

INSPECTION REPORT

Japanese School

Report published in April 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Japanese School

Location	Al Wasl
Type of school	Private
Website	www.japanese.sch.ae
Telephone	04-3449119
Address	P.O Box 7149
Principal	Mr. Massanori Nagamine
Curriculum	Japanese
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	6-15 years / Grade 1-Grade 9
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	133
Largest nationality group of Students	Japanese
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	11th November to 12th November

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The context of the school

The Japanese School in Dubai, situated in Al Wasl, provides a private education for Japanese boys and girls from Primary to Junior High, aged six to 15 years. The school follows the prescribed Japanese Ministry of Education curriculum. The primary phase, from Grade 1 to Grade 6, is followed by the Junior High phase, from Grade 7 to Grade 9. Almost all students return to Japan to complete their high school years. Japanese, mathematics, social studies, art, home science and science are taught in Japanese. Arabic and English are taught as additional languages. At the time of inspection there were 133 students on the roll. The school had no Emirati or Muslim students. Attendance was outstanding.

The school used a variety of externally generated tests to monitor students' progress. In the primary phase students were tested using standardized tests annually as well as school-based tests at the end of each term. In the Junior High School, students sat the Japanese Nationwide examinations four times per year. Almost all of the school's 20 staff were expatriates selected by the Japanese Ministry of Education. The 18 teachers were well qualified academically and had appropriate teaching qualifications. They were supported by three teaching assistants. At the time of the inspection the principal was completing his third year in the position.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Good

Key strengths

- Across both phases attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science were good. They were outstanding in Japanese.
- Attitudes and behaviour of all students were outstanding;
- The school's extremely positive learning ethos was underpinned by excellent relationships;
- Teaching for effective learning and assessment were good;
- Partnerships with parents were outstanding.

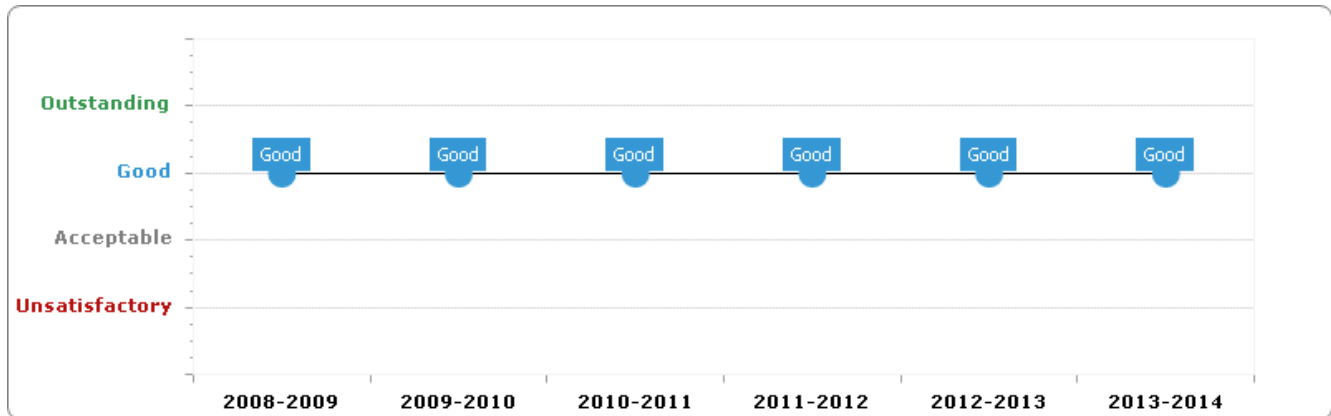
Recommendations

- Use assessment to:
 - identify the needs of different groups in each class;
 - ensure appropriate work is planned to meet the needs of each group;
 - ensure that there is sufficient challenge for the most able students;
 - involve all students in evaluating their own learning and that of their peers.
- Build upon the training for teachers to ensure they accurately identify students with special educational needs (SEN) and provide a modified programme to meet their individual requirements.
- Determine the key priorities for improvement and then produce a focused action plan. Ensure that evaluation of progress against the action plan is more rigorous and analytical.
- Address the shortfall in time allocated for the teaching of Arabic to meet MoE requirements.

Progress since the last inspection

- Teaching quality remained good. There had been an improvement in the provision of ICT equipment for students' use. In some subjects, notably science and Japanese and this was beginning to have a positive effect on students' learning.
- There had been significant efforts to promote health and well-being and the students had responded enthusiastically.
- Staff had undertaken training in the teaching of special needs children but had not systematically identified students with SEN or those who were gifted and talented and did not provide consistent and effective support or appropriate challenge for such students.
- The school still did not meet MoE requirements for provision for Arabic as an additional language.

Trend of overall performance



How good are the students' attainment progress and learning skills?

	Elementary	High
Islamic Education		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as a first language		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an additional language		
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Acceptable
Japanese		
Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding
Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding
English		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good
Mathematics		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good
Science		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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	Elementary	High
Quality of students' learning skills	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Elementary	High
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

	Elementary	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

	Elementary	High
Curriculum quality	Good	Good
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Elementary	High
Health and Safety	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Good
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Acceptable
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress?

In both phases, attainment was acceptable in Arabic, good in English, mathematics and science and outstanding in Japanese. Students in all grades consistently achieved results in English, Japanese, mathematics and science which were well above those achieved by students in Japan. In Arabic as an additional language, most students in both phases showed appropriate listening and conversational skills, could read and comprehend familiar words and used them in simple sentences to an adequate level. Reading comprehension and writing skills were less well developed. In English, speaking and listening skills were also more advanced than writing skills. By Grade 9, writing was well formed, spelling and grammar were accurate and students could speak fluently using extended sentences with good vocabulary and grammatical structure. Students read and wrote independently and to a high standard in Japanese and they probed well beyond the textbook and demonstrated excellent critical thinking. In mathematics, students in the upper stages demonstrated good knowledge of algebra and geometry and used mathematical formulae confidently to solve problems. Practical skills in science were good and students had a good age-related understanding of appropriate concepts such as digestion, chemical reactions and forces. In the upper grades, students used technology well in Japanese and science to research and deliver presentations.

Progress was acceptable in Arabic as an additional language in high school and good in Elementary. In both phases progress was good in English, mathematics and science and outstanding in Japanese. In Arabic, elementary students made better progress in applying new words in basic oral and written tasks. In high grades, students developed adequate understanding of texts but only a minority developed the ability to write independently. Whilst progress in English writing was good, students performed better in their reading, speaking and listening skills. In mathematics, older students made good progress in making inferences and linking concepts to solve problems. Throughout the school, students demonstrated increasing mastery of the concepts of science but lacked opportunities to develop independent investigative skills. In Japanese, students progressed particularly well in applying critical thinking to the analysis of origin of characters and words.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

Across the school, attitudes to learning were positive. Students were diligent and demonstrated an enthusiasm for learning. Although some students were passive in their learning, they knew what they had learned and how to improve their work. Throughout the school, most students were capable of independent research and were enthusiastic when teachers provided open-ended and challenging tasks. Students learning Arabic were enthusiastic about the language. Students supported each other well and were willing to lead presentations. When they worked together as a team they were collaborative and respectful of each other's points of view. Increasingly, they made links across their subject learning and with real life contexts. Critical thinking skills were a developing feature of learning, best demonstrated in Japanese lessons.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students were self-disciplined and showed positive and mature attitudes. Their behaviour was excellent at all times. Relationships between students were very respectful and cordial. They demonstrated outstanding responsibility through cleaning of school grounds and the watering of garden plants. Regular exercise and eating habits that promote healthy living were strictly followed. Attendance was outstanding and punctuality to lessons and school events was excellent. Students understanding of Islamic values and their role in Dubai was strong. Students visited local mosques and used Islamic greetings when meeting Muslims. Their appreciation of UAE culture was evident on school displays, performance of the National Anthem and visits to Emirati cultural sites. Students researched and reported on Dubai features and cultural landmarks. They promoted a strong Japanese cultural ethos in the school and were well aware of similarities and differences between UAE and Japan. Students had strong links with the community through exchange programmes with local schools in which they met other students and wrote about their experiences. The student council was active and had a strong voice in the school. Students showed excellent work ethics and took good care of the school. They participated in recycling and conservation, and increased their environmental awareness through visits to DEWA and a sewage treatment plant.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching was good overall, with some examples of very effective teaching. The positive rapport between teachers and students ensured a productive learning environment in most classes. Teachers had good subject knowledge and used it well to probe the understanding of students. Effective questioning skills engaged most students well. Teachers had high expectations for students' achievement. Whilst the best lessons provided challenge, a lively pace and opportunities for independent and paired learning, this was not consistent in all lessons. Almost all lessons were well-planned and the purpose of activities was clear, although a summary of the lesson was not always done. There were missed opportunities to make use of information and communication technology (ICT) in some lessons although it was a strong feature in Japanese and science lessons. Teachers did not always accommodate the different learning styles of students, and those with special educational needs were sometimes overlooked. There were significant strengths in the teaching of physical education, home economics and social subjects.

The quality of assessment procedures was good. Most teachers had a very good knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses. The comprehensive collection of data about individual students permitted an effective process for recording their achievements and monitoring progress. These assessment data, coupled with external examination results, were the basis for informative progress reports for parents. However, there was insufficient involvement of students in the assessment process. In almost all instances, the marking of students' work was routinely completed, but supportive comments to indicate how students might improve their work were not always evident.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

The quality of the curriculum was good in both phases. It had clear aims and rationale and offered an enriched version of the Japanese Ministry of Education curriculum, which provided a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities for students. It did not meet MoE requirements for Arabic as an additional language. From Grade 1 to 9, there was a strong progression of concepts with most students challenged as they moved up through the school. All students studied English and Arabic in addition to the Japanese Ministry of Education curriculum. All students had daily reading time to develop literacy in Japanese, as well as morning homeroom exercise and school cleaning before classes began. Extra-curricular activities included school partnership visits and exchanges, annual music, drama, sports festivals, the community outreach programme and field trips.

The school had made limited adjustments to the curriculum to provide tasks that were closely matched to students' different abilities in some classes, especially Japanese but it did not routinely meet the needs of students with special educational needs or those who were gifted and talented. The range of curriculum subjects provided suitable opportunities for students to follow their aspirations. The inclusion of Arabic and English was valuable to those students wishing to continue their education in an international community. Extra-curricular clubs were not extensive but did provide some further opportunities for students to develop specific talents and follow their interests, especially in sporting activities.

[View judgments](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and safety provisions were good across the school. Medical staff effectively monitored students' health. Medicines and hazardous substances were securely stored. Full records were kept in relation to health and safety. All students participated enthusiastically in daily school cleaning and understood the importance of hygiene. The school had established a committee 'Supporting Mind & Body' which launched effective initiatives to promote health and well-being, such as the Marathon Challenge to encourage running. It led monthly meetings of all teachers to discuss aspects of the health, social and emotional well-being of students. The premises were secure and students felt safe. Emergency procedures were well documented and rehearsed and great care was taken when students were transported to and from school and while on educational visits. Child protection arrangements were understood by all teachers and staff members.

The quality of support was good across the school. Very good supportive relationships between staff and students based on mutual respect were a notable feature of the school. There were good systems to promote regular and prompt attendance of students. As a result, attendance was outstanding. The skills of staff in identifying students with special educational needs were still developing and measures to promote the support of students who find learning difficult were emerging. Additionally, lessons did not provide sufficient challenge to promote the effective development of students who were gifted and talented. The exception to this was the support available for students whose learning needs differed from those of their peers. Staff knew students well, exchanged information about the progress and welfare of individual students efficiently and gave a high priority to their well-being. Students were confident to seek help and advice when needed for a range of personal matters as well as future careers guidance.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was good and there was a consistent vision and sense of purpose. The Japanese Ministry of Education curriculum was delivered to a good standard with additional enrichment in relation to the multicultural nature of Dubai. Distribution of leadership roles was at an early stage and had not had significant impact. Communication within the school was excellent as were relationships at all levels. The school leaders had the capacity to continue improvement but the three yearly staff rotation interrupts the continuing process of school improvement.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. The school regularly sought feedback from parents, students and staff and used this to inform planning but did not have systematic processes for identifying key areas for improvement. Very good analysis of performance data was not adequately used in planning. Team involvement in planning and self-evaluation was at an early stage of development. Self-evaluation was too descriptive and insufficiently analytical. Staff had annual planning reviews which, along with peer observation, informed professional development needs. The school had made insufficient progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection report.

Links with parents and the community were outstanding. Parent involvement was highly productive and helped improve learning and attainment. Excellent two-way communication ensured that parents understood what was happening in school and that the school responded to the views of parents. Parents valued the school reports. The links with the Japanese community were excellent and students had strong links with the community through exchange programmes with local schools.

Governance was acceptable. The board included relevant stakeholders and met regularly receiving and considering reports from parents, teachers and the principal. Board members determined the allocation of resources and had addressed some areas of weakness. However they had not ensured that any of the recommendations in the previous report had been fully met and the school remained non-compliant with MoE requirements regarding provision of Arabic as an additional language. The board was not sufficiently challenging in holding the school to account for performance.

Management was acceptable. Daily procedures and routines were effective and efficient. Teachers were well qualified and deployed. The school had invested significantly in ICT and students were starting to use this in lessons. However, this had yet to have an effect on improving standards.

Premises were acceptable and adequately maintained but, although there was ample space in most classrooms, the science laboratory was just adequate for the school's largest classes. The library was little more than a large book cupboard and the number and quality of books in English and Arabic required improvement.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

The school had begun to look at this area of their work in a more systematic manner. All staff had received some on-line training based on educational material from Japan but there was only limited evidence that this had significantly improve provision because programmes of study had not yet been modified to meet the needs of students. All staff were caring and showed concern for their students but no member of staff had been trained to identify, assess and plan the necessary support for any identified students. Some students were noted as being of concern in the school but very limited action had been taken to assess and monitor these students. The school had put in place an outline special educational needs policy. This was not yet effective and as a result, the monitoring of students with identified or possible special educational needs was currently unsatisfactory.

What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys			
Responses received	Number		Percentage
Parents	This year	73	83%
	Last year	74	75%
Teachers	18		100%
Students	There were no senior students in the school		

*The percentage of responses from parents is based on the number of families.

The following statements were based on the survey response at the time of the inspection. The above response figures are the most up-to-date and accurate available prior to publication.

Most parents and all teachers who responded to the survey were very positive about the school. Nearly all thought their children were making good progress in all subjects and enjoyed school. However, around a third said their children received private tuition out of school. Nearly all considered that their children were safe on buses and in school and that student behaviour was good. Most felt they were listened to by the school and that it was led well. A minority felt that their children were not making good enough progress in English and Arabic and a similar proportion felt the range of subjects and activities was not wide enough. All teachers were very positive. All felt student behaviour was good and that the school leaders listened to their views.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan should address:

- Recommendations from DSIB;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school;
- Priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report you should contact:

inspection@khda.gov.ae

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