

Submission from Tsuyoshi Takahashi, Director General, Japan Foundation.

I represent the Japan Foundation, London.

The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 under the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and became an Independent Administrative Institution in 2003. We promote international cultural exchange between Japan and the rest of the world, and provide financial support for a range of international cultural exchange programmes. Our activities are financed by annual subsidies from the Japanese government, capital gains accrued from the management of our original endowment fund, and contributions and donations from the private sector.

One of the main activities of the Japan Foundation London is to support Japanese teaching in the UK. This includes:

- Providing grants to promote Japanese language education or to introduce it into schools.
- Producing and distributing Japanese language educational materials.
- Running events, training courses and networking opportunities for teachers of Japanese and schools with links with Japan
- Providing information and advice to teachers of Japanese
- Running an in-house library for Japanese language education resources that is available free of charge to UK teachers

We also support learners of Japanese, and distribute information and answer enquiries on all aspects of Japanese teaching and learning in the UK.

More information about our organisation can be found at www.jpf.org.uk.

I have only responded to the points in which we feel qualified to answer:

- Can language learning be embedded in existing teaching?

I would like to share some examples I know of when Japanese has been embedded into the curriculum at Primary level:

1. The Japan Society/Japan Foundation have created a specific resource to teach Japanese at Primary level. You do not need to be a specialist language teacher, or have knowledge of Japanese to teach this 10 week programme. <http://www.japansociety.org.uk/rsn/index.html>
2. The Japan Foundation has a scheme of work to teach Japanese at primary schools. This contains lesson plans, supplementary resources, target vocabulary and teaching tips, and will give teachers of Japanese at primary level all they need to hold effective, engaging and enjoyable Japanese lessons. http://www.jpf.org.uk/language/teaching_resources.php#primary
3. The Japan Society has also created resources to teach about Japanese geography in Primary schools:

<http://www.japansociety.org.uk/schools/resources/downloads/japan-in-geography-at-ks1/> This is a fantastic resources that includes Geography and language teaching.

4. You can see the whole range of activities from Bearsden Primary school, in East Dunbartonshire, Scotland. Pupils made origami, wrote spooky ghost stories, made Japanese fans, tried woodblock printing...and learnt about IT as they created a website to display their work: <http://godzillasden.blogspot.co.uk/2010/03/are-you-brave-enough-to-enter-godzillas-25.html>
5. Manchester Metropolitan University has created a whole range of resources that mix language learning with information about the Tohoku Earthquake that happened in Japan in 2011. The resources were created in partnership with pupils from the Fukushima area of Japan, and are a thought provoking insight into Japanese language and culture. This will soon be available as a resource for primary schools.
6. At Tenbury Primary school, they taught a little Japanese and then gave students the chance to read stories provided by the Japan Society, then write their own Japanese style poetry, paint accompanying pictures and perform their own '*kamishibai*' in a traditional Japanese way. You can see more about it here: <http://japaneseclubprimary.blogspot.co.uk/p/kamishibai.html>
7. The discovering language project has been very successful in several areas of the UK. [http://sha.org.uk/Home/About us/Projects/Discovering language/Discovering language/](http://sha.org.uk/Home/About_us/Projects/Discovering_language/Discovering_language/) This projects teaches primary level pupils a carousel of six different languages, to give them awareness of several different languages. This can be embedded into the primary curriculum using current teachers rather than specialist primary language teachers. This promotes linguistic diversity, gives children a solid understanding of how to learn languages and makes it easier for them to pick up new languages further up the school. The languages that are currently available are German, Spanish, French, Japanese, Punjabi, Latin, Esperanto, Polish, Lingala, British Sign Language, Tamil, Mandarin and Cantonese . You can see more about implementation patterns here: [http://sha.org.uk/Home/About us/Projects/Discovering language/Implementation patterns/](http://sha.org.uk/Home/About us/Projects/Discovering_language/Implementation_patterns/)
8. Please feel free to read our case study about Neherthong Primary school and their inspiring Japanese language teaching: <http://www.jpf.org.uk/language/casestudies.php#case1>

- The choice of languages for teaching – which languages should children be learning and why?

We agree that primary schools are an ideal environment for children to begin language education, so they can learn to enjoy and appreciate languages and cultures from an early age. We also agree that it is best not to restrict schools at all in their choice of languages at this level; in Scotland, where so many schools enjoy

rich linguistic and cultural diversity it is important to allow schools to teach to their strengths and make use of their existing teachers' language abilities.

In particular, I would also like to list some reasons for students to study Japanese at this level. I am sure that many of these reasons would also apply to other languages, but with regards to Japanese in particular:

1. Japanese is a very suitable language choice for primary school children. Japanese pronunciation is very easy for English speakers and beginner-level grammar is highly logical, consistent and easy to learn. We have also found that children relish the chance of learning a new script and that dyslexic and SEN children also respond well to the phonetic characters of Japanese.

2. There is a tremendous amount of support for Japanese language teachers and schools offering Japanese, including resources specifically designed to meet the needs of primary education. These services can help to ensure that Japanese remains a sustainable subject and that the quality of Japanese teaching continues to improve. Some of the support services available from the Japan Foundation and other Japan related organisations are listed below:

- We run workshops, teacher training and networking for teachers of Japanese. These are almost always free for participants. We are happy to continue this and to introduce workshops for primary teachers of Japanese (both for specialist teachers and for non-specialists that would like to teach the basics.)
- We run courses for non-native teachers to brush up their Japanese language skills. This includes week-long refresher courses for intermediate and advanced level teachers, an online course for teachers with basic Japanese as well as funding for teachers to go to study Japanese and pedagogy in Japan.
- We have two in house Japanese language professionals who can run workshops/advise teachers about teaching methods, help create language resources, write schemes of work or Japanese syllabuses etc.
- We run the Japanese Language Local Project Support Programme that schools can apply to for funding (up to £3000) for schools that would like to add Japanese into their curriculum.
- We can provide professional, personal advice to schools and teachers looking to start Japanese, and can even assist them in finding a specialist Japanese language teacher.
- We have a scheme of work for Japanese aimed at Primary level pupils that is free to download.
- We have 10 week long programme of teaching materials called Ready Steady Nihongo, designed for non-specialist teachers who would like to introduce the basics of Japanese. This is all online, free and includes all lesson plans, games, hand-outs etc.
- We run a web-based discussion group for teachers of Japanese in the UK where they can swap ideas and ask each other questions (there are currently over 700 members signed up to this list.)

- We have a specialist Japanese language education library including approximately 10,000 Japanese language resources that can be borrowed by teachers of Japanese from any UK Educational institution. We even have a postal loan service which means that teachers in Scotland can benefit from our library without travelling to London.
- We run a volunteer programme where we send Japanese speakers to schools to give free Japanese language taster sessions. This has been very popular with primary schools.
- We also run other activities to encourage, support and inspire pupils that study Japanese. For example, in 2011/2012 we ran the Japan Webpage Contest for Schools. This was a great success and demonstrated how many primary schools already teach Japanese language and culture to their pupils. This kind of project is especially good for enhancing cross curricular activities. One of the first schools to win this competition was Bearsden Primary School in Scotland.
- In addition to the support offered by the Japan Foundation, there are many other Japan related organisations that also run grant programmes and/or offer support to UK schools. These include the Anglo Daiwa Foundation, the Consulate General of Japan in Edinburgh, the Embassy of Japan, the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation and the Japan Society. All of this means that Japanese is a sustainable and well-supported choice for a primary language.

3. There is a large base of Japanese-speaking graduates able to teach the language within the UK: The government-run Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme has continued to employ UK graduates to go to Japan and teach in Japanese schools for 1-5 years since 1987. After 25 years there are now over 11,000 JET alumni in the UK, including many who became teachers. The JET alumni association has a very active chapter in Scotland (based in Edinburgh but with many members in Glasgow as well) these people would be an excellent source of Japanese teachers at primary level.

4. As well as language learning, the study of Japanese offers a great insight into culture (including modern popular culture) that inspires children and helps provide enthusiasm for language learning. Japanese manga, anime, characters and games are with children popular throughout the world and we have noticed this makes children very enthusiastic when they start learning the language. This strong cultural dimension to language learning makes Japanese particularly interesting for many children.

Finally, I would like to highlight that we are currently administering a survey about Japan language education in the UK. We would be happy to share our results with you. We run this survey every three years, and the results of the 2009 survey are [here](#).

We would be very interested in working with the Scottish Government to expand our provision for primary languages in Scotland. If you have any questions whatsoever, please feel free to contact my colleague at Josephine.audigier@jpf.org.uk.

- The role of languages in economic development – what languages should children be learning to benefit their future careers, and to help Scotland flourish economically?

Once again, I would like to mention that Japanese is an excellent choice of language for Scottish students for their future careers. Japan is the world's third largest economy and there are more than 65 Japanese companies that operate in Scotland employing thousands of people, most of which are based around Edinburgh and Glasgow. Japanese companies successfully based in Scotland include Terumo Vascutek, Terasaki Electric, OKI Data, Mizuno, Mitsubishi Electric, Ricoh and Teijin Dupont. (info from: <http://www.sdi.co.uk/about-sdi/office-locations/japan.aspx>) In addition to this, there are many Scottish companies that operate in Japan. These include Aggreko, Metaforic, RBS, Lloyds TSB, Aberdeen Asset Management, Wolfson Microelectronics, Picstel Technologies, Wood MacKenzie and Hawick Cashmere.

Considering the size of Japan's economy, Japanese must surely be a highly useful business language for Scottish pupils. A recent article in the Telegraph stated that "Japanese was ranked as one of the top 10 foreign languages to study in a recent survey of UK employers' preferences. Those students who enrol in degree courses studying the language, as well as Japanese culture and literature, also perform extremely well on lifetime salary, averaging £36,437 from graduation through to the age of 65. Perhaps surprisingly, this puts Japanese studies well ahead of subjects not on this list such as Law, which ranks 37th among *degrees by lifetime salary – only 46 per cent of law grads will go on to become highly paid lawyers.*"

In addition, many regions in the UK in which Japanese companies are located have strong links with Japan. In these regions, pupils, their families and teachers have a strong interest in Japan, and knowledge of Japanese could have substantial vocational value for young people there. This is best exemplified by a comment from one of the Japanese language teachers from a city with a major Japanese automobile factory, saying: "We have had huge successes in the teaching of Japanese, with many of our students continuing their study of Japanese at university or being successful in securing a job because of their knowledge of Japanese....the impact on their global understanding and on widening horizons has been huge." We hope this could happen more in Scotland.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my response.