



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم  
Abu Dhabi Education Council  
التعليم أولاً Education First



# Private School Inspection Report

Japanese School of Abu Dhabi

Academic Year 2015 – 2016

lqraa



Japanese School of Abu Dhabi

<b>Inspection Date</b>	January 25, 2016	to	January 26, 2016
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	March 9, 2014	to	March 11, 2014

General Information		Students		
School ID	115	Total number of students	77	
Opening year of school	1978	Number of children in KG	32	
Principal	Masahiro Ogawa	Number of students in other phases	Primary: 40	
School telephone	+971 (0) 2 444 6104		Middle: 5	
School Address	PO Box 8120, Al Muroor Street, Abu Dhabi		High: 0	
Official email (ADEC)	<a href="mailto:japanese.pvt@adec.ac.ae">japanese.pvt@adec.ac.ae</a>	Age range	3 to 15 years	
School website	<a href="http://www.jsad.ae">www.jsad.ae</a>	Grades or Year Groups	KG1 – Grade 9	
Fee ranges (per annum)	Medium: AED 29,580	Gender	Mixed	
		% of Emirati Students	30%	
		Largest nationality groups (%)	1. Japanese 70%	
			2. -----	
			3. -----	
Licensed Curriculum		Staff		
Main Curriculum	Japanese Curriculum	Number of teachers	15	
Other Curriculum	-----	Number of teaching assistants (TAs)	5	
External Exams/ Standardised tests	Grade 6 Japanese National Test	Teacher-student ratio	KG/ FS	1:10
			Other phases	1:5
Accreditation	-----	Teacher turnover	11%	



## Introduction

Inspection activities	
Number of inspectors deployed	3
Number of inspection days	2
Number of lessons observed	35
Number of joint lesson observations	0
Number of parents' questionnaires	16; (response rate: 23%)
Details of other inspection activities	Meetings with senior staff and teachers, informal parents and ancillary staff meetings, discussion with students; scrutiny of written work, review of school data, documents and presentations, analysis of surveys.

School	
School Aims	To ensure that students can enter, or return to, the Japanese education system with the minimum of disruption.
School vision and mission	<p><b>Kindergarten</b> a child with a richness of mind and healthy body, a child who can treat his/her friends gently and has confidence in himself/herself, a child who can be creative and play on his/her own.</p> <p><b>School</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>to raise children who are willing and eager to learn</li><li>to raise children to be polite and considerate</li><li>to raise children who can care for themselves and stay healthy</li><li>to raise children who are worldly and have a sense of the international community.</li></ol>



<b>Admission Policy</b>	Mainly children of Japanese Embassy Staff and a few other Japanese speakers. In addition a small number of Emirati Students are admitted to KG then progress through the school.
<b>Leadership structure (ownership, governance and management)</b>	1 Principal and 1 Vice Principal



### SEN Details (Refer to ADEC SEN Policy and Procedures)

SEN Category	Number of students identified through external assessments	Number of other students identified by the school
Intellectual disability	0	0
Specific Learning Disability	0	0
Emotional and Behaviour Disorders (ED/ BD)	0	0
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	0	0
Speech and Language Disorders	0	0
Physical and health related disabilities	0	0
Visually impaired	0	0
Hearing impaired	0	0
Multiple disabilities	0	0

### G&T Details (Refer to ADEC SEN Policy and Procedures)

G&T Category	Number of students identified
Intellectual ability	0
Subject-specific aptitude (e.g. in science, mathematics, languages)	0
Social maturity and leadership	0
Mechanical/ technical/ technological ingenuity	0
Visual and performing arts (e.g. art, theatre, recitation)	0
Psychomotor ability (e.g. dance or sport)	0



## The overall performance of the school

Inspectors considered the school in relation to 3 performance categories

<b>Band A</b>	High performing (Outstanding, Very Good or Good)
<b>Band B</b>	Satisfactory (Acceptable)
<b>Band C</b>	In need of significant improvement (Weak or Very Weak)

School was judged to be: **BAND (A) Very Good**

Performance Standards	Band A High Performing			Band B Satisfactory	Band C In need of significant improvement	
	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Weak	Very Weak
Performance Standard 1: Students' achievement						
Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills						
Performance Standard 3: Teaching and assessment						
Performance Standard 4: Curriculum						
Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students						
Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management						
Summary Evaluation: <b>The school's overall performance</b>						



## The Performance of the School

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### Evaluation of the school's overall performance

The overall performance of the Japanese School is very good. High quality leadership and management have ensured that both the Kindergarten (KG) and the main school have cultures that promote high standards and very good personal and social development. Talented teachers exploit the opportunities provided by the small numbers of students to offer support and challenge to each of them. As a result, they all make at least good progress across the school.

The school is very successful in its aim to provide a Japanese style of education for students in Abu Dhabi. The Japanese curriculum is provided in full for all of the students and the curriculum requirements for the Emirati students are met through the provision of additional lessons and support. The behaviour of the students is outstanding. Relationships are friendly and very respectful. Staff and all students embrace the style and requirements of the school, from the staff welcoming students each morning, eating lunch together, cleaning the classrooms and corridors and working together in lessons. Academic progress is at least good in all subjects with the exception of Arabic as a first language and social studies taught in Arabic where it is acceptable.

The school makes very good use of assessment information to help it modify its curriculum provision, in particular to meet the needs of the Emirati students. Staff, parents and students are supportive of the school's aims and strategic direction. The school knows itself well and is working hard to improve further.

### Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The high standards achieved by the school in the Japanese national exams have been maintained. The Emirati students, who have been joining the school since 2006, are supported in making very good progress, especially in spoken Japanese. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Teachers use assessment information and their knowledge of the students very well to match work to their needs. The school ensures that students use information and communications technology (ICT) either at home or in school effectively. The school knows itself well and has a suitably clear development plan with clear timescales. There is now an effective child protection policy and staff and students are fully aware of procedures. There are no remaining health and safety concerns.

The principal leads very well and is very ably supported by willing staff and a committed Board. The school has demonstrated that it has very good capacity to sustain the improvements made.



## Development and promotion of innovation skills

The school models innovation in the manner in which it has created opportunities to support students who need help to access the curriculum. The school does not promote separate projects but rather allocates time within the existing curriculum for students to develop very high-level skills of debate, enquiry, problem solving and critical thinking. This was seen in a very meaningful debate between students in a primary class who were looking at the question of whether very small communities should be provided with dedicated medical facilities. A majority of the students have a very sophisticated world view. The style of teaching in a large majority of classes invites students to be creative; for example in mathematics, finding alternative calculation methods, or when designing and making pen holders.

## The inspection identified the following as key areas of strength:

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- the attainment and progress of students in most subjects
- the quality of teaching and learning in all phases of the school
- the use of assessment information to help match the curriculum to the individual needs of students
- the leadership and daily management that has created a school with very high aspirations for students' personal and social development and their academic progress.

## The inspection identified the following as key areas for improvement:

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- the development of further ways in which the older Emirati students can improve their skills in Japanese writing to match their outstanding speaking and listening skills
- the use of the time available for social studies in Arabic and for Arabic as a first language to raise standards in these subjects.



## Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement

Students' achievement Indicators		KG	Primary	Middle	High
Islamic Education	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	
Arabic (as a First Language)	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	
Arabic (as a Second Language)	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	
Social Studies	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	
English	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	
	Progress	Good	Good	Very Good	
Mathematics	Attainment	Good	Very Good	Very Good	
	Progress	Very Good	Very Good	Very good	
Science	Attainment	Good	Very Good	Very Good	
	Progress	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	
Language of instruction (if other than English and Arabic as First Language)	Attainment	Good	Very Good	Very Good	
	Progress	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	
Other subjects (Art, Music, PE)	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	
Learning Skills (including innovation, creativity, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving and collaboration)		Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	



Student achievement is very good overall. Evidence from lessons and scrutiny of students' work indicate that a large majority perform at above and sometimes well above age-related standards in most subjects. The exceptions to this are in Arabic as a first language, Islamic education and social studies where attainment is acceptable. This is partly because the students have only limited time before school starts to study these subjects and then they are immediately immersed in learning in a Japanese language environment.

In Japanese, mathematics and science subjects, a large majority of students attain levels in external tests that are above curriculum and international standards. The school's results in Japanese national tests are well above average; some students' grades being in the top 5% compared to outcomes of students in Japan. The Emirati students make very good progress across the subjects of the Japanese curriculum. In Japanese, students make very good progress, quickly extending their vocabulary and gaining confidence in expressing their ideas in a range of situations. The Emirati students who join the school with no Japanese make very good progress in developing listening and speaking skills and are very quickly on a par with their peers in this aspect of the language. The attainment of the Japanese students rises more quickly in writing. Almost all the students rapidly become fluent in Japanese and use it continuously at school, to present ideas, lead debates and to organise their daily lives. All students from Grade 3 onwards, are able to read and to study literature in Japanese.

Students of Arabic as a first language make steady, acceptable progress and use Arabic at an age appropriate level. Those who study Arabic as a second language make good progress and achieve well. The students learn to write, read and speak Arabic and by upper primary school can correctly write sentences to accurately express ideas. Most students do not consistently use standard Arabic. In Islamic education, a large majority of students have secure knowledge and understanding of Islamic values but do not have enough opportunities to relate them to daily life. In social studies, students have only a basic knowledge of the history, heritage and values of the UAE. In the upper primary grades, they understand and appreciate individual rights and what the country provides for its citizens. Students' achievement in Japanese social studies is very good.

In English, most of the older primary students understand English but are reluctant to join in a conversation. Their progress accelerates in Grade 7 when they begin to have formal English lessons, quickly learning to translate words and phrases from Japanese and to identify good English. Their confidence improves.

In mathematics, students develop confidence in basic numeracy skills. In KG, they have opportunities to count accurately through songs, rhymes and games and by the time they move to Grade 1 they have developed a very good range of knowledge and skills. The use of drill as the starting activity for the majority of the mathematics lessons,



embeds learning of key number facts. By Grade 4, students efficiently complete straightforward calculations and begin to use their mathematical ability to solve problems independently. By the time they reach Grade 6, the level of almost all students is well above curriculum expectations. In science, students develop the knowledge and understanding of concepts well. A good range of practical learning opportunities and tasks, such as when Grade 4 discovered the boiling point of water, give students real experiences and develops their practical skills. Students find the subject interesting and most do well.

Students enjoy their work very much and have very positive attitudes towards learning. KG children demonstrate very good self-reliance and can organise themselves when not being taught directly. They very quickly learn that there are times to play and times to learn with an adult. They are self-disciplined and settle quickly when asked to do so. Children in KG clearly enjoy learning and develop the skills necessary to move successfully to Grade 1. All the students have very well developed learning skills. The older students work hard to improve their own learning, for example seeking help and re-doing work or asking for additional support in the period after school. In Grade 6, they appreciate that they are pursuing examination related goals and focus accordingly. In almost every subject, students demonstrate that they can tackle problems and work together to find solutions.

## Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills

Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good	
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	

All the students have positive attitudes towards learning and towards each other and the teachers. They enjoy improving their learning and very willingly seek support, when needed. Their behaviour is exemplary. They are self-disciplined at all times and



act with a maturity beyond their years. Students and staff indicate that there is no bullying and there is no evidence of it. This excellent behaviour helps make the school run very smoothly. The students are proud of their school and show pride in the nationalities of both Japan and the United Arab Emirates. They are caring of each other, helpful and always respectful. They understand what it is to be safe and healthy and make wise choices with regard to diet and exercise. Attendance at 98% is outstanding. Students are always punctual.

Students have a good understanding of the UAE through sharing experiences with their peers and much discussion and debate. They have great respect for the heritage and culture of the UAE. All the students, the large majority of whom are from a Japanese background, gain a good understanding and appreciation of a range of cultures.

Students participate willingly in all activities including before and after school and at lunchtime. It is part of the school routine for all the staff and students to participate in cleaning the school. All join in, wiping floors and surfaces, removing waste and generally making sure the room is clean for the afternoon. Actions such as this build a sense of shared responsibility for the environment. All of the students have a very positive work ethic. They are aware of their environment and show a keen interest in global issues such as climate change and economic development.

### Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

Teaching and Assessment Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Teaching for effective learning	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	
Assessment	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	

Teaching is very good overall. The quality of teaching ranged from outstanding to one lesson that was graded weak; the large majority was graded good or better. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use it very well.

In KG, teaching strategies are very effectively focused on the needs of individual children and in particular to support their language, social and mathematical development. Almost all the children join in readily and with great enthusiasm. As a result of very good teaching, they have developed some high-level skills in language



subjects and in physical education. In KG3 in particular, they develop very good learning and organisational skills.

In grades 1 to 9, the teachers follow the Japanese curriculum, teaching a range of subjects, mostly to their own classes. This means they get to know the students in these small classes extremely well and are able to provide work that ensures students make very good progress. During lessons, almost all the teachers give individualised feedback to the students to support their learning. Lessons usually move on at a good pace and provide lots of opportunities for students to participate. In almost all lessons, students are well motivated and enthusiastic. Some expert specialist teaching in science supports the very good progress of the older students. Arabic, Islamic education and social studies teachers plan well but often do not utilise the time well enough to effectively deliver and embed their students' learning.

Most of the teachers are skilled in asking probing questions that require the students to think. This stimulates their problem-solving and critical thinking. Students are often involved in discussion and debate that further extend their thinking.

The school has very effective assessment procedures for tracking the progress and achievement of students and have commissioned further assessments to help identify the particular learning needs of individual students very precisely. This analysis, along with the evaluation of internal assessment data, has informed teaching and significant curriculum modification. Assessment outcomes are benchmarked against Japanese national data. A significant number of students arrive from or leave to return to Japan at various times of the year. The school always has up-to-date assessment information available and makes rapid use of new information.

#### Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

Curriculum Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	
Curriculum adaptation	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	

The school delivers the Japanese curriculum in full and also offers Arabic, Islamic education and UAE social studies. The school meets all requirements regarding the allocation of time for the subjects taught in Arabic; senior leaders are reviewing the current timetable configuration in order to raise standards in these subjects. The



curriculum has been carefully considered to meet the needs of its students in this region. The school conducts ongoing reviews of the curriculum, in the light of UAE priorities, in particular to meet the needs of its Emirati students. Additional staffing and time have been provided to ensure that students studying Japanese as a second language have as much support as possible to help them acquire high-level skills. The curriculum reflects the aim of the school to mirror the Japanese system as closely as possible. The school has included Japanese daily routines and activities as well as the content of learning.

Apart from the core subjects, the curriculum is also enriched by subjects such as 'moral learning and manners' and 'daily life'. The curriculum is designed to promote understanding and skills as well as the acquisition of knowledge. There is very good provision in all subjects and the curriculum is planned effectively to support the personal development of the students.

KG curriculum prepares children very well for school, and then each year the curriculum builds on previous learning ensuring continuity. Any students returning to Japan are equipped well through their time in the school. Students are well prepared for the Japanese national tests in Grade 6. There are good cross curricular links and opportunities have been created for students to use their developing language skills to good effect in a range of subjects, for example they are asked to hypothesize and debate in social studies lessons on topics of their own choice.

There are opportunities for creativity through art, music, design and through creative expression in language. The development of problem solving, critical thinking, hypothesizing and testing are regular features of lessons. The school has maintained its focus on repetitive drill exercises, particularly in mathematics and this equips students to have a bank of computation skills that they can use in more complex situations.

The school very successfully celebrates both its Japanese culture and that of the UAE in a variety of ways from enthusiastic and tuneful singing of both national anthems at the start of the day, to projects, desert trips and heritage visits.



## Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/safeguarding	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	
Care and support	Very Good	Very Good	Outstanding	

The school has very effective procedures for the care, welfare and safeguarding of students. Health and safety policies have been created and are known well by the staff, the students and their parents. This includes child protection. The school is a safe, hygienic and secure environment. The students are welcomed by all the staff as they arrive at school in the morning and they are seen off at the end of the school day in the same caring manner. Supervision of students is very effective at all times and on school transport. Security staff are friendly, efficient and an effective part of the school team. All staff understand their responsibility for reporting safety issues and know what to do if there is any form of emergency. The buildings and equipment are well maintained; good maintenance systems are in place. The school keeps accurate and secure records.

The school promotes safe and healthy lifestyles very well. This is evident during the lunch breaks, for example, when staff share meal times with students, clean their teeth together and help tidy and clean the classrooms and corridors. Through these actions, students learn important lessons about everyone's role in caring for themselves and the environment.

There are very positive relationships between staff, students and parents. The students feel that their concerns or suggestions are listened to and that their questions will always be answered. The school provides support staff to help any students who are struggling with their academic achievement, inside the class, early in the morning or after school. The school does not have any students with designated special educational needs. The small number of students in each class allows teachers to notice and support any particular gifts or talents. All students in the school are appropriately challenged to make the most of their abilities.



## Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management

Leadership and management Indicators	
The effectiveness of leadership	Very Good
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Very Good
Partnerships with parents and the community	Very Good
Governance	Very Good
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Very Good

The school has a very small, dedicated leadership team, but all of the staff contribute to school leadership. The principal has created a very positive ethos and staff morale appears high. All are committed to doing their best for each student. There is a strong commitment to the Japanese nature of the school and its place in the UAE. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the curriculum and Japanese pedagogy. The school's efforts are clearly focused on increasing student achievement and they have achieved very high standards of student learning and personal development.

Relationships are respectful, courteous and professionally effective. The staff contribute through their roles as members of school improvement committees. The school constantly demonstrates its ability to innovate, for example, providing alternative ways to manage the curriculum to raise the achievement of students. The school has recently commissioned a full external assessment of students' capabilities in Japanese written language. It is clearly focused on the outcomes to find ways in which it can better meet the needs of those students who have Japanese as an additional language.

The school has a very effective governing board that includes staff, parents, Japanese embassy staff and local business people. It is closely involved in decision-making including the allocation of finance. The governing board requires the school to report regularly on its actions and outcomes. Through regular staff and Board meetings, the school reviews its own performance based on internal assessment and review and external results. This informs the school development planning (SDP) document which has clear targets, suitable timescales, and evaluation criteria and staff responsibilities. The SDP is a useful document that effectively supports school improvement. The school has developed over time, most obviously in the removal of an unsafe outdoor play area and its replacement with a shaded, all-weather pitch. This adds another dimension to the physical education curriculum and provides a good place for the students to meet at break times.



There are very good relationships with parents. Communication is both rapid and effective and reports are regular. The school has developed a number of international partnerships. Some of the older students have visited a school in Japan and others make contact through the use of technology.

The school is very well organised and can reorganize itself very rapidly, for example when staff are absent, without disruption to the students. Procedures are very well known to staff and students. The school is generously staffed by high-quality professionals who are well equipped to challenge and support the students.

The premises are acceptable and there is a large amount of space. There are some specialist facilities, for example for science and technology and a very good gymnasium. The learning areas are of acceptable quality. The range of resources adequately meet the school's curriculum requirements.

### **What the school should do to improve further:**

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1. Develop additional strategies to support the oldest Emirati students in improving their skills in writing Japanese by:
  - i. using all opportunities in lessons to develop reading and writing skills in a structured way
  - ii. providing even more out of school opportunities for students to develop their language skills.
2. Review the timetable configuration for social studies in Arabic and Arabic as a first language to raise standards in these subjects by:
  - i. making more efficient use of the time currently available
  - ii. considering providing for these subjects at an alternative time in the school day.