

School inspection report

4 to 6 November 2025

Rikkyo School in England

Guildford Road

Rudgwick

West Sussex

RH12 3BE

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders communicate the school's aims well to pupils and parents, and they are effectively woven throughout the curriculum. Pupils are caring, kind, polite and tolerant of their peers and teachers.
2. Trustees and governors successfully support and challenge leaders to promote pupils' wellbeing. They ensure that leaders have the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their responsibilities effectively so that the Standards are met. However, at the beginning of the inspection, not all the required information was made available to parents on the website. This was rectified during the inspection.
3. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) programmes are well planned and meet statutory requirements. They include an appropriate range of topics, such as challenging discrimination, consent, drugs awareness, and making and maintaining healthy friendships. Pupils learn that every individual is unique and deserves respect.
4. Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan stimulating activities that ensure pupils make good progress and achieve well. However, in some lessons, teachers do not always provide effective support to pupils, which has an impact on their engagement and achievement.
5. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well in the classroom with individual guidance from suitably trained staff. Currently, all pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL); some also speak Japanese as an additional language (JAL). The curriculum includes regular timetabled English lessons which are designed for pupils to acquire language fluency so that they attain the required standard for university entrance. However, not all teachers provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise speaking English in other subjects.
6. Pupils are suitably well supervised throughout the day, including during breaks and lunchtimes, and in the evenings. The school site and premises, including the boarding houses and medical centre, are maintained to a suitable standard. Secure risk assessment procedures ensure that risks that may affect pupils' welfare, health and safety are identified and mitigated.
7. The well-trained boarding staff know pupils well and ensure that they are well supported and cared for. Boarding staff respond to boarders' needs appropriately.
8. Pupils learn to appreciate different cultural traditions during their studies. Pupils learn about democracy and Britain's institutions through thoughtful discussions and visits to a wide variety of significant sites and places of interest within the United Kingdom (UK).
9. The well-designed careers programme enables pupils to think widely about possible career paths based on their skills, aspirations and enthusiasms. Leaders ensure that pupils receive appropriate support when they apply to university both in terms of their written application and interview.
10. The well-trained safeguarding team ensures that staff are kept up to date with the latest statutory guidance. Safeguarding leaders have formed productive working relationships with external agencies so that appropriate procedures to safeguard pupils are implemented effectively. Staff are methodical in carrying out pre-employment and recruitment checks in a timely and robust manner.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- check systematically to ensure that all the required information is consistently made available to parents
- ensure that all staff adapt their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils consistently
- extend opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence in speaking English in all lessons.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Trustees and governors meet and visit the school regularly to challenge and provide support for staff. Governors ensure comprehensive oversight of leaders' work and verify that leaders have the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake their roles. Trustees, governors and leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the Standards are met consistently and the wellbeing of the pupils is actively promoted.
12. Leaders have developed systems to evaluate the success of the school's work. These systems support leaders to understand the quality of the school's provision, including where it is most effective and where there are areas for improvement.
13. Subject leaders have an effective overview of their curriculum areas and outcomes for pupils. The well-considered training and coaching programme for staff, together with regular monitoring of teaching and pupils' work, is successful in improving teaching. Leaders take effective action to ensure the consistency of teaching approaches across the school.
14. The experienced boarding team is well trained and maintains a 'home-from-home' boarding community. Boarding leaders recognise and provide for the needs of boarding pupils, all of whom are experiencing a new cultural context. Communication is effective. Boarding staff respond swiftly and appropriately to any concerns or suggestions raised.
15. Most of the required information is available on the school's website. However, at the start of the inspection, the behaviour, online safety and RSE policies did not reference the latest government guidance. Practice in these areas is secure and compliant with statutory guidance. These policy oversights were rectified during the inspection. Parents receive written reports and regular updates regarding their child's progress and attainment across all subjects.
16. The school's appropriate three-stage complaints procedure is available on the school's website and is implemented effectively. Leaders respond swiftly to any concerns raised and follow procedures correctly. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. There is a suitable and up-to-date accessibility plan.
17. Leaders collaborate effectively with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils' particular needs are identified and understood thoroughly. They work productively with children's services and other safeguarding partners to ensure a co-ordinated approach to safeguarding.
18. Leaders have established a consistent approach to managing and mitigating risk with defined protocols which are put into practice to help keep pupils safe. Risk assessments of all types consider current and potential risks, especially for high-risk activities such as those that take place in sport, on water or during overnight trips. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are secure, with appropriate input from external experts.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

19. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. Pupils study the Japanese national curriculum with a focus on the creative arts and science. The curriculum also includes a course in English literature and language which is specifically designed for pupils who speak EAL. The range of subjects studied is comparable in scope and richness to the national curriculum of England and covers all the required areas of learning. The curriculum is designed to respect pupils' Japanese cultural and linguistic identity while at the same time fostering English-language competence and respectful engagement with British society. This careful fusion of curriculums enables pupils to proceed to further education, both in Japan and the UK.
21. The Japanese curriculum uses a nationalised examination system and so assessment is carried out internally. Pupils perform well in external qualifications. In 2025, almost all pupils achieved above the benchmark in the English proficiency examination used by Japanese universities. Pupils have produced portfolios of their work for the Higher Project Qualification (HPQ) that reflect a high standard of achievement. These and other qualifications support pupils well in gaining places at universities with competitive entry requirements, in both Japan and the UK.
22. Teachers are knowledgeable in their fields. They use their expertise to plan lessons that explain new concepts well. Teachers are quick to spot and correct any emerging misconceptions. Typically, teaching is adapted well to the needs of each pupil, providing helpful individual guidance that enables pupils to make good progress in their studies. However, in a small number of cases, teachers do not always adapt their teaching resources and activities sufficiently to meet pupils' needs. This can result in varying levels of engagement. The atmosphere in classrooms is underpinned by a culture of scholarly ambition and intellectual enquiry. Teachers have established clear routines and high academic expectations of their pupils. These attitudes play a major role in pupils' academic success.
23. A new assessment system has recently been introduced to check pupils' attainment and progress. On arrival, pupils take baseline assessments in English, Japanese and mathematics. Staff are increasingly confident in using the school's new data tracking and assessment system to review learning and to determine suitable strategies for support.
24. Individual plans are compiled that enable staff to adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs, including those who have SEND. Individual plans are regularly reviewed and revised. The learning support department ensures that additional one-to-one support is provided both in and out of classrooms, which enables pupils to make good progress from their starting points.
25. Teachers are well trained and have the necessary expertise to support and develop pupils' literacy skills. As pupils progress through the school, they become more fluent and confident readers in English, in addition to their confidence and fluency in reading Japanese. Within the English programme, pupils learn conversational English, writing, spelling and listening skills. In mathematics, pupils learn how to find unknown equations and gain a better understanding of the relationships between variables. Such activities help pupils to view problems from different angles in order to solve them. This helps to consolidate their understanding and supports them to complete more complex tasks.
26. Throughout the week, all pupils attend timetabled English lessons. In the most effective lessons, teachers provide clarification on subject-specific terminology to support pupils' understanding, for

example, in biology and geography. This support helps younger pupils to engage fully in English during lessons, such as those about animal classification and climate change. However, older pupils do not always use English in English language lessons when learning about complex topics, such as conjunctions, which affects their bilingual proficiency. Similarly, not all teachers provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise speaking English in other subjects throughout the school day.

27. Pupils take part in, and benefit from, a wide range of enrichment activities that support their personal development. Pupils develop their skills in a variety of co-curricular activities including asymmetric flower arranging, calligraphy, martial arts and the traditional Japanese tea ceremony. Adventure residential trips provide further opportunities for pupils to acquire new interests and skills, building their self-confidence and self-esteem.
28. Boarders' social wellbeing is supported effectively through participation in a wide range of recreational activities including craft making, Halloween disco, karaoke and movie nights. These experiences, together with supervised prep and weekend outings, encourage a positive boarding house ethos and develop boarders' independence and good habits of organisation and study.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

29. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

30. The curriculum provides a comprehensive programme of sports sessions and co-curricular activities, including badminton, budo, dance club, football, park runs, yoga and Zumba. Each week, during Friday sports, pupils can choose activities such as adventure sport, golf, horse riding, skiing and swimming. Activities are taught by specialist staff and carefully tailored to meet pupils' needs. The school's outdoor classroom gives pupils the opportunity to practise their controlled and intentional breathing techniques in nature. Pupils regularly participate in fitness challenges. Participation in these activities helps to develop pupils' self-knowledge, physical wellbeing, self-confidence, social skills, self-esteem and teamwork. Pupils learn the importance of sleep and how taking part in physical activities can have a positive impact on mental and physical health.
31. In PSHE, teachers reinforce the importance of maintaining physical health and fitness. The caterers provide pupils with a range of healthy food options, including international dishes. Leaders pay close attention to pupils' dietary requirements and take appropriate precautions regarding food allergies or intolerances.
32. In religious education (RE), pupils learn about different world religions and spiritual outlooks. This helps pupils to gain a perspective on the spiritual and moral dimensions of life, as do their studies in the creative and expressive arts and outdoor activities. Throughout the school day, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their life, including their beliefs and values. For example, pupils regularly participate in kendo, a modern Japanese martial art that also supports mental and spiritual self-development, discipline and personal growth.
33. The medical centre for pupils who are injured or feel unwell includes a suitable 'wellness' room where pupils can recover their composure should they feel overwhelmed or anxious. Experienced and well-trained staff manage the medical centre well, including those in the boarding houses. Secure procedures are in place for the administration and locked storage of medicines. Staff are always available to support and care for pupils' physical and mental health.
34. The RSE programme, delivered during PSHE lessons, has been revised and reflects current statutory guidance. Leaders consult parents regarding curriculum content. Appropriate topics, such as consent and drugs awareness, provide pupils with strategies to make positive choices and to make and sustain healthy and respectful relationships.
35. Behaviour management is effective. There are suitable numbers of staff supervising pupils during breaks and mealtimes. The relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect and courtesy, and reflect the school's ethos. For example, during mealtimes, pupils are responsible for collecting and serving food while maintaining the cleanliness of their tables, which promotes accountability and citizenship skills. Staff demonstrate positive social behaviours. Pupils adopt these and, as a result, behaviour is calm and civilised during lessons and around the school site.
36. Leaders ensure that the school's anti-bullying strategy is implemented consistently by staff. Bullying is rare. If any incidents occur, pastoral leaders act swiftly and use restorative approaches to encourage pupils to reflect on their behaviour and its negative effect on others.

37. The school's premises and boarding accommodation are well maintained. Regular health and safety checks are undertaken to keep all areas of the school safe and secure. Leaders take an assiduous approach to managing fire safety with appropriate policies, training and maintenance. The importance of fire protocols is explained to boarders clearly and fire drills are carried out regularly during boarding hours.

38. Attendance and admission registers are appropriately maintained in line with current statutory requirements. Leaders understand that they must inform the local authority should any pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times.

39. Boarders are provided with comfortable and well-resourced accommodation. Boarding leaders provide a calm environment where pupils can relax and participate in a range of social events, and they regularly seek boarders' views. Boarders are well supervised during the day and evening, and before they go to bed. Boarding staff oversee prep and are easily contactable during the night and at weekends. Pupils think highly of boarding staff because they create a welcoming environment where they feel supported as part of a close-knit family. Pupils behave well and appreciate the friendships they are able to form in the boarding environment.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

40. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

41. The carefully planned economic curriculum enables pupils to develop their understanding of monetary and financial matters. Pupils develop their financial literacy skills and learn about the benefits of making informed financial decisions, such as about how to manage a household budget. They learn about monetary policy and aspects such as mortgages, managing borrowing and understanding the effect that debt can have on mental health and wellbeing. Older pupils learn about ISAs, the stock market and global financial markets. Boarders understand the value of money and develop skills in everyday situations, such as using debit cards in the tuck shop. The curriculum helps pupils to develop important skills such as making sensible financial decisions that prepare them for adult life.
42. The PSHE curriculum teaches pupils to demonstrate tolerance and respect and to celebrate differences. Pupils understand not to judge people based on stereotypes, such as physical appearance or disability. They appreciate that everyone is unique and special and that no one should have to worry about the things that make them different.
43. The careers curriculum supports the school's aim to nurture each pupil's potential. Pupils receive helpful and impartial guidance from staff about a range of careers. This includes specific advice about subject choices and support for writing university applications. Pupils attend local work experience placements. They also compile a 'careers dream' folder where they assemble a range of documentation that they use to identify their skills and match them to career options. Visiting speakers together with school alumni give helpful advice on a range of careers, such as in education, equestrianism, entertainment and music.
44. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles in the school, such as chapel representatives, food monitors and sports captains. School council members are selected through a democratic process in order to represent pupils' views to senior leaders. These positions of responsibility help pupils to develop their own leadership skills.
45. Each boarding house is overseen by a house captain who supports boarding staff in routines for the smooth running of the house and leads house meetings to encourage communal responsibility. These activities help to promote mutual respect as well as a sense of civic duty. A buddy system is in place for new boarders so that they feel comfortable and supported in boarding.
46. Pupils develop an appreciation of the diversity of cultures, traditions and values other than their own, by reading literature and in lessons. For example, in RE, pupils assess and appreciate the similarities and differences between Greek and Japanese mythology by examining moral decision-making, consequences of choices and how different cultures express their shared values.
47. The curriculum is carefully planned to develop pupils' sense of social responsibility and is represented in acts of service. Pupils participate in many community outreach projects, including singing carols at care homes, hosting open days and work experience in local schools and charity shops.
48. In PSHE lessons and 'home room' tutorials, teachers guide pupils to understand the need for rules, and rewards and consequences, to protect individual interests and maintain a well-ordered society.

This approach enables pupils to distinguish between right and wrong. It also reflects the school's aim of enabling pupils to become global citizens by applying moral principles and values while promoting service, community and civic responsibility.

49. Pupils gain an understanding of democracy, laws, legislation and political systems, and explore political viewpoints by visiting the Houses of Parliament and the Royal Courts of Justice. Pupils learn that all members of society benefit when its citizens respect democracy, abide by the law and contribute positively to their community. Staff ensure that any discussions that contain political content are conducted impartially and without bias.
50. The comprehensive trips and visits programme enables pupils to deepen their understanding of local and national institutions and services in contemporary Britain. They visit famous London institutions such as the British Museum, and places of cultural and historical interest in London and beyond. Participation in these outings helps pupils to learn how public institutions make a positive contribution to society.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

51. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

52. Leaders and governors promote a positive culture of safeguarding across the school. They ensure that staff are alert to the possibility that safeguarding issues could occur at any time and that it is everyone's responsibility to identify, report and act on any concerns raised. Staff regularly identify potential risks and suitable mitigations, for example by completing evaluations following trips and visits.
53. The tutor groups provide a nurturing environment where pupils feel safe, secure and well looked after. Pupils know how to share a worry or concern with a trusted adult. Information about how pupils, staff and visitors can contact members of the safeguarding team is displayed throughout the school. There is an independent person available for boarders to contact. Termly surveys enable pupils to report any concerns should they feel unable to discuss matters directly with staff. In PSHE lessons, pupils are reminded that they can share any concerns they may have via an anonymous 'worry' box. Leaders use these systems effectively to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing.
54. Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of safeguarding requirements for boarders. They have established a range of effective mechanisms and policies to ensure that the boarding houses run smoothly and are compliant with statutory guidance. Safeguarding procedures for the welfare of boarders are well understood and effective. Regular communication between the medical, pastoral, safeguarding and boarding house teams ensures that pupils' welfare is prioritised.
55. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are trained appropriately for their responsibilities. The safeguarding team delivers effective training to staff so that they are confident in responding to any safeguarding issues and know to whom they should report concerns.
56. The staff behaviour policy clearly sets out leaders' expectations about how staff should conduct and present themselves, in person and online, both in and outside school. Staff understand this policy and know the necessary procedures they should follow should they need to raise a low-level concern about any adult working in the school. Safeguarding leaders respond swiftly and take suitable action when required.
57. In PSHE, pupils are taught how to stay safe, including online. Topics include cyberbullying, spotting scams and the risks of uploading personal images. Suitable internet filtering and monitoring systems are in place to help to protect pupils from accessing inappropriate content. These systems are checked regularly. Online records confirm that any alerts of breaches in the security of the school's internet are acted upon swiftly. Appropriate staff supervision arrangements, including CCTV, are in place across the school's extensive site.
58. Effective working partnerships with external agencies ensure that safeguarding leaders can seek advice or make timely referrals to relevant agencies, such as children's services and the local authority, as required.
59. A single central record (SCR) of recruitment checks is suitably maintained and is regularly reviewed by leaders and governors. Staff involved in recruitment receive specific training for their roles. Robust procedures are in place for checking the suitability of staff and family members of boarding staff resident on the school site. Staff demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the required procedures when recruiting overseas staff, particularly Japanese nationals. The school's safer recruitment procedures are thorough and effective.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

60. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Rikkyo School in England
Department for Education number	938/6188
Registered charity number	306987
Address	Rikkyo School in England Guildford Road Rudgwick West Sussex RH17 3BE
Phone number	01403 822107
Email address	eikoku@rikkyo.co.uk
Website	www.rikkyo.co.uk
Proprietor	Rikkyo School in England Trust
Chair	Mr Junichi Sugiyama
Headteacher	Mr Toru Okano
Age range	10 to 18
Number of pupils	171
Number of boarding pupils	171
Date of previous Ofsted inspection	25 to 27 April 2023 (Boarding inspection)

Information about the school

61. Rikkyo School in England is a co-educational day and boarding school, located near Horsham, West Sussex. The school was founded in 1974 and caters for children of Japanese families living and working abroad. It is a registered charity overseen by a board of trustees and a governing body.
62. The school is organised in three sections: the elementary school division, for pupils aged 10 to 12 years, a junior high school division, for pupils aged 12 to 15 years, and a high school division, for pupils aged 16 to 18 years.
63. All current pupils are boarders and are accommodated in three boarding houses located within the main school building. There is one boarding house for male pupils aged 10 to 15, one for male pupils aged 15 to 18 and one for female pupils aged 10 to 18.
64. The school has identified 10 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
65. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for all pupils.
66. The school states its aims are to provide a high-quality bilingual and bi-cultural education which will enable pupils to achieve their ambitions of becoming global citizens and securing a place in prestigious universities in Japan and other parts of the world.

Inspection details

Inspection dates	4 to 6 November 2025
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67. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

68. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and a Chapel service
- observation of a sample of co-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair of governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

69. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit www.isi.net.

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For more information, please visit isi.net