

School: Rugby School Japan

Lead Improvement Partner:

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The findings and next steps of this report reflect the work of the Lead Improvement Partner.

The Compliance visit took place between 20th September and 24th September 2024.

Site visited: Kashiwa City, VS Chiba, on site.

Student Numbers: 240

Compliance is valid for 5 years.

The next Compliance check is due in September 2029.

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COMPLIANCE REPORT

Rugby School Japan have successfully met standards one to six of the COBIS Compliance system.

1.0 SAFEGUARDING AND SAFER RECRUITMENT

The school places a high priority on the safeguarding of students and staff, including child protection, and the safe recruitment of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

1A

STANDARD

The school recruitment process is fair, thorough and transparent and applies to all appointments consistently

COMMENTARY

The single central record (SCR) contains details of all members of staff, external employees and members of the board of directors and board of councillors. At present the SCR is managed by the deputy principal (pastoral). This is a role which would benefit from the support of a human resources (HR) manager who takes responsibility for the collection, checking and uploading of relevant checks.

The safer recruitment policy and practice are in line with the COBIS standards. The school uses direct applications as well as through the TES recruitment portal. The school's commitment to safeguarding is clearly outlined in their job adverts and job specifications. For most roles, the recruitment process involves three rounds of interviews involving the Principal, senior and middle leaders as well and members of CEA. In all these interviews there is at least one safer recruitment trained member of the interview panel.

The school currently has strong protocols in place for police and background checks for all candidates which include the International Child Protection Certificate (ICPCs) for those members of staff who have lived or worked in the United Kingdom (UK) and background checks run by First Advantage who carry out a series of checks for each specific country in which the candidate

has lived or worked. The school have employed this measure as police checks are not readily available in Japan. Certificates are all uploaded to the relevant staff profile on the SCR and are up to date.

The SCR has links to copies of birth certificates as well as copies of photographic identification. Contracts are held by CEA central office, but front covers of employment contracts are available on the SCR. As the school continues to grow, it is vital that an HR specialist is employed within the school to support with the compliance of the SCR to ensure that all documentation is kept up to date so that the British ethos in standards of safeguarding is upheld as well as adhering to all local labour laws.

Two references are required for each applicant, ensuring that one is from the last headteacher and sent from an official email address. These are followed up by phone calls with referees. The reference request form contains a specific question which asks if they know of any reason why a candidate may not be suitable to work with children.

During the visit more than 10% of on-site and external staff were checked. All documentation was correct and available. There has been a lot of work undertaken over the past year to ensure that the safer recruitment process and SCR records ensure that before staff begin their contracts all relevant checks have been completed. Moving forward this may become unsustainable for the deputy principal to continue to complete and update. Considering the size of the predicted growth of the school, it may be advisable to consider specialist software to ensure that all documents and checks are flagged and updated as necessary.

The school has an equal opportunities policy which describes fully the areas which might be at risk of discriminatory practice and the roles and responsibilities within the school community to be alert for these. The school is sensitive to ensure that their policy is consistent with Japanese law.

NEXT STEPS

- Employ an HR Manager to support with the upkeep of the SCR as well as supporting onboarding and offboarding for staff.
- The school may benefit from acquiring SCR software to help in efficiency in updating the SCR.
- All copies of original documents must be signed and dated before being uploaded.

1B**STANDARD**

All staff within the school including volunteers and supply staff meet high standards of child protection and the safeguarding of students

COMMENTARY

Rugby School Japan (RSJ) has a detailed safeguarding and child protection policy which makes clear both roles and responsibilities at different levels in the school community. There is a clear methodology in place for reporting concerns and disclosures. CPOMS is used to record all concerns, and these are clearly assigned to the pastoral team and detailed actions and reflections are recorded on the system. This level of reporting is very effective as the team record all concerns no matter how small, which means that they can build up a picture of the student's mood, needs and possible supported to be put in place. Both the boarding and academic team voiced how important they felt this approach was even if it meant increased email traffic.

There is a team of six safeguarding leads. These are all either members of the senior leadership team (SLT) or senior pastoral staff as well as a Japanese speaker to ensure that all communication with outside agencies is clearly communicated and understood. There is no specific time allowance to carry out these roles as all carry other senior responsibilities. All have received certified level three safeguarding training, and this is renewed every two years.

There are posters of the safeguarding team in some areas of the school with details of how to contact them, however further copies are needed in high traffic areas of the school. Both parents and students in conversations expressed confidence that they knew whom that they might approach in case of safeguarding concerns. The parents felt that there was a transparent and open approach to communication with all members of staff should they have a concern. They also felt that they are listened to and that their concerns were dealt with quickly and with care. Visitors entering the site sign in at security and receive a red coloured lanyard and for scheduled meetings the schools safeguarding procedures are emailed to them before arrival.

A designated safeguarding governor (from Rugby School UK) is in place and is available for both formal and informal advice on any safeguarding issues. A safeguarding report is produced for each board meeting and practice and

policy reviewed and updated when necessary. The designated safeguarding governor meets with the DSL to discuss trends and safeguarding concerns but not yet to help support in monitoring the SCR.

The safeguarding team delivers annual face-to face training supplemented by online modules to all staff as part of their induction and regular updating. Staff who join during the year receive this training as a matter of priority as well as a 1:1 meeting with the DSL. All pastoral meetings have safeguarding updates as a regular agenda item.

There are a wide range of activities to keep students alert to safeguarding issues. These include weekly assemblies and aspects of the PSHE programme. The PSHE programme and overarching well-being related activities are very much in their development but the recent appointment of a PSHE coordinator will lead to the future development of a bespoke RSJ well-being and PSHE programme for all year groups. There are though already in place an abundance of positive initiatives such as well-being days, trained peer listeners, a hub system for students of different year groups and genders to work together as well as the investigation into an electronic management system to measure student well-being.

The school employs a professionally qualified counselling practitioner who works with students at the school one day each week. The school uses him as a reference point for access to external agencies should they be required on an individual need basis, however there is a need for greater resourcing in this area.

It would be beneficial to network more closely with the staff across Rugby School Thailand and Phoenix House School to further develop safeguarding knowledge and up to date practices. This could be a very supportive network for staff generally.

NEXT STEPS

- The appointment of a full-time counsellor would further complement the pastoral provision.
- Increased visibility of DSL/ADSL posters and information around the campus.

- Develop a safeguarding network across the Rugby Group and CEA member schools.
- Designated safeguarding governor to meet with DSL to monitor the upkeep of the single central record.

2.0 STUDENT WELFARE

The school provides a safe and supportive environment for all young people.

2A

STANDARD

The school provides a pastoral structure that meets the needs of all students and promotes their personal development

COMMENTARY

A positive ethos permeates the school. All students, staff, governors and parents or caregivers spoken to were happy and proud of their school. All stakeholders felt that the school was a happy place to work, and this led to happy children and positive and proactive staff. The pastoral system at the school is centred around the house system. Every member of staff is a tutor who oversees a vertical tutor group connected to a specific house. Each house includes a resident tutor, house assistant, deputy housemaster and a housemaster or housemistress (HM). The HM is responsible for the overall holistic care of each student in their house and knows their students very well. Positive and mutually respectful relationships between students and staff were apparent throughout the visit.

Around 55% of students are boarding students (full or weekly) and as such require a significant amount of emotional support. Day students each have their own workspace so that they feel fully included within the house. This has been a positive decision, with day boarders stating that they feel fully included and part of their houses.

The overall pastoral system is overseen by the deputy principal (pastoral) who also acts as one of the DSLs. He oversees the running of the pastoral curriculum at the school. Staff, students and parents were complimentary

about the leadership of this area and felt that it was a strength of the school.

Students are very confident in identifying who they need to speak to if they have any worries or concerns and feel very well supported and cared for at the school. Students commented that they felt that every member of staff genuinely cared about their well-being and referred to school as 'home' on more than one occasion showing a genuine feeling that they feel their holistic well-being and happiness is at the centre of the school's decisions. CPOMS ensures that information is being fed constantly to the pastoral team and boarding house staff have contact with the members of their house on multiple occasions during the day. All students are encouraged to return to their house at breaktime, which in a very relaxed and friendly atmosphere allowing time for many individual well-being 'check ins' to take place with boarding staff.

The introduction of curriculum leads for lower (Years 7-9), middle Years 10-11) and upper (Years 12-13) school this year has added a further layer of support that the students will receive at the school. The role (in its development) is designed to flag up academic concerns amongst students at the school as well as to support and develop the most appropriate option pathways for students at I/GCSE and A Level. The curriculum leads will work with HMs to help put support strategies in place both in school and within the boarding environment.

To work to ensure that everyone at the school is supporting the well-being and pastoral care of the students CPOMS is used to register any concerns that any member of the teaching or admin staff witness amongst the students. CPOMS is encouraged to be used by everyone to flag any concern so that HMs and the rest of the pastoral team can develop as full a picture as possible of the academic and pastoral progress and well-being of each individual child. The pastoral team, tutors and teachers are finding the use of CPOMS to be extremely beneficial in supporting students. To complement this, every second week all staff (including key admin staff who work with students) attend a pastoral briefing where HMs highlight key students of concern in their houses. This information is then followed up by email detailing this information (together with student photographs) for anyone who was unable to attend the briefing. This has been a highly successful approach to communicating worries, strategies for support or information about students to all staff. It is this "whole school" approach to pastoral care that the students and parents/caregivers recognised as being a key component of the RSJ way of life.

Parents/caregivers, despite this being a boarding school, still play a significant role in the emotional and social well-being of their children. Parent workshops run by senior leaders are well attended and aimed at upskilling parents on for example, supporting their children on creating a positive digital footprint and the responsible use of their devices. Parents are fully involved in all significant academic and pastoral issues and the intervention of support that is put in place is very much seen as a partnership between school, the students and the parents/caregivers. All parents commented on the high level of individualised care that their son or daughter received at the school.

COMMENDATION

- The level of individualised care and support for students which is picked up from very detailed/frequent submissions to CPOMS.
- The leadership of pastoral care which is multilayered and is clear that it is a responsibility for all.
- Communication sessions in whole staff sessions which identify key students in pastoral briefings and how they can be supported.
- Level of communication between academic and boarding staff members to ensure that they have a complete picture of the student and their experience.

The school have been awarded Beacon Status for this sub standard.

NEXT STEPS

None noted.

2B

STANDARD

The school has provision for the physical and mental health, and safe supervision, of all students to allow them to flourish in the school environment

COMMENTARY

PSHE is a planned programme of learning through which children acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to support the management of their lives both now and in the future. The newly appointed PSHE coordinator is redesigning the curriculum to be more bespoke for the school and is developing the curriculum to be more sensitive to the context of residing in Japan. They have made an excellent start as the developing curriculum shows information and discussion on a range of age-appropriate mental health and well-being issues such as healthy friendships, budgeting and hygiene. To ensure that students felt some ownership of the curriculum senior students were asked their opinions of the topics and issues they felt were important to include in the curriculum. The aim of this is to ensure relevancy and appropriateness of learning for the students at the school.

There is a head nurse, and four qualified nurses employed at the school. The spacious, well equipped and welcoming medical room is supervised 24/7 and the night nurse has accommodation on site in case of an emergency. Nurses ensure the safe administration of medication on behalf of parents and maintain a record of all visits to the clinic on ISAMS. All medicines and medical files from admissions are secured in a locked cabinet. A doctor is employed off-site as a consultant to any complex medical issues and in emergency cases there is rapid access to a local hospital. The nurses provide medical kits for trips and expeditions.

The school is developing a culture of sport. Physical health and fitness are important parts of the curriculum. The exceptional onsite facilities allow for a range of team and individual activities including swimming, football, rugby, basketball and tennis. An excellent choice of extra-curricular activities ensures that students can take part in areas to promote their own holistic well-being and are very well supported by the vast majority of students. All students (boarding and day) are allowed to use the schools' facilities after school hours

and a scheduled programme is put together making use of the swimming pool and gym, where personal programmes are put together for students to follow.

RSJ encourages healthy eating. A choice of hot meals is available at all mealtimes with choices across a range of cuisines. Fresh fruit and salad are available with every meal. Boarding students eat all meals in the dining hall and during the day all students have access to snacks (onigiri, bananas, toast) at break time in the boarding houses. Filtered water dispensers are available across the school.

The vertical tutor system is very much at the heart of monitoring and supporting student well-being. Older students act as peer-listeners to younger students and every Monday students sit together in tutor groups with their tutor for lunch. To encourage this further a pod system where students of different ages and houses has been set up and team building activities done together at the end of the week on a Saturday morning (where parents are also invited).

The school is extremely proactive in supporting students with the responsible use of their electronic devices.

NEXT STEPS

PSHE lead to be supported with further training beyond RSJ particularly in relation to international school PSHE and the cultural sensitivity needed in this subject.

2C

STANDARD

The school ensures that through positive behaviour management students are supported in their learning and safety

COMMENTARY

Positive behavioural management is a real strength of the school and

behaviour by the students seen during the visit was exemplary. Creating a caring and inclusive community amongst all students at the school is key to the school's overall behaviour management. The school expects students to make the right choices but if not, there are clear guidelines of consequences for students who don't adhere to these high expectations. All behaviour is recorded on CPOMS, and this information is shared and then followed up by the relevant pastoral team. There are a range of rewards at the school such as merits, principal commendations and other prizes as well as consequences when high standards are not met. These include demerits, gating, school detention and study halls. Continued violations of the behaviour policy can lead to suspension or, in the most extreme cases, expulsion. There are though several clear stages to ensure that leaving the school is very much a choice of last resort. Incidents of bullying, including online, are very rare, but if it happens there are many levels of support for any student involved. All students gave a resounding endorsement that the school makes them feel safe and secure.

There is a real sense that student behaviour is the responsibility of everyone at the school. This starts with the student manual that emphasises the school culture of high expectations and is built on with the role of the tutor who is empowered by the school to develop deep and positive relationships with their tutees. This is then layered with the roles of the boarding team and SLT resulting in an extremely high-quality pastoral care system supporting students' individual needs. Even more significantly there is an understanding that every student is different with an array of different needs, so the school must fit the pastoral system slightly differently around each individual student in their care. This is something that is without doubt recognised by students of all ages at the school.

The Rugby School learner profile is beginning to play an ever more important part of building up qualities and skills that the school would like all RSJ students to possess. These are celebrated in assemblies and around school and are seen as a guide of qualities that students should be aspiring to achieve in their daily lives.

Student voice is very active and an important part of school review. Heads of school (who meet regularly with SLT) and other student leaders feel that not only are their voices heard and changes important to them can be introduced, but also that they are very much involved in the ongoing discussions of how

best to grow and develop RSJ. Students felt that the school was extremely caring and described that they felt there was very little (if any) bullying within the school and if students were unhappy there was an excellent care network to support any individual student.

COMMENDATION

An extremely positive and caring support network is available for all students at the school.

NEXT STEPS

None noted.

2D

STANDARD

The school ensures that off-site activities are appropriate and safe

COMMENTARY

The school has a clear and comprehensive policy in place for organising trips, ensuring all aspects are well structured and compliant. A detailed handbook is provided to staff, outlining the procedures and expectations for trip organisation. Pre-visits are conducted by the deputy principal and the director of extracurricular activities and partnerships to ensure the suitability and safety of each location. Communication with parents and caregivers is clear and consistent, keeping them informed of all necessary details.

Last year all students could choose between four destinations across Japan for whole school trips. These destinations and the subsequent activities planned were clearly linked to the curriculum or personal development objectives.

Trip and event request forms are required to initiate the planning process, and three levels of risk assessments are conducted to ensure the highest safety standards are met. Paperwork is uploaded to a Google drive and recorded in

detail.

All trips and residential programmes are included in the school's fee structure, with full insurance coverage in place. This insurance also covers parents or caregivers in the event they need to travel to the student in the event of a medical emergency. Additionally, the school has a critical incident and natural disaster policy in effect for all trips, ensuring the safety and well-being of participants during unforeseen events. This robust organisational approach reflects the school's commitment to providing a safe, educational, and enriching experience for students on all trips.

Parents voiced that they would find it useful to have a yearly overview calendar of trips.

COMMENDATION

- The level of detail and overall organisation of trips and event and the risk assessments.
- Debrief and reflective approach to ensure that trips are purposeful and linked to the curriculum or personal development objectives.

NEXT STEPS

None noted.

3.0 FACILITIES

The school provides all students with access to an environment conducive to learning and that keeps them safe.

3A

STANDARD

Accommodation supports the learning needs of all students

COMMENTARY

RSJ provides accommodation that fully supports the learning needs of all students by offering a well-equipped, inclusive environment conducive to both academic and personal development. All classrooms were appropriate in size with effective lighting and temperature control. Large windows lined along walls connected to corridors ensures a safe and inclusive atmosphere throughout.

The new school campus boasts state-of-the-art facilities which include eleven purpose-built science labs as well as the schools innovation lab. This room is deliberately flexible from the furniture chosen to the movable white boards to promote creativity and technological exploration, helping students engage with cutting-edge projects. This area was recently used during a session with Rolls Royce which focused on robotics and systems engineering. However, this room has also been used for arts-based projects as well.

The separate art, visual arts and DT workshops offer students ample space to explore the arts as well as refining their practical skills using a variety of machines, equipment and resources.

The school's wide range of specialised spaces also enhances learning in the arts and well-being. The black box drama room which is in the final stages of decoration will offer a flexible space for performing arts, allowing students to explore acting and stage production in an adaptable environment. There is an impressive music department complete with many practice rooms. These are well used with many students participating in music lessons throughout the week.

Additionally, the debate chamber fosters critical thinking and public speaking skills, providing a dedicated space for students to refine their arguments and express their ideas in formal settings. For older students, the sixth form centre offers a focused environment tailored to meet their academic and social development needs, aiding in preparation for further education or career pathways.

The school has a large sports hall as well as a 3G rugby pitch and a swimming pool. There is a dance studio where students can take part in hip-hop and ballet lessons. There are regular access points for clean drinking water where students can refill water bottles as needed.

Beyond safety, RSJ fosters an environment conducive to effective study and learning. The library, which is currently in development, offers a variety of books in multiple languages, catering to the diverse needs of students, although this is in its infancy, the highly qualified librarian has a clear vision for a multi-language library with a wide range of resources. Study areas throughout the school are equipped with high-quality furniture that supports comfortable and productive learning. There are lots of spaces around the campus which have a “cosy” feel to them for studying both in groups and individually to suit all students.

As the school has been concentrating on quality provision for its students in the first year, it has not yet had an opportunity to feel “lived in” and the walls and decoration do not highlight the exciting journey of the schools opening or student achievements to date. The development of further displays, photographs and notices would further enhance the community ethos that is at the heart of everything RSJ do. This would be an excellent opportunity for the marketing team to develop the image of the school both internally and externally. The parents/caregivers had so many wonderful things to say about the school that would be valuable to share. There are lots of wonderful events and students showcases happening, but it is not as visible around the school to visitors and the school community as it could be.

COMMENDATION

- The variety of learning spaces as well as facilities that genuinely support learning.

NEXT STEPS

- Consider how marketing opportunities, both internally and externally, can promote the heart of the school and highlight the achievements and passions of the students as well as the journey the school has come on so far.

3B

STANDARD

The site provides a secure environment for students, staff and visitors

COMMENTARY

RSJ gives a high priority to onsite safety and security. The campus is surrounded by fencing with only two gated entrances controlled by security guards. All visitors must wear and display a red coloured lanyard (there are different colours for different designations (parents, employees, resident spouses)) and sign in and out at the guard house/reception. Safeguarding information is present at the guard house, but guards should make visitors' reading of this information more explicit.

Fire practices and earthquake drills are carried out regularly as legally required and information as to when these are held is recorded. As per local regulations, fire extinguishers are located 15-20 metres apart on all corridors and checked every three months. A detailed intruder response manual is also in place to outline how the school responds in a lockdown situation.

The school has a very well-equipped health centre staffed by a head nurse and four full-time nurses who serve all age groups and meet the needs of all day and boarding students. The health centre has three beds with screens to protect privacy as well as a treatment couch. There are seven AEDs throughout the site which are checked weekly.

All buildings have exit routes from upper floors in the case that an emergency prevents students evacuating the building via the stairs. These include a variety of fire and earthquake evacuation measures from ladders, evacuation chutes and evacuation harnesses. Students and staff hold practice sessions on how to use the evacuation equipment and induction week for staff saw them sliding down

evacuation chutes as part of their training. Evacuation routes are well signposted in each room.

The entrance security has developed since the school's opening and, whilst there is significant security, it would be good to see the front gate closed during the school day for added security.

NEXT STEPS

- Fire and Lockdown procedures should be attached to the back of classroom doors, so they are visible rather than on tables in rooms.
- More safeguarding team posters in high traffic areas.
- Further training for security guards on safeguarding protocols as well as the front door being closed in the daytime.

3C

STANDARD

The fabric of the school provides an effective and safe working environment

COMMENTARY

RSJ ensures a safe and effective working environment by adhering to stringent Japanese building regulations, which are specifically designed to withstand natural hazards such as earthquakes and typhoons. The school's buildings are constructed to the highest standards, ensuring maximum safety during such events.

Additionally, interior fixtures and fittings are meticulously maintained, with high-quality finishes and regular inspections to guarantee both safety and aesthetic appeal. This attention to detail ensures that the school's physical environment supports a secure and comfortable atmosphere for students and staff alike.

In specialised areas such as the science laboratories, RSJ takes additional precautions to ensure safety. The science prep room and labs are kept in an

organised manner, with dangerous chemicals properly stored and labelled to minimise risk. The lab technicians are highly qualified and have a clear understanding of how chemicals should be stored and also disposed of safely. The labs follow strict safety protocols during experiments to protect both students and staff. The labs themselves are well-equipped with protective goggles, lab coats and eye wash stations.

Similarly, the school's sports facilities, including the swimming pool, are maintained to high safety standards, with necessary equipment regularly inspected to prevent accidents. Students are required to undergo a swimming test prior to being allowed access to the pool. Given the 2m depth of the pool there are plans to adapt this so that there is a shallow area for less confident swimmers who are currently not able to access the swimming facilities due to concerns around safety. The pool is locked when not in use.

A rigorous cleaning schedule is also in place, ensuring that all areas of the school, including classrooms and common spaces, are hygienic and well-maintained, further contributing to a safe and efficient learning environment. The cleaning and maintenance staff were frequently seen around the campus during our visit. Cleaning materials were locked away safely.

There is a clear emphasis on health and safety in the preparation and serving of food at the school. There is a large and airy kitchen where all food is prepared by a contracted catering company. Separate preparation and cooking areas exist, and catering staff wear hair nets whilst in the kitchen and in the serving of food. There is air conditioning and fans available in the kitchen to ensure these areas are both pleasant to work in and the best places to prepare and cook food. Filtered water is used to wash all salads and other fresh food items served to the school community. All food is prepared and cooked on site. It was noted that cleaning fluids should be kept in a separate area from food preparation and storage.

NEXT STEPS

- Although they were not stored above food causing contamination, it would be good to see cleaning fluids stored separately from areas of food.

3D

STANDARD

Overall facilities meet the needs of all students, including those with additional educational needs and/or a physical disability

COMMENTARY

RSJ ensures that its facilities meet the needs of all students, including those with additional educational needs and/or physical disabilities, by maintaining an inclusive and accessible environment. The school's infrastructure is designed to accommodate a wide range of physical abilities, with features such as ramps, elevators, and wide doorways to ensure ease of mobility. The only place that this is not apparent is in two of the girls' boarding houses where the shower areas are not accessible.

During the admissions process, any students who may have additional mobility needs are invited with their parents/caregivers to tour the campus to evaluate whether the school buildings meet the needs of the student. Additionally, specialised learning spaces and resources are available to support students with diverse educational needs, ensuring they have access to the same learning opportunities as their peers.

There are suitable and separate toilet and washing facilities for staff and students throughout the school which are gender appropriate. All toilets have grab rails for those with accessibility needs.

The school has lifts in every building which allows access to all rooms for those with limited mobility. There are currently no students who might require this, but there are wheelchairs located in the clinic for short-term provision at ground level.

The school have a clear AEN policy which outlines provision for students. The school are currently in a position whereby they have a small EAL department which support students within class and provide some interventions outside of the classroom where necessary with a view to fully integrating students into the classroom as much as possible. As the school grows it will need to decide where the threshold of English language proficiency is during admissions as this will greatly influence the EAL provisions and resourcing needed for the school and could

change the ethos of the current inclusive EAL policy and procedures.

NEXT STEPS

Consider what level of English is required for admission to plan and resource the EAL department effectively as the school grows and develops.

4.0 GOVERNANCE

The school's governors work to support students and to provide strategic direction for the school.

4A

STANDARD

All governors / proprietors meet all the requirements for adults with access to young people reinforcing the importance of safeguarding within the school

COMMENTARY

All members of the board of directors (BoD) as well as the board of councillors (BoC) and subcommittees have undergone the required background checks, including ICPCs, and have completed safeguarding training. The designated safeguarding governor (DSG) holds an additional safeguarding qualification and meets regularly with the DSL. Safeguarding is also a standing agenda item at all board meetings, ensuring ongoing attention and compliance.

The clarity of vision as well as the commitment to supporting RSJ to success is impressive. The board members are from a range of backgrounds and there is a full complement of skills which are utilised for the benefit of the school. Members of the BoD and BoC are known to staff and make an effort to meet them at the beginning of the year.

There are several subcommittees which allow for deeper discussions around key issues such as safeguarding which sits within the risk management subcommittee.

NEXT STEPS

None noted.

4B**STANDARD**

Measures are in place for governors to register interests and to manage any conflicts of interest

COMMENTARY

There are clear guidelines for governors relating to registers of interest and how conflicts of interest are to be managed. This was confirmed by the members of the BoD and BoC that the visiting team spoke with.

NEXT STEPS

None noted.

4C**STANDARD**

There are written procedures / protocols for the remit of the work of the governing body

COMMENTARY

The governance structure of RSJ is based on the Private Schools Act and includes several key bodies. The BoD is the highest governing body, responsible for decision-making and supervising the school's management. The BoC acts as an advisory body, providing input and feedback on various school matters. Additionally, RSJ appoints two auditors to review the school's business and financial operations. Meetings for each governing body are scheduled for at least once a term but can be brought together for further meetings if required. Several subcommittees have also been created to encourage more individuals with key expertise to give their advice when discussing key strategic decisions before a board meeting will take

place. All sub-committees have a board member as part of these groups. They meet twice a term, and the board member will report back key findings at the next board meeting.

The school has established clear written procedures and protocols outlining the remit and responsibilities of its governing body including how they are selected and their period in role. These are detailed in the RSJ governance framework, which operates in accordance with the Private Schools Act, the Articles of Endowment, and agreements with Rugby School International Limited (RSIL). The governance framework defines decision-making processes, duties, and the authority of the BoD and other governing bodies, ensuring proper oversight and compliance across the school's operations.

NEXT STEPS

None noted.

4D

STANDARD

There is appropriate support for new governors

COMMENTARY

The BoD and the BoC have been in place since the school opened and have not had any new additional members since. It will be important that as they are now established, they create an appropriate induction programme for anyone joining the board moving forward.

NEXT STEPS

Create and implement a new governance training and induction programme with resources to support.

4E**STANDARD**

Governors have a commitment to their own training and development

COMMENTARY

At present all BoD and BoC members undertake safeguarding training. The members of these two groups are highly accomplished in their own field of work, however moving forward it may be useful for members to attend some relevant sessions during INSET days or external courses where appropriate.

NEXT STEPS

Moving forward it may be useful for members to attend some relevant sessions during INSET days or external courses where appropriate.

4F**STANDARD**

The governors provide records of meetings and decisions which show evidence of active and committed governance

The profiles and contact details for the governors are available to parents along with key policies

COMMENTARY

There are clear meeting minutes from BoD meetings as well as BoC meetings. Meetings take place once a term and are carefully minuted, as well as being signed.

The board hold regular strategy meetings as well as more informal conversations with SLT and parents/caregivers to ensure that a range of voices are heard and incorporated into the strategic plans for the school.

The governors are involved with the school on a strategic level; however they are also regularly on campus and are invited to school celebrations, events and

induction sessions.

Safeguarding and Health and Safety are standing items on the BOD agenda.

NEXT STEPS

None noted.

5.0 ETHOS AND VALUES

The school has an evident British educational ethos, is outward-looking and promotes international mindedness.

5A

STANDARD

British educational ethos and values are at the heart of a holistic approach to learning and to the development of learner qualities

COMMENTARY

The school is dedicated to educating the whole child and RSJ is closely aligned to the Rugby School UK 'whole person, the whole point' ethos. As much focus is given to the arts, humanities, performing arts and sport as the more traditional STEM focused subjects. There have been real efforts to offer personalised pathways for students where appropriate and there is a real sense amongst the academic team that individual student pathways can and should change as students move through their educational journey. A personalised learning support team offer a number of strategies to support students of differing educational and inclusivity needs. The additional educational needs (AEN) and English as additional language (EAL) departments care deeply about their students and ensure that as far as their capacity allows, they can support students in an individualised way so that they are able to develop the tools and skills to reach their own individual potential. Both these departments will be critically important as the school grows, and it is vital

that they are part of the admissions process to ensure that students entering the school are able to receive the appropriate level of care. Should students require further support there is flexibility regarding the final I/GCSE examinations that they make take. English as a second language and coordinated science are available as well as a free choice in option subjects with the end goal of trying to provide each student with a personalised pathway that should provide the best opportunity to reach their own potential at A Level.

Reports are written using the school's reporting portal on ISAMS. An assessment and reporting calendar is shared with staff at the start of the academic year and is also communicated with parents. There are three types of academic reports, an interim, an assessment (Year 10-13) and a full academic report. This standardised approach, tailored to the age and development stage of each student ensures that feedback is meaningful, supportive and relevant to individualised learning journeys.

The school is affiliated with reputable examination boards such as Cambridge, Pearson, Oxford AQA & AQA. This shows a dedication to ensuring that students will be well prepared and successful in standardised external assessments. The choice of these is tailored so that the most appropriate standardised assessment is being sat by the students at the school.

In the learning environment, a holistic curriculum is fostered through teachers who exude warmth and care, creating a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for students throughout the school.

RSJ is providing and will develop further a comprehensive guidance at the higher education level. A newly appointed sixth form coordinator and an externally appointed higher education consultant will ensure that the students and their parents will be well supported in exploring various academic and other career options.

Staff at the school engage in professional development through an in-house programme of sessions led by current middle and senior leaders. EAL and AEN training was provided during inset sessions at the start of the year and this provision and support will continue to grow as the school increases in size and diversity.

NEXT STEPS

None noted.

5B**STANDARD**

The school has an outward-looking perspective promoting its values via a wide curriculum and through opportunities to develop awareness of other cultures and global issues as far as this is permissible within the host country

COMMENTARY

Values of respect for others and open mindedness are actively promoted in the curriculum and is something that will be explicit in the developing PSHE curriculum.

Positive student interactions, such as the whole school singing performance in the dining room and the clapping of students after presentations in assemblies indicates a supportive, inclusive and encouraging atmosphere throughout the school. These kinds of positive actions can contribute significantly to students' confidence and sense of achievement.

Well-being and pastoral care are prioritised and thriving within the school. A school environment that places importance on the mental and emotional well-being of its students is crucial for fostering a positive and supportive community. The fact that students know how to communicate and where to seek help indicates that there are strong support systems in place. This is particularly important for creating a safe space where students feel comfortable addressing their concerns and seeking guidance when needed. The positive feedback from students about their teachers is a testament to the quality of the relationships between students and educators. A real sense of care, evident in conversations, further reinforces the idea that teachers are not only focused on academic success but also genuinely care about the well-being of their students.

The perception that students are well looked after and that their feelings matter contributes significantly to a positive school culture. Feeling valued and supported by the school community can positively impact students' overall experience and their ability to thrive academically and personally.

Outward looking and service perspectives are promoted by the extracurricular programme. A well-being day saw the whole school off timetable to take part in a

carousel of activities designed to enhance not just their own well-being but to think about what impact they could have within their local community. Money raised on this day was donated to a local maternity ward as well as hats being knitted for babies in their care. Recognising the increasing cultural diversity of the school is seen in the celebration of different cultural festivals as well as a growing resource of books in the library written in languages such as Japanese, Chinese and Hindi. International mindedness is evident throughout the curriculum. A reading programme working with a local kindergarten and an ECA working to curate the corridors at RSJ with Art are two other ways that the school is beginning to encourage the students to think beyond themselves and contribute positively to their own school and the community beyond the school gates.

The school places a strong emphasis on student voice and leadership that is helping develop the school into becoming a dynamic and inclusive environment for student leadership. Providing various avenues for student leadership from prefects, the school and house council and heads of school allows many students of all ages to take on leadership responsibilities and actively contribute to the school community. This not only empowers students but also helps in fostering a sense of ownership and pride in their school.

RSJ is committed to implementing sustainable practices across its campus to minimise environmental impact and foster environmental awareness. The school integrates energy-efficient designs, with buildings constructed to the highest specifications, including a 5-star energy efficiency rating. Solar panels and recycled heating systems contribute to reducing the school's carbon footprint, while assemblies and events such as Earth Day help raise environmental consciousness among students and staff. Additionally, the school's environmental sustainability society serves as a platform for discussing green initiatives and collaborating on campus-wide sustainability projects.

RSJ actively engages with the local community through partnerships with the Urban Design Centre Kashiwa (UDCK) as well as participating in monthly litter-picking events to improve the surrounding area. The school also prioritises energy sustainability, ensuring that all new buildings meet rigorous eco-friendly standards. By integrating these sustainable practices and maintaining a focus on energy conservation, RSJ leads by example in its pursuit of environmental responsibility.

NEXT STEPS

Explore options for further partnerships with charitable organisations and service-based projects.

5C**STANDARD**

The school teaches the majority of subjects through the medium of English

COMMENTARY

The school primarily conducts lessons in English. French, German, Chinese and Japanese are taught as individual lessons to I/GCSE and A Level groups (for those who choose it).

There is a growing focus on EAL support, demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity and recognising the diverse linguistic skills of some of the students. This is an area worthy of increasing resources as the school grows and becomes more and more diverse in its EAL needs.

NEXT STEPS

None noted.

6.0 BOARDING

The school in its provision of boarding provides a high level of care for students promoting their health, emotional well-being and educational progress.

6A

STANDARD

The school has taken appropriate measures to ensure the health, safety, well-being and happiness of boarders, taking into account their age and gender

COMMENTARY

A happy and inclusive atmosphere permeates the boarding ethos at RSJ. The individualised and inclusive pastoral structure is embedded within the boarding experience for every child at the school. It is without doubt that the vast majority of students at the school buy into the experience of boarding and see their house as much more than a place to sleep and work but as a home that they not only feel safe in but one that will help nurture them to reach their full potential.

There is very clear and informative boarding booklet for both students and parents that not only sets out expectations and outlines logistical structures of how the houses run but also shows the critical importance that the school places on ensuring that the boarding ethos permeates and drives the ethos of the entire school. The school has very clear boarding safeguarding policies and procedures that are well understood by students and their parents. There is absolute faith from the parents that their child will be cared for beyond a simple duty of care. They feel that their son or daughter is being welcomed into an extended family that they can trust and believe will be only positive for the well-being and development of their son or daughter.

Activities outside of school hours for boarders are continuing to develop but are plentiful. Students have access to sporting and other academic facilities in the school itself as well as a range of more informal activities happening in the evenings. These include a mac and cheese evening, hot chocolate, reading and karaoke. These activities are varied and age appropriate and will only continue to

be enhanced as the school grows in student and staffing capacity.

The resident boarding staff and tutor teams provide a myriad of layers of academic and pastoral support for each child and ensure that students are extremely confident in knowing who they can contact regarding when and if they need support in any area of their school life. The sheer number of trusted adults working with the students ensures that the smallest concern is recorded and acted upon. Beyond this the school has put in place health and well-being specialists to support with more challenging concerns. Access to a chartered psychologist and specialist health care professionals at local hospitals mean that any serious mental or physical health issue can be managed as quickly and effectively as possible. On site, students and staff have access to a qualified nurse 24 hours a day.

COMMENDATION

The creation of a caring and inclusive environment in all boarding houses.

NEXT STEPS

None noted.

6B

STANDARD

Staffing and facilities are designed to allow boarders to flourish educationally

COMMENTARY

Every teaching member of staff at the school is a tutor and therefore part of the boarding structure. This means that all staff are included in the communication of information between the school and the boarding houses. CPOMS ensures that all concerns and positive actions are recorded, and these small tidbits of information can be pieced together by the pastoral team to decide the level of action needed to support and solve the concern.

Students have a well-resourced and structured prep time to ensure that they can keep up to date with their academic pursuits. All students can study in purpose-built study areas downstairs in all houses. Year 7-9 students all complete their prep

time in the study rooms with Year 10-13 students being allowed to study individually in their rooms. This system has a good level of flexibility with some Year 9 students, after the first term, being allowed to move to study from downstairs to their own room. This is done on an individual basis after conversations between the student, pastoral and academic teams. Two tutors work in each boarding house after school and in the evening (together with the resident team). Their role is to have individual conversations with each student to ensure that they are receiving support where their individual needs arise.

Prep time is tiered in time depending on the age of the students with older students being given more flexibility to study for longer periods. A careful watch though is given to all students to make sure that downtime is a must for everyone. Mobile phones are handed in to the resident staff each evening so as not to interfere with prep or relaxation before going to bed.

NEXT STEPS

None noted.

6C

STANDARD

Boarders are able to communicate with parents or guardians

COMMENTARY

Students have daily access to be able to speak with parents and caregivers. This is something that all students praised as a strength and felt that they could contact their parents whenever they felt the need or were feeling a little homesick. Private spaces are available for this to happen, and it was obvious amongst the boarding team that an element of flexibility was needed with this to ensure that younger students for many of which this is the first time that they are away from home.

Every house has a resident assistant who is a native Japanese speaker. These individuals were highly praised by the HMs as they provide invaluable support for not only students but also when communicating sensitive issues with parents.

It is evident that the school is trying hard to educate parents as much as possible as to the advantages of boarding. Each Saturday parents are invited informally into school at the end of the week to watch pod activities being done by the students. This time not only allows interested parents to come and witness for themselves some of the activities that are happening in the boarding houses but also to be able to have informal chats with HMs and senior leaders.

NEXT STEPS

None noted.

6D

STANDARD

New boarders are inducted successfully and supported as they join the boarding community

COMMENTARY

There is a very clear boarding handbook that is available to students and parents. This contains not only information pertaining to the ethos of the boarding culture at RSJ but all logistics regarding structures, routines and lines of communication between the boarding houses, the school, students and parents. A well-integrated buddy system then ensures that students feel welcomed into the house as well as understanding where they can go for support and information as needed. Students arriving mid-year are not forgotten and a policy exists to ensure that these students (and their parents) are brought up to speed as quickly as possible.

CPOMS data, multiple daily check-ins with tutors and resident boarding staff ensure that small and individual concerns are noticed and dealt with before they become more significant problems. Communication between the boarding teams is crucial. Regular weekly meetings between the senior HM and the deputy principal ensure that issues and concerns are identified early as well as a constant culture of review and reflection of practices and systems being put in place in what is a school that is still only just over one year old.

All students spoken to were full of praise for how they had been inducted into the school and felt that this was due to everyone (students, teachers and admin staff) being invested in ensuring that students felt as comfortable as possible, as quickly as possible.

NEXT STEPS

None noted.

6E

STANDARD

Meals meet the needs of boarders

COMMENTARY

The school prepares all meals on site using an external catering company. There are separate areas for storage, preparation, cooking, clearing and washing up. Two options of main course are available for each meal including vegetarian and vegan options. These choices demonstrate attention to a healthy and balanced diet and a plentiful array of 'added extras' such as salads, fruit and cereal are available with every main meal. This ensures that even the hungriest and potentially most selective boarding student has access to an excellent choice of food options.

Students all felt that the food overall was very good and that feedback regarding food was listened to and acted upon. Allergen lists are available for each meal and students with allergies are known to the catering team and to staff. Nut-free posters are visible at the entrance to the dining hall and every meal choice was accompanied by a recipe of ingredients that students could see. The school is continuing to work with the catering company to ensure the highest standards in working practices and to minimise risks to students who have allergies.

A range of healthy and filling snacks are available to students during break time at school. All students, both day and boarding return to their houses to enjoy these.

NEXT STEPS

Continue to work with the catering team to ensure that risks to students who have allergies are minimised.

6F

STANDARD

There is an appropriate range and choice of activities for boarders outside teaching time, including sufficient free time each day

COMMENTARY

Boarding students have access to a range of activities beyond the school day. The good staffing levels of adults working in the boarding houses each evening means that areas of the school can be open for boarders to use. This is still in its infancy and something that the HM team are very keen to develop.

Although the boarding houses are physically very near the rest of the school, the site itself is large which means that opening all sporting and academic spaces for students in the evenings is still a challenge. This will though evolve and develop as more students enter the school and staffing levels continue to increase. This is not to say, however that the boarding students are not well catered for. Students are able to take part in an array of after school extracurricular activities directly after school and then after prep are able to use the swimming pool, gym, sports hall and field following a rota throughout the week. Layered on this are opportunities to take part in house trips as well as older students being able to go to the local shopping mall to buy snacks and socialise with friends.

During the weekends after Saturday lunchtime there is a full programme of available activities as well as an understanding that student 'downtime' at the weekend is also a very important aspect of their mental and physical well-being.

NEXT STEPS

Development of extracurricular activities for boarders after school hours and an understanding and appreciation that these will be different for students of different ages would be welcome.

OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

It was clear from our visit to Rugby School Japan that the school has created a culture of respect and care across the school community. Boarding provision is not a common occurrence in Japan and the school has therefore worked hard to promote the benefits that this has to offer students. The strong leadership team have recruited staff who share in the vision and ethos of the school, and this has certainly been a strength in the first year of operation.

The pastoral care system and whole school approach is exemplary and the level of communication between both academic staff and boarding is just one aspect of the success in this area. The school have been awarded a Beacon Status for Standard 2a.

This strong emphasis on mutual respect fosters a positive learning atmosphere where students feel cared for, heard and valued. Their courteous conduct and obvious love for school reflects the school's commitment to instilling core values that prioritise kindness, empathy, and understanding in all interactions.

At the moment the members of SLT undertake a number of key roles and it is vital that key management positions such as admissions, operations and marketing are filled in order to allow for further capacity to continue the developments at RSJ. As the academic team grows it will also be important for a layer of SMT to be developed to support the strategic work and academic monitoring required across the school.

RSJ has managed to create something very special in a short space of time and we are excited to see the school continue to thrive in the future.

PRIORITY NEXT STEPS

1. The SCR to be transferred to an automated software system to ensure complete accuracy and ease of updating.
2. The appointment of an HR manager within school to support with the updating of the SCR as well as staff HR needs.
3. The development of a more advanced internal and external marketing

strategy as well as the further development of local partnerships where appropriate to the future development and growth of the school.

4. Consider the role and resourcing of the SEND and EAL departments as the school grows. Consider the involvement of these areas in the admissions process.
5. Further development in the capacity of SLT (admissions, operations) as well as the development of an SMT.
6. Develop collaboration with RST/Phoenix and work to create networks of support outside of RSJ for staff particularly those with limited international experience.

BEACON AWARD

Rugby School Japan are recommended for Beacon status for Standard 2A. The level of pastoral care and wellbeing support is exemplary and made possible by the proactive and effective communication of staff across the whole team. In particular, the whole school pastoral briefings support awareness of individual students across the school and showed a highly thoughtful approach to personalised care.

Recommendation to COBIS Director of Accreditation:

That Rugby Japan has met all COBIS Compliance Standards and should be awarded COBIS Member school (Compliance) status.

