

The Japanese School

87 Creffield Road, Acton, London W3 9PU

Inspection dates

12 March 2024

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b) and 32(1)(c)

- At the previous inspection in June 2023, these standards were not met as a result of ineffective safeguarding arrangements. At that time, leaders had not ensured that staff were sufficiently trained or knowledgeable about statutory safeguarding guidance. Staff had a limited understanding of key risks that pupils might face, including, for example, online bullying and exploitation.
- This progress monitoring inspection found that leaders, including the members of the proprietor board, have taken a range of suitable actions to address the previous weaknesses. Leaders have introduced a comprehensive programme of training for all staff and those responsible for governance. This is implemented to ensure that staff, including those who join the school directly from Japan, are well equipped to understand the latest statutory safeguarding guidance. Leaders have established a staff induction procedure which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of staff and leaders. It sets out, in a systematic and comprehensive way, what staff need to know and which training staff must attend.
- Staff now have a sharp and up-to-date knowledge of the school's safeguarding arrangements. They follow procedures for reporting and recording concerns about pupils' well-being. Leaders make sure that staff keep up to date with changes to statutory guidance. Leaders attend regular briefings with the local authority to understand the potential risks in Ealing and across London. They ensure that all staff are aware of this information.
- Leaders have put safeguarding at the top of every agenda. As part of raising the profile of safeguarding, leaders have provided parents and carers with information, including workshops, around themes such as online safety. Pupils said that they feel safe and well cared for in school. They know how to report concerns and said that staff take these seriously. Through the curriculum, including in physical education and personal, social, health and economic education lessons, pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe.

Pupils hear from visiting speakers, including on specialist topics, such as the dangers of carrying knives.

- The school's safeguarding policy is suitable. It is published online for parents to read.
- These standards are now met.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(d), 20 (6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(6)

- The previous inspection found that leaders were not following statutory guidance for checking the suitability of staff who apply to work at the school. For example, leaders had not ensured that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks had been completed on all new members of staff, particularly those who arrive from overseas. Leaders had not complied with the statutory requirements for schools to obtain a separate barred list check if a member of staff works with pupils before a DBS certificate is available. Statutory prohibition from teaching checks had not been carried out. Arrangements for checking the suitability of members of the proprietor body were unsuitable.
- Leaders, including members of the proprietor body, have worked effectively to address the issues identified at the previous inspection. Leaders now have a clear understanding of what checks must be carried out. The single central record of pre-employment checks is now compliant. Record-keeping is well organised. It demonstrates that leaders ensure that all the required checks are conducted before staff begin employment, including those who join from overseas and members of the proprietor board.
- Leaders have established effective systems for checking recruitment arrangements. Members of the proprietor board check the school's safeguarding records and leaders commission audits to assure themselves that procedures are robust.
- These standards are now met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 33, 33(f), 33(g), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii) and 33(k)

- At the previous inspection leaders did not have appropriate systems in place for managing complaints.
- This progress monitoring inspection found that the school now has a suitable complaints procedure. Leaders have a clear understanding of how to manage complaints, including at informal stages.
- These standards are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- At the previous inspection, members of the proprietor body were not familiar with their statutory duties relating to safeguarding. As a result, arrangements for safeguarding were not effective. The proprietor body had not ensured that leaders had the necessary expertise and knowledge to make sure that the school met the independent school standards.

- Leaders have taken seriously the weaknesses found at the previous inspection. They have used the expertise of external consultants as well as support from the local authority safeguarding teams. Together, they have overhauled the school's procedures to make these fit for purpose and to reflect statutory safeguarding guidance. Leaders' work has had a direct impact on the school's culture of safeguarding. Procedures, including for recruitment, are now robust. Additionally, staff now have a stronger understanding of the part they play in keeping pupils safe.
- The school now has a larger team of trained safeguarding leaders. No time is wasted in ensuring that staff are well trained in safeguarding matters. The revised induction arrangements, including the staff handbook, are comprehensive and clear. Leaders have given particular consideration to the 'rotation' of staff and how this should be managed. This means that the school is now better prepared for changes to staffing when teachers or leaders move to and from Japan.
- Leaders have ensured that the previously unmet standards related to safeguarding, staff suitability checks and the school's complaints procedure are now met.
- However, over time, leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards have been met consistently. While they have taken effective action to put things right since the previous inspection, their work, including these new arrangements and procedures, needs time to embed, and in turn, ensure that the improvements made recently can be sustained. Therefore, the standards in this part are not met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	101958
DfE registration number	307/6070
Inspection number	10317711

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 status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 15
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	288
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Japanese School Limited
Chair	Shigeki Okada
Headteacher	Masahiko Sato
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,741
Telephone number	020 8993 7145
Website	www.thejapaneseschool.ltd.uk
Email address	ron-nichi@thejapaneseschool.ltd.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	6 to 8 June 2023

Information about this school

- The Japanese School provides for the children of expatriates who are working in London for a temporary and limited period until they return to Japan. The school is partially funded by the Japanese government. The senior leadership team and most teachers come from Japan and work in this school for two to three years before returning to Japan.

- The proprietor body comprises a group of Japanese companies. The proprietor board members are representatives of these companies who are currently working in the United Kingdom. Employees of different companies take on this role on an annual rotation basis.
- The school follows the Japanese national curriculum, supplemented by aspects of the English national curriculum. Almost all teaching is in Japanese, which is spoken by staff and pupils. The Japanese academic year starts in April.
- The school's is registered to admit up to 400 pupils.
- The school's last full standard inspection took place in June 2023.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The school's most recent inspection was in June 2023 when it was judged to be inadequate and not compliant with the independent school standards.
- Following the inspection in June 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) required the school to prepare an action plan. This action plan was reviewed by Ofsted in October 2023 and subsequently rejected by the DfE.
- This was the school's first progress monitoring inspection since the standard inspection. It was conducted without notice.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders, members of the proprietor board and groups of staff. The inspector met with pupils and toured the school building. The inspector reviewed documentation related to safeguarding, complaints and staff recruitment.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection

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.

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

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)(a) no such person is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that person is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 to that Act;
 - 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)(d) the proprietor ensures that, where relevant to any such person, an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of that person and an enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after that person's appointment.
- 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)(i) is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that individual is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 of that Act; and
- 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)(i) where relevant to the individual, an enhanced criminal record check.

■ 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)(ii) a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act;
- 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)(v) an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained in respect of S;
- 21(3)(a)(vi) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(d);
- 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.

■ 21(4) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to each member of staff in post on 1st August 2007 who was appointed at any time before 1st May 2007, whether each check referred to in sub-paragraph (3) was made and whether an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained, together with the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained.

■ 21(6) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation each member ("MB") of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether the checks referred to in paragraph 20(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained.

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); and
 - 33(k) provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

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