

London Bunka Yochien School

307a Horn Lane, Acton, London W3 0BP

Inspection dates

30 January – 1 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a happy school. The children love to learn and the teachers enjoy teaching them.
- The school is improving. Leaders acted quickly to improve the care and safety of the children after the previous report. Leaders have maintained these high standards. The school is a safe place where children are cared for extremely well.
- Leaders manage the school well. They make sure that the quality of teaching is consistently good, enabling children to make good progress in their learning.
- Leaders provide a good curriculum, balancing the Japanese and English curriculums successfully. They recognise that they need to provide more opportunities for children to speak and read English words and sentences.
- In the school's secure environment, children thrive. Their behaviour is exceptionally good. They are courteous and considerate towards others. Older children take pride in helping younger ones, and are excellent role models.
- All the adults are caring. They watch over the children and make sure that they come to no harm.
- Teaching is good. Adults provide a wide range of worthwhile activities. These enable children to explore and develop good language and number skills, and to learn about the world around them. Adults accept that there are fewer opportunities for children to learn these skills in the outdoor play areas.
- Adults promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Tasks have a strong appeal to children's imagination. The school celebrates a wide range of faiths and customs from across the world. The school promotes children's understanding of fundamental British values successfully.
- As a result of good teaching, children make consistently good progress. The most able children are given tasks with a good level of challenge. The youngest children are gently supported and learn a wide range of new skills. Each child is given good personal attention. This enables all the children to learn well.
- The school keeps parents and carers informed about their children's progress and day-to-day events. Parents spoke warmly about the care that the school provides for their children.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Give children more opportunities to speak and read English.
- Provide more opportunities for children to learn a wider range of skills in the outdoor play areas.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have improved the school since the previous inspection. The school now meets all the independent school standards. As an early years setting, the school also meets all statutory requirements of the early years framework. Children are cared for exceptionally well, and leaders make the children's welfare their highest priority.
- Leaders successfully ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good. They work alongside the teachers and support them well. Those who responded to the Ofsted survey of staff views were positive about the school and the encouragement they receive from leaders.
- Leaders have built effective links between school and home. Parents told the inspector that they feel fully informed, not only about day-to-day matters, but also about their children's progress. Parents told inspectors that they love the school. A typical comment from one parent was, 'We are incredibly pleased with our child's progress and have seen some amazing events at the school, including sports day every year and the Christmas show, which is always a wonderful spectacle.'
- Leaders are ambitious to provide the best possible start to the children's education. Leaders have adopted the best of both the Japanese and English curriculums. Both curriculums aim to give children a good grounding in language, number and social skills. The school enables children to explore and find things out for themselves in a way that is typical of English early years settings. Parents told the inspector that they liked the informal structure of the school, including the mixed-age groups. One parent commented, 'The younger children learn from the older ones.'
- The curriculum provides plenty of opportunities for children to develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities. Many of the activities have a strong appeal to the children's imagination. Children learn a good deal about the customs and traditions of a wide range of cultures, including Christmas and the Hindu festival of Diwali. These opportunities enable children to respect those of all faiths and backgrounds.
- The curriculum gives children a good grounding in fundamental British values. Through the varied curriculum, children learn to regard all people as equal. They learn to care for others. This was particularly seen during the inspection when two children took responsibility for demonstrating activities to others. Children learn to respect British institutions, such as the police and fire services. They could identify the Union flag as well as their own flag, and were proud of both.
- The curriculum is enriched by a programme of events and outings to widen children's experience. Children are taken to local places such as parks and libraries, and also to farms to have a wider experience of the natural world.
- Most teaching is in the children's home language. Children have opportunities throughout the day to learn English words, such as words to do with the calendar and the names of various fruit and vegetables. Some children have weekly additional English lessons. Leaders accept that children would be more confident in an English-speaking environment if they knew more phrases and could recognise more signs in English.

Governance

- The proprietors are very experienced and have owned the school for many years. They are completely hands-on, sharing in the teaching and care of the children. There is no separate governing body and the proprietors govern, lead and manage their school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school publishes a comprehensive safeguarding policy on its website, and copies are available on paper to those parents who wish to see it. The policy meets statutory requirements and provides clear guidance on keeping children safe and promoting their welfare.
- The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Adults know which leaders are responsible for keeping children safe. Leaders know exactly which external agencies to contact if they have any concern about a child. There is always someone on-site with responsibility for the safety of the children.
- The school carefully checks the backgrounds of all those who come into contact with the children. All have checks made on their fitness to work, including police checks. Leaders make sure that they are confident about the right to work of all adults. Leaders check that no one on the staff has been stopped from teaching.
- The school complies fully with the early years statutory requirements for safeguarding and welfare. All staff are trained in first aid procedures for young children. Their training is kept up to date.
- Adults are trained in recognising signs of neglect or abuse, including female genital mutilation. Adults are trained to spot signs of radicalisation or extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is consistently good. The adults share in teaching all the children. In addition, they focus on groups of children of different ages. One adult, for example, looks after the two-year-olds, providing the gentle encouragement suitable for such young children. As a result of such close attention, all children feel confident and enjoy their learning.
- Adults provide a wide range of activities for all groups of children that provide them with a good level of challenge. For example, in one activity, the older and most-able children clearly enjoyed playing a very demanding game. In this activity, an adult chanted traditional Japanese songs, while the children picked out cards that had the same lines printed on them. As Japanese writing contains a great number of characters, this activity was very challenging, enabling the most able children to make strong progress in their literacy.
- Children who need more help with their reading are taught a simplified form of the alphabet. They learn well because they concentrate hard and do not get distracted.
- The youngest children are given tasks that have a good level of challenge. For example, children develop their vocabulary in their home language by naming animals on picture cards. Adults take the opportunity to discuss the animals with the children. Such activities

successfully promote children's speaking skills.

- Teaching successfully covers the wide range of skills common to both the Japanese and English curriculums. For example, children's physical development is promoted well. Indoors, children do exercises using large movements that strengthen their bodies and promote coordination. Outdoors, children have the opportunity to ride wheeled vehicles, slide, run and dig in the sand tray.
- Children are prepared well for learning to write. Adults provide many activities designed to encourage children to develop good manual dexterity. They are introduced to writing by using a variety of tools, including brushes and pastel colouring sticks.
- Adults teach children good mathematical skills. Children learn to recognise the Arabic numbers common to both languages, and to count and calculate. They also learn about symmetry from an early age, by making simple and beautiful origami shapes from paper squares.
- Teaching promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. For example, during the inspection, children were getting ready for the annual Setsubun festival. Children made masks of evil monsters in preparation for throwing beans at the monsters to ward off evil and bring good fortune. Such activities have a strong appeal to the children's imagination and result in them making colourful and attractive artwork.
- Learning opportunities in the indoor play areas are varied and stimulating. Leaders accept that the outdoor areas provide fewer chances for children to read, write and learn number skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Children are happy and confident, and this can be seen in the joyous way they arrive in the morning and greet the adults. Adults prioritise the care and welfare of the children.
- Children are not easily distracted. They focus on their tasks and learn extremely well. There are warm relations between adults and children. As a result, children feel secure and are ready to learn.
- Children are exceptionally kind to one another. They told the inspector that all the children are kind. The school's records of behaviour show that there are no incidents of bullying or unkindness. The inspector saw children getting on extremely well with one another, sharing the equipment without a hint of squabbling. Older children are excellent role models to younger ones, demonstrating to them how activities should be carried out.
- The school strongly promotes children's well-being. Two-year-olds have rest areas, should they need them. Lunch arrangements are extremely civilised. Adults eat with the children. Children bring healthy lunches from home, and the school insists that only water and green tea are allowed; not unhealthy fizzy drinks.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Children keep their surroundings immaculate. When they take their shoes off, they arrange them neatly in pairs. Even the youngest children tuck chairs under the table when they move to a different activity.
- Children behave considerately, even when they become excited, such as when chasing one another, or pretending that a teacher is a monster needing to be captured.
- Attendance registers show that children rarely miss school. Their attendance is high.
- Parents who communicated with the inspector all agreed that their children are safe and happy. A typical comment from one parent was, 'I am particularly impressed with how teachers closely monitor children's emotional and behavioural development.' Surrounded by caring adults, children thrive and feel secure at the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children of all ages and abilities learn well. This is because they receive teaching that is focused on their individual needs. Teaching is varied and flexible. At times, children receive effective one-to-one support. At other times, adults put them into groups chosen by age and ability. When appropriate, children learn successfully through whole-class teaching. As a result of such flexibility, children receive teaching that has the right amount of challenge. With such close care and attention, all children, including the most able, make good progress.
- A scrutiny of children's work shows that they make good progress in acquiring skills in reading, writing and mathematics during their stay at the school. Adults keep careful records of children's progress and share these regularly with parents.
- Reading in the children's home language is a particular strength of the school. Many Japanese books are provided for children to read, either with an adult or on their own. By the time they leave, children have learned to recognise a large number of characters. Where parents wish, children are given effective English phonics teaching.
- Children make good progress in a range of subjects across the curriculum. For example, children have a good understanding of geography, and can accurately identify countries and continents on a globe.
- Children are prepared well for the next stage in their schooling, whether they return to their home country or move to a Japanese school, either in the United Kingdom or another country.
- Children attain a good standard of fluency in reading and writing in their home language. Children's skills in English meet statutory requirements. The school accepts that children would benefit from being given more opportunities to speak and recognise a wider range of English words and phrases.

School details

Unique reference number	131755
DfE registration number	307/6079
Inspection number	10026286

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 6
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Number of part-time pupils	3
Proprietor	London Bunka Yochien Ltd
Chairs	Yukimi Asato and Akiko Nagai
Headteacher	Akiko Nagai
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,750
Telephone numbers	07714 518079 and 07710 450287
Website	www.londonbunka.com
Email address	home@londonbunka.com
Date of previous inspection	14–16 January 2014

Information about this school

- London Bunka is a 'yochien' or kindergarten. The curriculum blends elements from both the Japanese and English early years curriculums. The school complies with the early years statutory framework.
- The proprietors have run the school for 25 years. Both teach in the school. One is also the headteacher of the school.
- The school's aim is to teach children to be kind and independent.
- The school uses the premises of a sports and social club during the day, when the club is

closed.

- No child has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- No child is eligible for support from the early years pupil premium.
- Children stay at the school for one or two years, and either move back to Japan or go on to Japanese schools.
- The school was last inspected in January 2014, when most aspects of the school's work, including teaching, behaviour and the curriculum, were judged to be good. The school did not meet all safeguarding and welfare standards, and was judged to be inadequate overall. The school was visited again in September 2014. By this time all standards had been met.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector watched the children learn on each of the three days of her visit. She observed all the teachers, including the proprietors, who also teach the children.
- The inspector talked to the children, both in English and in Japanese, with the help of the interpreter. The inspector looked at samples of the children's work. She observed the children at play and when eating their lunch.
- The inspector held discussions with the proprietors.
- Most children are transported to and from school by the school bus. The inspector spoke to three parents during the inspection. There were three responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including two written comments. The inspector took all responses and comments into consideration.
- The inspector took account of two responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire for members of staff.
- The inspector reviewed documents and policies, including those related to safeguarding, in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspector considered a range of evidence on pupils' attainment and progress. She also examined safeguarding information and records relating to attendance, behaviour and welfare.

Inspection team

Natalia Power, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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