

WALES' JAPANESE SATURDAY SCHOOL

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The Japanese Saturday School in Cardiff was established for economic development purposes in 1981, supported by Japanese manufacturing companies, the then Welsh Development Agency and subsequently Welsh Government. It is run by The Wales Japan Club, (a registered charity), founded in 1981 by senior members of the leading companies in South Wales in order to manage the school.

The Japanese School meets every Saturday at Whitchurch High School, in the north of Cardiff. It has a kindergarten class, and formal education for ages 7-16. As well as lessons in the Japanese language and maths, the school also holds an annual Sports Day and an annual ceremony with performances in the traditional way of a school in Japan. The children and young people also participate in community activities to promote Japanese culture to the wider community.

To ensure Wales can compete and continue to attract FDI from Japan, following the first wave of investment in the early 1970s, with companies such as Sony and Panasonic, and subsequent investment over the past 40 years, continuity of Japanese education for the children of re-located key workers is crucial. At its peak up to 150 pupils aged 6–18 attended the school. Today there are some 70 pupils.

The high standards of education provided by the school in Wales, particularly in key subjects such as Mathematics and Japanese language, has been influential in many of its former students securing places at Japan's leading universities and subsequently securing employment in influential roles in industry back in Japan and globally. Their experiences have influenced them in their careers and they are invaluable new ambassadors for Wales in Japan.