

The Japanese School

87 Creffield Road, Acton, London W3 9PU

Inspection date

1 October 2024

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

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 monitoring inspection in March 2024, the school had ensured that most of the previously unmet independent school standards (the standards) identified at the time of the last standard inspection in June 2023, were then met. These related to safeguarding, staff suitability checks and the school's complaints procedure. However, over time, the school had not ensured that all of the standards in Part 8 had been met consistently. The March 2024 inspection found that arrangements and procedures needed time to embed to ensure that the improvements made could be sustained.
- Since the previous inspection, the proprietor body and the school have taken a range of steps to secure sustainability in ensuring that the school meets the standards consistently. A new cohort of seconded teachers and the new headteacher arrived from Japan in April 2024. Before arriving, they were required to read 'Keeping children safe in education' and information about the standards. This was followed up by an online training session delivered by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). On arrival in England, the new staff had further face-to-face training which strengthened their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and the standards.
- As a matter of course, all staff are given regular safeguarding update training. These sessions are followed up by an ongoing programme of checking and auditing of staff's knowledge. The school analyses the responses from staff and uses the findings to inform further training.
- To further strengthen the culture of safeguarding and ensure that all requirements are met consistently, the school now has five safeguarding leaders who are trained as DSLs. The proprietor body made these appointments with careful consideration to ensure that their roles would make the most impact on the school and support continuity.
- The proprietor body changes the chair of the board annually. In the past, the chair had often arrived recently from Japan, with limited initial understanding of the statutory duties for proprietors of independent schools. The proprietor has changed these arrangements to work on a three-year cycle. The current chair, for example, spent one

year as a vice-chair before becoming the chair. The current vice-chair will become the chair next year, during which time the current chair will remain on the board and mentor the new chair. The intention is to continue with this model to ensure that the chair has both the experience and support that they need during their tenure. The proprietor body are currently interviewing local prospective proprietor board members, as they wish to appoint one who permanently resides in England. This is to secure more continuity and consistency of the board's expertise in their statutory duties.

- To further help the proprietor body and the school to meet the standards consistently, the school has commissioned external consultants. The school draws effectively on these consultants to develop its knowledge and expertise in education and governance. For example, the school commissions external consultants to carry out reviews across the school's work and use their findings to deliver advice, guidance and training to the school. This has already made a strong contribution to securing the school's understanding and implementation of the standards and other requirements. The school intends for external consultants to continue to work with the school until at least July 2025.
- These standards are now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets 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. 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.

The school now meets the following independent school standards.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	101958
DfE registration number	307/6070
Inspection number	10356349

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
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	293
Proprietor	The Japanese School Limited
Chair	Shigeki Okada
Headteacher	Kiyoshi Nobuta
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,777
Telephone number	020 8993 7145
Website	www.thejapaneseschool.ltd.uk/nihonjingakko/
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 is registered to admit up to 400 pupils.
- The current headteacher assumed his post in April 2024.
- The school's last full standard inspection took place in June 2023. The school's last progress monitoring inspection was in March 2024.
- The school does 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 a progress monitoring inspection in March 2024, when it was judged that part 8 of the standards remained unmet. The school's previous standard inspection was in June 2023 when it was judged to be inadequate and not compliant with the independent school standards.
- Following the inspection in March 2024, the Department for Education (DfE) required the school to prepare an action plan. This action plan was reviewed by Ofsted in June 2024 and subsequently rejected by the DfE.
- This was the school's second progress monitoring inspection since the standard inspection. It was conducted without notice.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders, members of the proprietor board, a group of staff and two groups of pupils. The inspector also met with three external consultants commissioned by the proprietor body to support the school.
- The inspection considered the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the single central register of pre-employment checks and whether the school's safeguarding policy is available to parents and carers. These requirements of the independent school standards are met.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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