

Rikkyo School-in-England

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	938/6188
Unique Reference Number	126132
Inspection number	316951
Inspection dates	20-21 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell AI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Rikkyo School is a co-educational Anglican Christian school for the children of Japanese families living and working in the United Kingdom and Europe. Established in 1972, it occupies a large rural site, near to Horsham in West Sussex. All students are boarders at the school. The Japanese national curriculum is followed to provide continuity in the students' education with the prime goal of them achieving places in Japanese universities of their choice. The school is registered with the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) in England to take 160 students; there are currently 144 students attending between the ages of 11 and 18 years. The school's boarding provision was inspected by the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI) in October, 2006. This is the school's first published Ofsted report.

Evaluation of the school

Rikkyo School is a good school with a number of particularly outstanding features. It provides a good quality of education. Students say they are happy to be at the school. They make good progress because of their willingness to learn, as well as the outstanding quality of the curriculum and good teaching provided. The calm and harmonious atmosphere supports the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students; their behaviour is exemplary. They have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities. Staff work hard to support the students' education and personal development. The school meets most regulations but needs to address a number of issues.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. The school follows the Japanese national curriculum for students of compulsory school age, with the addition of the International General Certificate of Education (IGCSE) in the sciences at high school age. The curriculum is set out in writing and supported by published documents and individual teacher's planning. The provision meets the aims of the school by ensuring continuity in the students' education and the development of positive attitudes to learning.

The curriculum successfully meets the needs of students of all ages and aptitudes. Students develop appropriate skills in literacy and numeracy both in the context of the expectations of the Japanese curriculum, and in relation to their developing use

of English. The broad academic curriculum is supported by an outstandingly good programme of extra-curricular activities, both sporting and cultural. Students make good progress, and this is confirmed by most of them achieving places in higher education institutions in Japan, and occasionally universities in Europe and America.

The curriculum is suitably designed for students according to their age and stage of academic development. Students of compulsory school age in England are provided with experience of all areas of learning as specified by the English national curriculum. The curriculum provision for music and sport are exceptional. Both areas of the curriculum are particularly well resourced to ensure a broad range of opportunities and to encourage participation by students. All students of compulsory school age take music, with a large number opting to have additional private tuition. Students' experience of information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory in terms of access to computers, but the school's specialist classroom for ICT does not reflect the quality of provision that support other aspects of the curriculum.

All students of compulsory school age take a course in 'well being' (Hoken) which is the Japanese equivalent of personal social and health education as studied in English schools. Although careers education is not a specific part of the Japanese curriculum, all students are provided with appropriate guidance within a tutor group setting. The aim of all students is to achieve university entrance and resources focus on this goal successfully.

Teaching and assessment are good overall. As a result of good teaching students make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Lessons are most frequently typified by teachers' excellent subject knowledge and the rich and varied range of learning opportunities they provide. However, limited access to ICT resources in classrooms sometimes constrains the range of strategies available to teachers, for example, in developing English speaking skills. Teachers set work that is often challenging and which meets the needs of the full range of abilities in each class well, although this is not always reflected in individual lesson plans. Teachers have very high expectations of how students will respond and apply themselves to their work. For their part, the students take great pride in their work and are dedicated and enthusiastic learners. They are conscious of the need to keep careful notes as appropriate and to present their work well. Their application during lessons is exemplary; they are exceptionally committed learners and work hard unflinchingly. Joint teaching, involving English and Japanese teachers working together, is particularly effective in supporting pupils who are at the early stages of speaking English; for example in GCSE science. However, not all teachers have received specific training for communicating effectively with students for whom English is a foreign language. Many students' progress in written English is considerably better than their progress and confidence in spoken English. Teaching strategies are not always sufficiently successful at overcoming the students' natural reluctance to speak English.

Students' progress is assessed accurately and frequently and teachers ensure that they are well-informed about how to make their work even better. Even so, the marking of work does not always provide students with a permanent written reminder about how to achieve this. There are regular tests to check what the students have learnt and suitable records are maintained of their progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding. Their spiritual development is effectively supported by the school's regular Christian assemblies, conducted in the school chapel by the chaplain. Students are successfully supported in developing their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence by the experience of living abroad, the support provided by the school, their own high expectations of what they can achieve, their personal contribution and the wide range of opportunities and experiences available to them. Students work hard but at the same time have suitable opportunities for fun and relaxation.

The school successfully meets its aim of developing students' positive attitudes and behaviour through its Christian and moral ethos. The students' behaviour and their responses to the opportunities provided are outstanding. They accept responsibility willingly and demonstrate a mature approach to their activities, for example, in organising the school's annual Open Day to raise money for charity, to which the local community is invited. Students show a suitable general knowledge of public institutions and services through a number of aspects of the curriculum, but in particular from the wide range of visits and school trips organised to places of historic and cultural interest. They acquire further knowledge of English culture through good community links and a range of other cultures, for example through their work in art, where they become aware of the work of European artists.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

Provision to ensure the welfare, health and safety of students is good. Students say they feel safe and have confidence in the staff to ensure this will be the case. All staff are dedicated and vigilant. Suitable policies are in place in most respects and these are well understood and implemented correctly by staff. The school has a policy and good procedures established in practice for running the wide range of school trips and educational visits available to students, and can demonstrate careful organisational strategies.

Support for students' academic and for their personal development is good. Behaviour during lessons and around the school is exemplary. The maturity and self-control shown by students contributes significantly to the high quality of their welfare; for example, they say that bullying of any type is virtually non-existent. Students are provided with a high quality, balanced and healthy diet and they have a very good understanding of the importance of eating healthily. There are also frequent opportunities to take exercise, which they clearly enjoy and embrace with

great enthusiasm. The school fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act in England.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school understands the importance of undertaking checks to ensure that staff are appropriate persons to work with children. Suitable administrative strategies are established to carry out all necessary checks and to ensure that they are recorded in the required manner. However, checks have not been completed for a small minority of contracted staff. The school is aware of this omission and has already acted to ensure that all checks are completed as required.

School's premises and accommodation

The school premises and accommodation are good and have a number of particularly outstanding features. The buildings and extensive grounds are well maintained and provide excellent facilities for the academic studies, sports and cultural activities provided by the school. Classrooms are spacious and suitably furnished in most respects, with the exception of the ICT classroom where the seating does not meet the requirement for being adjustable. The work surfaces provided are functional for use with computers, but because they are not designed for specific use with computers, result in there being a large number of trailing wires which are a potential safety hazard.

Accommodation for boarders was judged to be suitable by the most recent CSCI report.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides parents with a range of information through its brochure, website and handbook for parents. Reports are provided to parents three times a year, at the end of each term. Nevertheless, despite the good features some of the information required by English law is not provided. For example, the school does not provide parents and prospective parents with details of the school's disciplinary procedures or the name of the chair of the trustees. Similarly, the school should make parents aware of other information that is available from the school on request.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a written complaints procedure that complies with requirements in most respects. However, this is not readily accessible to parents as they are not informed that it is available on request from the school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all staff prior to the confirmation of their appointment (paragraph 4(2)(a)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate seating for use with computers (paragraph 5(r)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide parents with the headmaster's name on school literature (paragraph 6(2)(a))
- provide parents with the chair of trustee's name for correspondence (paragraph 6(2)(c))
- provide parents with particulars of the school policy on and arrangements for discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- ensure that parents are aware that they can request from the school details of the complaints procedure (paragraph 6(2)(j)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- make details of the school's complaints policy available to parents (paragraph 7(b)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- provide training for English subject teachers in communicating with students for whom English is a foreign language
- improve strategies, and where appropriate resources, for encouraging students to speak English.

School details

Name of school	Rikkyo School-in-England
DCSF number	938/6188
Unique reference number	126132
Type of school	Secondary Japanese Christian
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1972
Age range of students	10-18
Gender of students	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 86 Girls: 58 Total: 144
Annual fees (boarders)	£12,000-£17,100
Address of school	Guildford Road Rudgwick Horsham West Sussex RH12 3BE
Telephone number	01403822107
Email address	lizwood@rikkyo.w-sussex.sch.uk
Headteacher	Mr Makio Higashi
Proprietor	Rikkyo School in England Trust
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell AI
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