



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS

INSPECTION REPORT ON The British School in Tokyo

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The British School in Tokyo

Full Name of School	The British School in Tokyo			
Address	1-21-18 Shibuya Shibuya-ku Tokyo 150-0002 Japan			
Telephone Number	03 3411 4211			
Fax Number	03 3411 4212			
Email Address	dwilliams@bst.ac.jp			
Head	Mr David Williams			
Chair of Trustees	Mr David Fitton			
Age Range	3 to 18			
Total Number of Pupils	653			
Gender of Pupils	Mixed			
Numbers by Age	0-2:	0	5-11:	389
	3-5:	105	11-18:	159
Inspection dates	23 Oct 2011 to 24 Oct 2011			
	21 Nov 2011 to 24 Nov 2011			

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI Schedule* for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection consists of two parts: a preliminary two-day visit followed by a four-day (team) inspection. The previous ISI inspection was in April 2004.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools in England and overseas. As such, ISI reports to the English Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas and the *ISI Framework* requirements. ISI is also the agency responsible for the inspection of schools in membership of the Associations of the Independent Schools Council (ISC). Accordingly, ISI inspections of British schools overseas are required to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare;
- provide objective and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and build on their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses;
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain;
- report to the DfE the extent to which schools comply with the published Standards for British Schools Overseas;
- where applicable, assure ISC Associations that their member schools maintain the quality of provision expected.

ISI inspection is for the benefit of the pupils in the schools and through public reporting makes the information available to parents, governments and the wider community.

Inspections for British schools overseas follow closely the framework and guidance for independent school inspection in England. The major difference is that schools in England must comply with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, which do not apply with legal validity to schools outside the United Kingdom. However, the inspection of overseas schools takes account where possible of compliance with any local requirements and it judges the extent to which the schools comply with the British Government's Standards for British Schools Overseas. The range of these Standards is as follows.

1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
5. The premises and accommodation.
6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others.
7. The school's procedures for handling complaints.
8. The quality of provision for boarding.
9. Leadership and management of the school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features

- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment or company law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The British School in Tokyo was established in 1989 to serve the local British community. The school has changed significantly since its establishment, having extended its age range to include secondary and sixth-form provision, and serving both the British and international communities, with pupils from more than 50 nationalities. It operates as a 'not for profit' trust independently of, but legally owned by, two Japanese educational establishments: Shibuya Kyoiku Gakuen High School and Showa Women's University. The school occupies accommodation on two sites that are some distance apart in the city centre, with the Nursery, Reception and Years 1 to 3 of the Primary School in the school's original building in Shibuya. Years 4 to 6 of the Primary School, and the Secondary School, comprising Years 7 to 13, are based over three floors of a building on the campus of Showa Women's University. Governance is the responsibility of a board of ten trustees.
- 1.2 There are 653 pupils on roll, with 494 in the Primary School and 159 in the Secondary School. Of these, 105 are in the Nursery and Reception, and 27 attend the recently established sixth form.
- 1.3 The Primary School has identified 45 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who require specific intervention. The Secondary School has identified 12 pupils with SEND, who require specific class support. About half of the pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.4 The school is non-selective. There is a very wide spread of ability, but the overall ability range is above the British national average.
- 1.5 The school aims to provide a world class British education to English speaking pupils of the international community in Tokyo, and to inspire pupils to thrive as global citizens. Its core values are expressed as 'confidence in our ability, excellence in everything we do, and responsibility to ourselves and others.'
- 1.6 English National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The British School in Tokyo is a dynamic and creative educational community which is highly successful in meeting its aims. It provides a British education of excellent quality, while making very positive use of its location in Japan as part of the pupils' learning experience. Pupils' achievements are excellent, and they make progress at all levels, including in the Nursery and Reception. They succeed in a wide range of academic, sporting and creative areas of learning. The pupils are enthusiastic about school and enjoy the stimulating and challenging educational experience it provides. Their excellent attitudes to learning play a key part in the success they achieve. A well-chosen range of subjects and highly skilled teaching, based on secure subject knowledge and up-to-date methods, including excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT), are instrumental in guiding pupils to success. Teaching is lively and innovative, and promotes intellectual curiosity and enjoyment. Very good records of pupils' progress are kept and used to ensure that their learning needs are met.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent, and they show real maturity in their attitudes and behaviour. They feel safe in school, and see it as a close-knit, mutually supportive and tolerant community in which individuals are respected for who they are. This sense of belonging and unity has been heightened by their mutual experience of the Japanese earthquake earlier in 2011, which occurred while the school was in session. The school is meticulous in the approach it takes to monitoring the pupils' personal development, as well as their academic progress. Staff know their pupils very well, and show true commitment to ensuring their welfare, health and safety. The school's policies and procedures are excellent.
- 2.3 Governance is of excellent quality and provides the necessary focus to challenge the school to give of its best while supporting it fully in an often complex operating environment. The success of the school is very effectively supported by leadership and management of high quality. The recent development of a sixth form has been very successful. Excellent recruitment practices ensure consistently high quality teaching, and well-organised programmes of learning enable pupils to progress quickly. Middle managers are highly efficient and ensure the smooth running of the school. The parental questionnaire completed prior to the inspection indicated overwhelming support for the effectiveness of the education the school provides, and inspectors concur with that view. The previous inspection, which took place in April 2004, recommended improvement in the use of assessment data, better monitoring of the curriculum and teaching, and more effective deployment of teaching assistants. The school's current provision has fully addressed those recommendations.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas

(The range of the Standards for British Schools Overseas is given in the Preface)

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Standards for British Schools Overseas.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Ensure that succession planning builds on the current excellent provision and makes best use of the delegated management structures.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

- 3.1 The overall achievement of the pupils is excellent. Their speaking and listening skills are often highly developed for their age. They read very well, and show a good knowledge and understanding of genres. Their application of numerical skills is of a high order and shown in their work across a range of subjects such as science and ICT, as well as in mathematics. At all levels they regularly demonstrate accurate and extensive subject knowledge, and during class discussion and in their written work they display detailed recall of material taught in previous lessons. They show often sophisticated levels of understanding and a high degree of skill in a full range of curricular activities.
- 3.2 Pupils have a considerable range of significant achievements in external events and competitions, such as silver awards in the UK physics Olympiad, and in a variety of instrumental and choral musical pursuits. The school is highly successful in competitive swimming, volleyball and football. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 complete The Duke of Edinburgh's Award at bronze level, with some progressing to silver level, and all pupils in Year 10 and above have completed a sports leadership qualification.
- 3.3 The following analysis uses the English national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. In English national tests taken at the ages of 7 and 11, results are far above the English national average for maintained primary schools. At GCSE, results have improved from year to year, and have been above the English national average for maintained schools. In 2010, results at GCSE were similar to the UK average for maintained selective schools. To date, no A-level examinations have been taken. Examination results, together with inspection evidence, show that pupils are making very good progress in relation to their starting points. This is particularly the case for pupils with EAL, reflecting the very good targeted support that they receive. Support also ensures that those with SEND make at least good progress, whilst the most able pupils progress very well, performing at least as well as their peers in English selective maintained schools. Across the school, attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils in all years, from the Nursery upwards, are keen, intellectually curious, and eager to share and talk about their ideas and discoveries. They work well whether individually or in groups.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)

- 3.4 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. This makes a very significant contribution to the pupils' achievement in relation to their age, ability and learning needs, with clear links to British and international education as well as valuable reference to the Japanese community in which the school is set. This is in line with the school's aim to provide a world class British education to English speaking pupils of the international community in Tokyo. The curriculum is enhanced by very well-resourced ICT and library facilities, with very good fiction and non-fiction books in a wide range of languages on both sites, successfully promoting a love of reading. There are vibrant displays of curriculum materials and pupils' work, which assist learning throughout the school. In the Nursery and Reception, the curriculum covers the key areas of learning and provides an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and indoor and outdoor learning. Nursery children learn Japanese and enjoy the creative experience of music making.
- 3.5 The primary curriculum encompasses a suitable range of subject areas, and this ensures appropriate coverage of creative, academic and practical activities. It is characterised by very effective planning across the primary years to ensure continuity of learning and includes all the subjects taught in the English National Curriculum, as well as Japanese language, local history and culture. It has a strong core of literacy, including well-developed library lessons, and of numeracy, ICT, science and personal, social and health education. There is very good provision for art, design and technology, history and geography, music, religious education and languages, including French. The impact of the primary curriculum is significantly strengthened by specialist teaching in music, physical education, Japanese and French. In the primary years, there are highly effective cross-curricular studies. For example, an Egyptian Day for Year 3 involved learning about Egyptian history, such as mummification of the pharaohs, wearing Egyptian costume and learning an enjoyable dance routine. The very well-designed curriculum allows pupils to apply skills, understanding and knowledge across a wide spectrum of subjects and strengthens their reasoning and investigative skills, and has a positive impact on the progress they make.
- 3.6 The secondary curriculum is significantly enhanced by the lively and interesting way in which courses are taught and the very good use of innovative learning resources. Pupils are very well prepared for either a return to senior schools in the UK or entry to universities worldwide. A well-chosen range of subjects gives pupils in Years 7 to 9 a suitably broad curriculum experience and includes drama and Japanese. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is challenging and provides a good core of GCSE subjects covering the key areas of learning, including English, mathematics, science and physical education for all, with options including art, business studies, French, geography, history, Japanese and photography. There are also plans to introduce Spanish to the secondary curriculum.
- 3.7 Breadth and challenge are provided in the sixth-form curriculum through a baccalaureate qualification, recognised by UK universities. This requires pupils to study at least three A-level subjects as well as a critical thinking programme, to undertake an extended project and to participate in a community project.
- 3.8 Throughout the school, there is highly effective provision for pupils with SEND. In addition to careful matching of tasks to abilities in lessons, one-to-one or small group support is given and individual education plans are in place where necessary. Booster groups also provide challenge for gifted and talented pupils. Provision for

the learning needs of those with EAL is very good; the school tailors its teaching styles for these pupils and uses a variety of methods to support them.

- 3.9 The very good quality extra-curricular programme plays a key role in personal development. In the Primary School, the extensive programme covers art and craft, contemporary and Irish dance, drama, music and a full range of sports, including swimming and basketball. The secondary curriculum is strengthened by an extensive and well-supported range of extra-curricular activities and clubs which include dance, debating, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, drama, music, photography, a full range of sports, including football and cricket, science and Taiko drumming. There are many varied outstanding opportunities for pupils to pursue sporting and musical activities at a very high level, with good participation in competitions locally and at international level.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.10 Teaching throughout the school is excellent, and effectively secures and enhances the high levels of progress shown by the pupils. It fully meets the school's aim to provide a world class British education.
- 3.11 Teaching is enthusiastic and imaginative, and is founded on the very good subject knowledge of the teachers, who work closely together to nurture an active desire for learning in their pupils. Teaching consistently moulds confident, creative and independent thinkers. Lessons are characterised by thorough and detailed planning, with skilful choice of methods and tasks. Highly skilled teaching assistants are deployed well to ensure that the needs of those with EAL or SEND are met. Teachers consistently devise lively and challenging work for the most able pupils. Well-planned booster classes and carefully targeted learning support within and outside the classroom ensure that pupils make very good progress in relation to their abilities.
- 3.12 Teachers devise stimulating experiences that capture the interest and imagination of their pupils, and bring enjoyment to their learning. The outstanding use of 'talk partners' from Reception onwards is one of several well-chosen teaching methods that develop the pupils' literacy skills. Teachers led Year 2 pupils on an investigative walk around a local urban district of Tokyo, producing exemplary work in geography, literacy and ICT. Secondary teaching strongly promotes learning; for example, a teacher in a Year 9 library lesson encouraged a love of reading through demonstrating witty and inventive use of language in oral book reviews. Teachers deliver lessons with energy, pace and considerable skill, for example in a Year 8 drama lesson where pupils were guided to produce a story monologue.
- 3.13 From the Nursery and Reception onwards, assessment is regular and rigorous, using English National Curriculum or examination related criteria. It is also characterised by detailed record keeping and skilled analysis and monitoring. As a result, teachers plan lessons well to meet the individual needs of the pupils. This has a significant impact on the excellent progress that pupils make in relation to their ability. Marking is consistently thorough and pupils appreciate the analytical and supportive comments made to guide and encourage them. The excellent resources provided by the school across the curriculum and at all ages are consistently well used by teachers, for example the outstanding imaginatively designed rooftop outdoor activity space used by the youngest pupils and throughout the Primary School.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school clearly fulfils its aim to promote good behaviour, mutual respect and tolerance for others. Pupils are proud of their school. Spiritual development is excellent. The pupils' high levels of self-awareness and self-confidence derive from a secure learning environment promoted by highly committed staff. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of self-worth, and develop into confident, independent young people with mature social skills and a sophisticated cultural awareness for their age.
- 4.2 Moral development is excellent. The pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and a good sense of moral responsibility, reflecting the codes of conduct that form the basis of the school's ethos. Behaviour is excellent and strongly supported by the school's behaviour monitoring system. Pupils understand the school rules; primary pupils observe the 'handy hints' behaviour scheme, any minor digression is usually redressed with minimal intervention from teachers.
- 4.3 Pupils demonstrate excellent social development. They have a very good awareness of accepting responsibility for decisions that affect others. A well-organised school council allows pupils of all ages to take responsibility for a range of activities and gives pupils a strong sense of involvement in the life of the school. A new school magazine created by pupils is a sophisticated publication, using material about teenage culture also produced by the pupils. Pupils are actively involved in supporting people less fortunate than themselves in the local and wider community. Following the traumatic earthquake in March 2011, they arranged fund-raising events in aid of victims.
- 4.4 Cultural development is excellent, in terms of local, national and international perspectives. The pupils, who are from many different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, work and play together very harmoniously. They enthusiastically explore the richness and variety of their own and others' cultural traditions as well as those of Japan through a wide range of festivals and events. Pupils are aware of the UK, its institutions, and its social and political structures, and also how these compare with those in other countries.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.5 The quality of the arrangements to safeguard the pupils' welfare, health and safety is excellent. Teachers care effectively for the well-being and development of all pupils, from the Nursery onwards. In line with its aims, the school maintains a thoroughly supportive and secure atmosphere where care for all is the priority. It has a secure system of ensuring that health and safety procedures are in place, and are practised; the arrangements for responding to the threat of an earthquake proved to be highly effective.
- 4.6 Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are excellent; there are many examples of interaction based upon mutual respect. Of particular note are the practical care and concern shown by secondary pupils towards those in the Primary School.
- 4.7 The culture of excellent behaviour is promoted by high expectations. Codes of conduct are displayed around the school giving clear guidance as to how pupils

should behave. Class teachers and managers deal with everyday misdemeanours in a positive and constructive fashion. Policies and procedures to guard against bullying are well organised, and enable the school to deal constructively with the rare cases of unacceptable behaviour. Pupils are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and view it as a safe place to be, and know that they can turn to a member of staff if they have any concerns or worries.

- 4.8 The school has comprehensive and effective structures and procedures for child protection and the recruitment of staff. The relevant training is undertaken, and the school has worked hard to ensure that it has appropriate links with local agencies in these matters.
- 4.9 The school takes all necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Regular risk assessments are made and appropriate training given. The school regularly employs consultants to advise on safe practices regarding emergency drills, and advice from the Metropolitan Authority is regularly sought to guide and help the school develop appropriate and effective health and safety practices and procedures. Arrangements for the care of pupils who are taken ill whilst at school are well known to the pupils, and involve school nurses and staff trained in first aid.
- 4.10 Pupils of all ages, including those in the Nursery and Reception, are aware of the significance of healthy living. The high levels of participation in activities, together with the high standards achieved in games, are key factors in the school's successful promotion of healthy living. The pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and parents are given guidelines on packed lunches and snacks. The arrangements for drawing up and maintaining admission and attendance registers are appropriate.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent and plays a significant part in ensuring that the school meets its aim of providing a world class British education. The trustees bring to their role a wealth of relevant expertise in business, education, finance, law and marketing, giving the school a very secure base of local knowledge as well as a good understanding of key priorities for a British school based overseas. Through good induction and training procedures, and frequent briefings by the school's leadership team, they have a clear insight into the working of the school throughout all key stages. The trustees are well known at the school, undertaking visits, attending formal occasions and school events, and meeting with parents.
- 5.2 The board makes excellent use of its collective expertise in developing a strategic overview and, with its specialised committees, seeks to ensure that its aims are fulfilled through the school development plan. Trustees are effective in monitoring the impact of school policies where appropriate, and they exercise constructive and supportive oversight of academic standards and pastoral matters. The trustees' support for the recruitment of teachers from the UK includes observation of their teaching as well as interviews. The consistently high quality of teaching has a subsequent impact on standards.
- 5.3 The board is effective in discharging its responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety throughout the school. Trustees ensure that staff are rigorously checked and that records of appointments are maintained reliably.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 Leadership and management are excellent throughout, and ensure that the school meets its aim to provide a world class British education. They evaluate provision with great accuracy at all levels and, drawing on their findings, set and implement suitable priorities. The leadership, together with the very effective support of trustees, shows a very good understanding of the management of British education in a foreign country. The clear and consistent educational direction established in the last few years by leadership is now reflected in the high levels of achievement, excellent curriculum, strong and effective teaching and very good personal development of pupils across the school. Skilful strategic planning in, for example, the reorganisation of secondary management and the addition of a sixth form, has significantly enhanced the extent and quality of the school's provision and contributed much to the fulfilment of its aim to provide a world class British education.
- 5.5 Outstanding leadership over a number of years in the Primary School has borne fruit in the contribution to pupils' high levels of achievement and personal development. Management is highly focused on the implementation and monitoring of the school's well-written educational and pastoral care policies. The accuracy with which the school identifies pupils' learning needs is reflected in their excellent progress and personal development.
- 5.6 Skilful management is demonstrated in the emphasis the school places on the recruitment of high quality teachers, mostly direct from the UK. This strength is complemented by careful monitoring of the curriculum, teaching and learning. There is a good balance of directive and delegated management across the school.

Teachers are held closely to account while being given the support they need to succeed and develop professional confidence. Management carefully ensures the safeguarding of pupils, and arrangements for welfare, health and safety, including training in child protection, are well organised and implemented. The school has thorough arrangements for checking the suitability of staff, volunteers and trustees.

- 5.7 The school is very well managed on a day-to-day basis by its senior staff at both primary and secondary levels. Middle managers, including faculty heads as well as phase and year leaders, contribute fully to the success of the school. In both the primary and secondary sections, the delegation of responsibilities to middle managers is highly successful in helping the school to meet its aims. Middle managers are committed and skilled in fulfilling their roles, for example by liaising very well to ensure continuity of provision, promoting high standards, and monitoring teaching, learning and assessment. The school makes excellent provision for the professional development of staff.

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.8 The links the school maintains with parents, carers and guardians are excellent and are highly effective in supporting its aim to provide a world class British education to English speaking pupils from the international community in Tokyo. The pre-inspection questionnaires distributed to parents showed overwhelming support for the education and care their children receive at the school.
- 5.9 The school provides parents with all required information. Weekly newsletters produced by the Primary School and Secondary School, both electronically and in hard copy, together with direct contact through email and social media networks, are key elements in the very good level of home-school communications. Parents support this approach, and regularly visit the school to meet staff and contribute to the wider curriculum, for example by talking about their work to groups of pupils. The school has a highly valued virtual learning environment, which was of great significance in allowing pupils to continue with studies successfully after the earthquake. Parents recognise the excellent work that staff had put into maintaining communication with them during that time.
- 5.10 Parents have considerable opportunities to play an active part in the life of the school. Some act as volunteer readers, whilst others accompany classes on visits. The much valued and very active parent-teacher association organises social events and raises funds for the school as well as for charities. Parent representatives organise popular coffee mornings and offer much helpful advice and support to other parents. Carers' networks offer effective social support to parents and carers of pupils who attend or are new to the school. Staff run regular parent workshops and information mornings on a diverse range of subjects, including reading with children.
- 5.11 Clear and informative reports and reviews include English National Curriculum levels and aspirational targets for achievement. Reports are distributed annually and supplemented by detailed reviews. These are complemented by termly parent consultations in person. Exceptionally helpful and informative welcome packs are designed to support parents as their children enter each new phase of the school.
- 5.12 The school has a clear procedure for formal complaints, which is followed appropriately when required, and a readiness to meet parents informally to explain and discuss actions.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and staff and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of trustees and other trustees, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Peter Jones	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Gillian De La Torre	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Dr Iain Farrell	Former Director of Studies, HMC school, UK
Miss Patricia Griffin	Head of Early Years, IAPS school, UK
Mr Derek Llewellyn	Former Deputy Head, COBIS school, The Netherlands
Ms Diane Perry	Headteacher, COBIS school, Belgium