pupils aged 0-3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 22	Girls: 15	Total: 37
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,310		
Annual fees (childcare)	£5,370		
Address of school	6 Hendon Avenue Finchley London N3 1UE		
Telephone number	0208 3432191		
Fax number	0208 3431747		
Email address	<a href="mailto:phil.lang@golderhillschool.co.uk">phil.lang@golderhillschool.co.uk</a>		
Headteacher	Mr K Kitagaki		
Proprietor	Mr K Maeda		
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry		
Dates of inspection	30 September–1 October 2008		