

INSPECTION REPORT

2022-2023



JAPANESE SCHOOL

JAPANESE CURRICULUM

GOOD

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SCHOOL INFORMATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

	Location	Al Wasl
	Opening year of School	1980
	Website	www.japanese.sch.ae
	Telephone	97143449119
	Principal	Masao Wada
	Principal - Date appointed	9/1/2019
	Language of Instruction	Japanese
	Inspection Dates	13 to 17 February 2023

STUDENTS

	Gender of students	Boys and girls
	Age range	4 to 15
	Grades or year groups	KG 1 to High
	Number of students on roll	174
	Number of Emirati students	2
	Number of students of determination	3
	Largest nationality group of students	Japanese

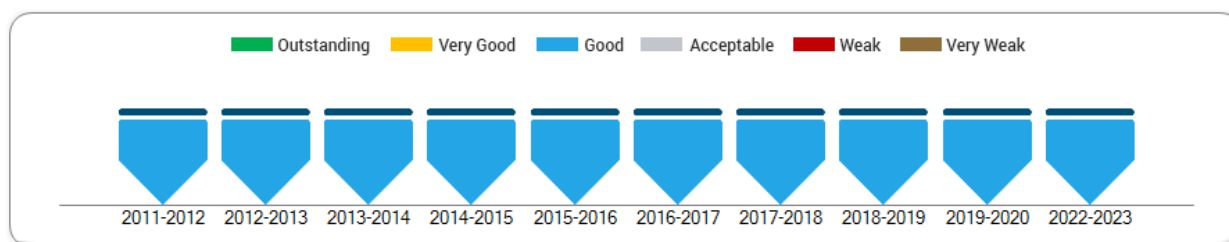
TEACHERS

	Number of teachers	26
	Largest nationality group of teachers	Japanese
	Number of teaching assistants	3
	Teacher-student ratio	1:18
	Number of guidance counsellors	1
	Teacher turnover	30%

CURRICULUM

	Educational Permit/ License	Japanese
	Main Curriculum	Japanese Ministry of Education
	External Tests and Examinations	NA
	Accreditation	NA

School Journey for JAPANESE SCHOOL



Summary of Inspection Findings 2022-2023

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for students' outcomes, provision and leadership.

STUDENTS OUTCOMES

- In KG, children's attainment in mathematics and science is good, and very good in English. Progress in all three subjects is good. Attainment and progress in Arabic are acceptable. Attainment and progress in English and science are good in Elementary and High. In mathematics, attainment and progress are good in Elementary and very good in High. The few students of determination in the school make steady progress.
- Students demonstrate excellent behaviour and positive attitudes towards learning. Attendance rates are very high. Relationships between students and their teachers are strong. Students have good cultural awareness, particularly those in High. They also have a well-developed sense of social responsibility.

PROVISION FOR LEARNERS

- Teaching is consistently good across the school. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and good understanding of how students learn, particularly in KG. The use of digital technology is limited. Teachers' questioning is mostly effective and their feedback to students is generally constructive. The level of challenge is not always high enough for the more able. Assessment systems are reliable.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is well aligned to Japanese standards and expectations. It is enhanced by additional Arabic and English classes, social and moral studies and reading programmes. Modifications to meet the needs of some students are appropriate. The school does not fully meet the statutory requirements of the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE).
- The school has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures. Classrooms and outside areas are safe and clean. Maintenance and safety checks are undertaken frequently, and any incidents are responded to adequately. Safety checks are not robust. Healthy living is well embedded in school life. The school is successful in promoting very good attendance and punctuality. Members of staff are caring and supportive.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Leaders ensure that the school provides a positive learning environment. The school's self-evaluation gives accurate views on students' academic and personal development. However, improvement planning does not address the issues of limited resources and outdated school facilities. Leaders involve parents in the life of the school. The constant change in governors does not help to sustain a clear direction. The daily operation of the school is well organised. Staff are appropriately qualified.

The best features of the school:

- The authentic Japanese learning experience and the curriculum that is well aligned with that in Japan.
- Students' positive behaviour, their attitudes to learning and their relationships with their teachers and their fellow students.
- The good attainment of students across all phases in English, mathematics and science.






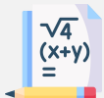

Key Recommendations:

- Enhance the rigour of safety checks and the maintenance of facilities and resources.
- Ensure full compliance with the UAE curriculum requirements and establish comprehensive systems for tracking students' progress over time.
- Define more clearly the roles of the owners, governors and senior leaders, and establish clear lines of accountability.




Overall School Performance

Good

1. Students' Achievement

		KG	Elementary	High
 Islamic Education	Attainment	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
 Arabic as a First Language	Attainment	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
 Arabic as an Additional Language	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
 Language of instruction	Attainment	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
 English	Attainment	Very good	Good ↓	Good ↓
	Progress	Good ↓	Good ↓	Good ↓
 Mathematics	Attainment	Good	Good ↓	Very good
	Progress	Good	Good ↓	Very good
 Science	Attainment	Good	Good ↓	Good
	Progress	Good	Good ↓	Good
		KG	Elementary	High
Learning skills		Good ↓	Good ↓	Good


2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills

	KG	Elementary	High
Personal development	Very good	Very good	Very good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Very good 
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good 	Good 

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good	Good

4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good 	Good 

5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students

	KG	Elementary	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/ safeguarding	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Care and support	Good	Good	Good

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership	Good
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Weak
Parents and the community	Very good
Governance	Weak
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

For further information regarding the inspection process, please look at [UAE School Inspection Framework](#).

Wellbeing

The quality of wellbeing provision and outcomes is at a **high level**.

- School leaders and the whole school community have a clear vision for wellbeing, which is supported by the high profile accorded to it in almost all areas of school life. A clear wellbeing policy is monitored by a dedicated governor. Leaders gather adequate information about most wellbeing needs from surveys of different stakeholders. The school's wellbeing leader has been successful in creating an action plan which, though lacking in clear success criteria, identifies appropriate areas for development. Understanding more fully the wellbeing needs of staff is an important priority.
- Throughout the harmonious school community, there is an awareness of everyone's responsibility to contribute to wellbeing. Students are very alert to the wellbeing issues of their classmates and actively and visibly support one another. Parents are very pleased with the contribution which the school makes to wellbeing. They indicate that their children are very well supported. Some members of staff say that when they raise concerns, their worries are not fully or immediately addressed.
- Through the strong relationships and monthly meetings between students and teachers, the school provides regular and routine high-quality personal and academic guidance. This increases students' sense of wellbeing and promotes positive attitudes and a high level of personal development. The school's health education programme effectively supports students in making healthy choices in their daily lives. In lessons, Students are self-motivated and enthusiastic about learning. Resilience and perseverance are regularly demonstrated.

UAE social studies and Moral Education

- UAE social studies and moral education have been modified and are taught as an integrated subject across the phases. The course is delivered in two fifty-minute periods each week. Students in Elementary and High use the Minaret Programme, which adds to religious and cultural knowledge. The UAE framework is fully embedded, and the subject is now fully compliant.
- Lessons are well planned, structured and build on students' previous knowledge. Teaching encourages students to adopt high personal and moral values. Assessment is clearly linked to curriculum plans which are shared with students across the phases. Adaptation of the curriculum provides individual challenge for students throughout the school.

Main Inspection Report

1. Students' Achievement

Arabic as an Additional Language

	KG	Elementary	High
Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Most students achieve the expected levels. Students' progress is restricted by the limited amount of time allocated to the subject. The school's assessment data are high, with no external benchmark assessments to support them. No significant differences exist between boys and girls.
- Students' listening skills are a strength. Most students can respond to their teachers' instructions well. Their spoken responses are often very short, with a limited range of vocabulary. Most can understand short texts. Extensive reading is underdeveloped.
- Free and extended writing has improved slightly. Students have more opportunities to write about different topics. However, most of the writing tasks are not sufficiently challenging. Students often write no more than a few lines using repetitive forms and simple structures.

For Development:

- Ensure that students' outcomes are aligned with MoE curriculum standards.
- Expand the range of vocabulary and structures that students use and improve their reading and speaking.

English

	KG	Elementary	High
Attainment	Very good	Good ↓	Good ↓
Progress	Good ↓	Good ↓	Good ↓

- The majority reads fluently, but without expression. Students can extract information from a text at an appropriate level. They follow a systematic programme in learning to read but lack strategies to decode unfamiliar words.
- Listening and speaking skills, including the introduction of new vocabulary, are key priorities. The promotion of listening and speaking has been particularly successful in KG. Students have frequent opportunities to share and communicate their ideas. They mainly use simple sentence structures, with little evidence of complexity.
- Students are not clear about the expectations of writing in different styles. Although they learn a wide range of English grammar, they have too few opportunities to apply their knowledge in independent writing.

For Development:

- Ensure that students are taught to read with expression, and to use strategies to decode unfamiliar words.
- Teach specific writing skills to support students in applying their knowledge of English grammar when writing extended pieces independently.

Mathematics

	KG	Elementary	High
Attainment	Good	Good ↓	Very good
Progress	Good	Good ↓	Very good

- Internal assessments indicate stronger attainment in Elementary and High compared with those observed in lessons and in workbooks. Students' performance declined in the Japanese Norm Referenced Tests (NRT) in 2022 compared with the previous cohort in 2019, although attainment is still strong in the high school.
- In KG, a large majority of children can add and subtract within 20 and recognise double-digit numbers and clock numbers. They understand the number of minutes represented by each numeral on the clock and can read the time.
- Students do not develop sufficient skills of critical thinking, problem-solving, independence and digital competence, as required by the previous inspection report. There is increased practical application of mathematical skills and understanding in the lower elementary phase.

For Development:

- Focus on students' acquisition of mathematical skills and understanding, and their application to everyday contexts.

Science

	KG	Elementary	High
Attainment	Good	Good ↓	Good
Progress	Good	Good ↓	Good

- The majority of students across all phases applies strong scientific investigation skills. For example, in KG, children begin to establish skills as young scientists through investigating how vegetables are grown and their importance in a balanced diet.
- Elementary students extend their practical and investigation skills as they increase their knowledge and understanding about magnetic energy, and the changes in the state of water from liquid to vapour when heated. In Grade 6, they can design their own experiments, although their methodology is not refined.
- The majority of students in the high phase shows good understanding of electricity. In Grade 8, students can apply knowledge of circuits and Ohm's Law. Grade 9 students record observations of experiments about chemical reactions. Students do not yet share sufficient details of their investigations as effectively as they should.

For Development:

- Extend opportunities for students to design their own experiments.
- Strengthen opportunities for students to compare how other groups have solved similar problems so that they can discover different approaches and methods of testing.

Learning Skills

	KG	Elementary	High
Learning skills	Good ↓	Good ↓	Good

- Children in KG collaborate, but less so than in other phases. Collaboration is slightly stronger in science lessons. Most students know what they are learning, but not necessarily how to improve their work.
- Students across the school are enthusiastic learners, who take some responsibility for their learning. They have positive attitudes and can work unsupervised for periods of time, commensurate with their age and stage of development. Students make links between their learning and the world beyond school.
- Students apply independent inquiry, research and problem-solving skills routinely in their science lessons. These skills are less evident in other subjects. The use of digital technology to support learning is not an intrinsic feature of lessons.

For Development:

- Ensure that students are consistently given clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Encourage students routinely to use digital technology to support independent inquiry, research, enterprise and innovation across all phases and subjects.

2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills

	KG	Elementary	High
Personal development	Very good	Very good	Very good

- Students demonstrate very positive and responsible attitudes towards learning and their school. Their behaviour in class and at break times is excellent. Relationships between the students are very secure. They are sensitive to the needs of others and show genuine concern for them.
- Students' understanding of healthy lifestyles is a strength. Most make healthy choices for their food and drinks. They participate in the schools' sporting activities and encourage others to do so.
- The school's policies and its behaviour management programmes have a very positive impact on students' attendance, which is very good. Students' punctuality in arriving at school and to classes after breaks is very high.

	KG	Elementary	High
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Very good ↑

- Students are aware of Islamic values and understand their relevance to modern society in the UAE. Most students, particularly the seniors, appreciate the diversity in the country and how people of different cultures live in peace and harmony.
- A particular strength is students' understanding of their own culture. They are proud of their own country and can give details of its history, art and tourist attractions. Their appreciation of world cultures is stronger in the upper phases.
- Students' awareness of the heritage and culture of the UAE has a positive impact throughout the school. Their awareness is enhanced by a number of activities arranged by the school or run by students themselves.

	KG	Elementary	High
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good ↓	Good ↓

- Students are caring and considerate of one another and respectful of adults. They are aware of their responsibilities in taking care of their immediate environment and of the wider community.
- Students have a positive work ethic. They enjoy opportunities to contribute ideas and to lead a range of projects in the school. One such is the radio club that is responsible for the production of the school's lunchtime radio programme.
- Students are aware of environmental and sustainability issues. Associated projects are in the early stages of development. Students understand and actively promote recycling. Some grow vegetables and others care for the school tortoises.

For Development:

- Provide more cross-cultural activities for students to enable them to compare their own culture with other cultures.
- Provide more opportunities for students to engage in sustainability and conservation activities that affect the local and wider communities.

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good

- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure in all phases. In KG, teachers have a good understanding of how young children learn. The majority of teachers plans activities to meet learners' needs. There is a lack of resources, including digital technology, to support independent learning.
- Teachers, especially in science lessons, question students effectively, and extend their critical thinking and reasoning skills. In some lessons, teachers do not fully develop students' ability to think critically, to reason or to justify their opinions.
- Teachers provide some challenge and support for students. However, the level of challenge is not always effective, therefore limiting progress. There is evidence of the development of some higher- order thinking skills. Innovation, enterprise and creativity are not common features in lessons.

	KG	Elementary	High
Assessment	Good	Good	Good

- Internal assessment processes are effectively linked as appropriate to the Japanese and the UAE curricula. The data are compared with Japanese national outcomes, but not benchmarked against international standards. The tracking of students' progress is difficult because of the transient nature of many students and teachers.
- Assessments are well used to plan students' next steps in learning. Teaching is usually adapted for different ability groups and effectively planned to meet students' individual needs and to address gaps in learning.
- Teachers provide positive support and guidance in lessons. They offer appropriate, but insufficiently targeted, challenge for a few abler students. Marking and oral feedback to students is always positive and supportive. However, their quality and effectiveness vary across subjects.

For Development:

- Strengthen systems to track students' progress.
- Personalise the challenge and support provided for students and ensure that they make expected progress.

4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The school is not compliant with MoE requirements in the elementary and high phases. The curriculum in the higher phases meets the requirements of the Japanese Ministry of Education. It is broad and balanced, and ensures progression and continuity, important for those students hoping to return to Japan.
- The KG curriculum aligns with the Japanese curriculum. Its key priorities are to develop independent thought and action, care for others, inspired activity, and physical and mental strength.
- The school conducts periodic reviews of the curriculum after analysing students' performance in tests. The curriculum is adapted to ensure adequate provision in most subjects and to meet the academic and personal development needs of almost all students.

	KG	Elementary	High
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑

- Adaptation of the curriculum has resulted in improvements in provision. Teachers adjust classroom practice and modify lesson activities effectively using strategies identified in individual education programmes (IEPs) to meet the needs of students of determination.
- Well-planned and considered community visits encourage students to make links between their learning and everyday contexts, such as the Grade 8 three-day work experience. Opportunities for innovation and enterprise are limited. Extra-curricular activities are resuming after curtailment due to the recent pandemic.
- Links with Emirati culture and society are largely delivered through the Minaret Programme, which is specifically designed to ensure students' exposure to the traditions and festivals of the UAE.
- There is no provision for Arabic in KG.

For Development:

- Ensure compliance with MoE requirements.
- Enable students to acquire innovation and enterprise skills.

5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students

	KG	Elementary	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The school has adequate safeguarding policies and procedures, including those for cyber-safety. Classrooms and playground areas are well supervised and clean. Practical measures are in place to keep children and students safe, particularly in KG.
- Healthy living is embedded in the curriculum and includes regular physical exercise and classes in home economics. Safety around transport has been significantly improved. Bus and car parking areas are separate, with barriers between them and the school buildings.
- Maintenance and safety checks are undertaken regularly, and any incidents are responded to quickly. However, procedures for, and documentation of, safety checks are unsystematic. Records lack some details, including dates, actions taken and outcomes.

	KG	Elementary	High
Care and support	Good	Good	Good

- Teachers have very positive and trusting relationships with their students. Students feel valued because they are treated with respect and allowed to take responsibility for their excellent behaviour. The school successfully promotes very good attendance and punctuality.
- Appropriate systems are in place for identifying students of determination. Teachers are aware of those with gifts and talents. Support is less successful in nurturing the potential of gifted students.
- Students' health and wellbeing are a high priority for the school and are underpinned by the alertness and guidance of dedicated staff. Older students receive good advice and guidance on possible future careers.

For Development:

- Ensure that safety checks are systematic, and that incidents and responses are well documented.
- Provide effective support to nurture the full potential of all students.

Inclusion of students of determination

Provision and outcomes for students of determination

Acceptable 

- The inclusion governor and school leaders show commitment to an inclusive school which accommodates students of determination. The qualified teacher who leads the inclusion department knows the students well.
- Appropriate systems, with support from teachers and parents, are used to identify students of determination. Provision in the classroom is supported by the qualified teacher and adequately meets the needs of these students.
- Parents appreciate the support provided for their children. They are involved in planning IEPs. They feel well informed and able to assist at home, through the detailed reports which they receive, both formal and informal.
- A specialist teacher provides support within and outside classes. Planning identifies areas of difficulty. Individualised modifications are made within lessons to support academic progress and to develop social and communication skills. However, learning targets are unspecific and so progress is not always clear.
- In relation to their starting points, students of determination are making progress. The school is very successful in promoting personal development. Consequently, students develop positive attitudes which support progress towards their learning goals.

For Development:

- Ensure that IEPs have specific and measurable targets so that teachers and students know when they have achieved success.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership	Good
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Weak
Parents and the community	Very good
Governance	Weak
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

- The principal and senior colleagues show strong educational leadership skills. They successfully ensure that the school provides a positive learning environment and a curriculum that is well aligned with the Japanese curriculum. Strong working relationships and high levels of commitment prevail in the school. Leaders' efforts lead to consistently good teaching. They ensure generally good academic achievement and sound personal development for students. Strategic planning and a consistent approach towards addressing whole-school priorities are not yet robust features of leadership.
- The school now has more accurate views of students' attainment. Processes for evaluating students' progress are less developed. There have been a few successes in improving the provision for students of determination, in moral and social studies and in some curriculum modifications. However, planning has failed to address the school's major priorities, which are improvement of the quality of resources and facilities, achievement of full compliance and review of the school's strategic direction and of plans to relocate.
- Leaders have very good links with parents, who are involved in the life of the school. Parents are well informed about their children's academic and personal development through regular communications. Daily contact with parents is a strong feature. Leaders regularly seek parents' views. Formal channels for communication between parents and school governors are yet to develop.
- Constant change and lack of a clear, sustained direction are the main features of governance. Governors do not demonstrate sufficient responsibility or oversight of the school's work. They have limited awareness of the school's priorities. They do not hold leaders to account. They have yet to establish clear expectations, roles and lines of accountability. In addition, governors' work on improving the school's current facilities and resources, and on achieving compliance with statutory requirements, has been limited. However, they have supported enhancement of provision for inclusion.
- The school's daily operation is very well managed. Policies and routines are well known to all teachers, students and parents. Teachers are appropriately qualified and supported by assistants and administrative staff. The KG premises are in good condition. The section occupied by the elementary and high phases is outdated. Equipment in the science laboratory is basic. The outdoor play areas are restricted. Learning resources in most classrooms, including the wi-fi connection, are appropriate. The facilities for teaching art are inadequate.

For Development:

- Ensure full compliance with the requirements of the UAE curriculum and regulations, and that better resources, more rigorous safety checks, and timely maintenance of the current school premises are provided.
- Ensure that improvement planning addresses all school priorities, and that action plans have clear steps, responsibilities, timelines and measurable targets.
- Enhance the role of governance by ensuring continuity, clarity of vision and strategies for improvement.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the inspection report. This 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 school inspection will report on changes made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report, you should contact QA.Schools@khda.gov.ae