EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT INSPECTION OF PRIVATE FURTHER EDUCATION AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE COLLEGES

THE JAPAN ROYAL ACADEMY OF HOMOEOPATHY

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Full Name of College	**The Japan Royal Academy of Homoeopathy**
Address	13 - 15 Canfield Place, London, NW6 3BT
Telephone Number	020 7644 9265
Email Address	edu@rah-uk.com
Managing Director	Ms Akemi Tsuzuki
Proprietors	Ms Torako Yui Ms Akemi Tsuzuki
Age Range	18+
Total Number of students	9
Numbers by age and type of study	18+: 9 FE only: 9
Inspection dates	**20 – 22 November 2012**

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PREFACE

This inspection report follows the framework for Educational Oversight of private further education colleges and English language colleges. The inspection consists of a three-day team inspection of the college's educational provision.

The ISI is an approved educational oversight body authorised by the UK Border Agency to inspect privately funded further education colleges in England and Wales offering courses on the Qualifications and Credit Framework, and English language colleges.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published Standards for private colleges;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations to colleges outside the scope of the Standards to support continued improvement of quality.

Inspection provides objective and reliable reports on the quality of colleges, and by placing reports in the public domain, makes this information available to students, Government and the wider community. Inspection takes account of the context of each individual college, and of how it evaluates its own performance and demonstrates its success.

The inspection of the college is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on students. The inspection does not include:

(i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
(ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the college, its services or other physical features
(iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the college or its accounting procedures
(iv) an in-depth investigation of the college's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE

1.1 Established in September 2006, the Japan Royal Academy of Homoeopathy (JRAH) is a private further education institution located in close proximity to Finchley Road underground station in North West London. The academy is affiliated to five sister colleges in Japan. The managing director is also a co-owner of the academy. The managing director reports to the principal who is the other co-owner of this academy and the owner of the five affiliated colleges. The academy offers a specialised level 3 professional programme in homoeopathy accredited by the International Therapy Exam Council (ITEC). The academy's aim is to provide a world-class education in homoeopathy.

1.2 The academy recruits students aged 18 years and over. Students are enrolled in September of each year for either the two-year full-time programme or the four-year part-time programme. The academy checks the suitability of all students for this highly specialised programme either through online assessment and interview or through face-to-face interview at the London or any of the Japanese academies. This is followed by an additional interview on arrival.

1.3 At the time of inspection there were nine students attending the academy. Five are enrolled on full-time programmes and four on part-time programmes. The vast majority of students are female. All students attending the academy are of ethnic Japanese origin. Four students are studying on a Tier 4 general student visa. English is an additional language (EAL) for all students. The majority of classes are taught in Japanese to provide students with a deeper knowledge and understanding of homoeopathy. No student currently attending the academy has been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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2. THE SUCCESS OF THE COLLEGE

2.(a) Executive Summary

	Section of the Standards	Grade awarded 1-4
3.	The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievement	1 Exceeds expectations
4.	Students' welfare, including health and safety	1 Exceeds expectations
5.	The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management	1 Exceeds expectations

2.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning is excellent and leads to outstanding achievements. Assessment prior to and on arrival is rigorous and is very effective in ensuring that students of a suitable calibre are accepted onto the highly specialised homoeopathy programme. Teaching is outstanding and is delivered by teachers who have detailed knowledge and experience within the field of homoeopathy. Students' skills development is outstanding. Retention and achievement on the course are excellent, with the vast majority of students achieving very high grades in their examinations. Student aspirations for progression are mainly to open homoeopathy clinics in Japan and are supported by the exceptional advice and guidance provided by the academy.

2.2 Health and safety within the academy are given high regard. Fire safety and fire evacuation procedures are appropriate. The academy has developed a set of more rigorous procedures, but these were only beginning to be implemented during the inspection. The premises are spacious, well-maintained and equipped with high level resources such as consultation rooms with audio-visual equipment and video conferencing resources to enable JRAH to be involved in live streaming with the affiliated sister colleges in Japan. Pastoral support and student welfare are very good. Relationships within the academy are excellent. Students feel that they are very well supported, though the support they receive is informal. The academy has developed formal documentation for tutorial and pastoral support sessions but these have not yet been implemented.

2.3 Leadership, management and governance are very strong. The managing director is highly involved in the day-to-day running of the academy and in the delivery of the curriculum. This, together with daily video conferences with managers and the co-owner in Japan, ensures that managers and staff have clear oversight of their roles and responsibilities. Student feedback is regularly collected and students are wholly satisfied with the provision. They are highly complementary about the staff and the course and would recommend the academy to others. Inspection findings support student views. Staff have access to continuing professional development opportunities and, although they are involved in the stringent appraisal process, this is currently an informal process. Documentation has been developed by the academy to formalise this, though it was only implemented during inspection.

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2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with standards for Private Colleges

2.4 At the time of the inspection, the college met all the key standards for private further education colleges and quality is high. **The college exceeds expectations for the quality of education.**

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The college is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Implement the newly developed documentation to formalise the appraisal process.
2. Implement the newly developed fire and safety log to further support health and safety and fire prevention monitoring.
3. Formalise pastoral support through the introduction of recording interactions that take place during student support sessions.

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3. THE QUALITY OF CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival

3.1 The academy has excellent procedures for the assessment of students prior to and on arrival. Modest entry criteria are set, though the vast majority of students attending JRAH far exceed these criteria. All students are interviewed, either through online video conferencing or face-to-face, and must be able to demonstrate a keen interest and awareness of homoeopathy. Face-to-face interviews are conducted either at the London academy or in one of the five affiliated colleges in Japan. Although the majority of the course is delivered in Japanese to provide students with a deeper knowledge and understanding of homoeopathy, all students must provide evidence of meeting the minimum entry requirements for English language. Students are provided with effective and accurate information, advice and guidance regarding the course. A minority of students may also attend taster sessions and short courses to prepare them for the course.

3.2 On arrival, students have a further interview and assessment to validate that they are suitable for the specialised course of study. Information gathered from this interview and from assessment is effectively disseminated to teachers to enable them to plan to meet the needs of all students in the class. Students requiring additional support in English are referred to an alternative provider for supplementary English classes.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

3.3 The academy only offers one course, the highly specialised professional homoeopath programme, accredited by the International Therapy Exam Council (ITEC). Once qualified and a member of a professional organisation, the majority of students aspire to open their own homoeopathy centres in Japan. In this regard, the course that is offered is well matched to students' needs and career aspirations. Students are educated to a very high standard which meets the academy's aim of providing a world-class education in homoeopathy.

3.4 The comprehensive and easily navigable website provides clear and detailed information about the professional homoeopath course. The prospectus is accurate and user-friendly. Almost all students complete the course for which they initially register.

3.5 Enrichment and extra-curricular activities are very good and include international conferences, web-links to the sister colleges in Japan and a range of events such as end-of-term parties.

3.(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning

3.6 The quality of teaching and its impact on learning are excellent. Teaching techniques are used effectively to support and extend learning. Teachers are well

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qualified and experienced. Their subject knowledge is excellent and all are highly specialised in the field of homoeopathy.

3.7 Most of the lessons observed were judged to be outstanding. Although the course is theory based and there is much teacher direction, students are able to effectively apply the theory to practice when involved in practical clinical situations. In these sessions students have consultations with clients, providing a diagnosis and recommendations for treatment. This is carried out in a private treatment room but is video recorded and is used as a reflection tool by students and as a method of group feedback. Teacher facilitation and student collaboration during these feedback sessions are excellent. The vast majority of teaching is delivered in Japanese to provide the students with a deeper understanding of homoeopathy and to develop their skills for when they return to Japan. However, some visiting lecturers deliver their lectures in English, which are then simultaneously translated into Japanese. There are some missed opportunities during these sessions for students to further develop their English skills, for example, when asking or answering questions. Students develop independent research and study skills as they consolidate their learning through further reading and research. Students' skills development is excellent.

3.8 Lessons are generally well planned and prepared, and use a variety of interactive media and presentations. As the course is examination-based, there is no coursework to mark or assess. However, there are missed opportunities to complete case studies to help students to prepare for examinations. Where teachers identify students with specific English language or literacy needs, they encourage them to attend English language classes at a local college.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

3.9 Progress and attainment are outstanding. Retention rates are very high and are often 100 per cent. Regular testing prepares students for the end-of-year and end-of-course examinations, with informal feedback from teachers which results in examination passes with high grades. The academy regularly analyses data and has a framework in place to evaluate student performance. Attendance is excellent and many part-time students attend additional classes with full-time students whenever possible.

3.10 Students make excellent progress through their course and have regular and highly effective opportunities to apply their skills in context during practical consultations with clients. All consultations are video recorded to provide students with a record of their performance, which is also discussed as part of group feedback.

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4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

4.(a) Health, safety and security of the premises (in line with expectations of educational institutions)

4.1 The academy makes good provision for the health, safety and security of the premises. Extremely high quality and spacious premises are well-maintained and resourcing, such as the homoeopathic pharmacy, are outstanding. Audio-visual equipment is excellent and allows consultations to be video recorded and for live video conferencing streaming with the affiliated sister colleges in Japan. Risk assessments are satisfactory and an appropriate range of health and safety documentation is in place. Fire evacuation logs are completed but are brief. Supplementary detailed and high quality documentation was provided during the inspection, though this was only beginning to be implemented during the inspection. Signage for fire evacuation was also minimal but was updated during the inspection. Maintenance of fire equipment is appropriate and outsourced to external companies. Comprehensive information concerning health and safety is included in the student handbook.

4.2 The academy has no provision for students with limited mobility. JRAH has no lift or access to upper floors, which contain consultation rooms and audio-visual rooms which are essential to the delivery of the course.

4.3 Provision for students who are ill or injured is very good. All accidents and incidents are accurately recorded in the accident log and there are sufficient numbers of first aiders and first aid kits.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

4.4 Student files, including registration and attendance information and documentation, are accurate and well-maintained. Student attendance is taken during each session and information is regularly collated. Attendance during inspection and the scrutiny of attendance data show that attendance levels at the academy are excellent. Students who arrive more than 30 minutes late are marked absent for that session. There is very little lateness or absenteeism without prior authorisation. The academy has secure procedures in place should they need to report a student to the UK Border Agency (UKBA) for failing to enrol, missing ten expected contacts or discontinuing their studies. The academy has never had to use these reporting procedures.

4.5 Comprehensive, clear and fair procedures are in place for the collection and refund of fees and deposits. This information is provided on the academy's website and in the student handbook. During enrolment, students complete a declaration to say that they understand the terms and conditions of the refund policy. Extenuating circumstances resulting in an application for refund of fees once the course has commenced is at the discretion of the managing director.

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4.(c) Pastoral support for students

4.6 Pastoral support for students is highly effective. Students report that they are extremely well supported in addressing personal and academic issues but the content of these discussions is rarely documented. The academy produced documentation to record outcomes of pastoral support during the inspection, though this has not yet been implemented. Students are provided with a thorough induction to the programme which is supported by a comprehensive student handbook. They are aware that they can approach teachers at any time for guidance and support and are grateful for the high levels of support that they receive. Inspection evidence confirms these views.

4.7 Relationships within the academy are excellent. There are high levels of peer support and collaborative working is excellent. Relationships between teachers and students are equally strong. The strong, nurturing ethos within the academy is clearly evident in the promotion of integration and tolerance. Stringent policies and procedures are in place to prevent bullying and harassment. There have been no incidences of bullying or harassment at the academy.

4.8 Career guidance is effectively provided throughout the course. The vast majority of students want to open homoeopathic centres in Japan on completion of the course and are guided through the process by the managing director and teachers.

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5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

5.1 Ownership and governance of JRAH are extremely robust and exceedingly effective. The close monitoring of the provision by management ensures that all responsibilities are fully discharged. The managing director is also a co-owner and is fully involved in the day-to-day running of the academy, as well as the delivery of the curriculum. There are daily conference calls with the other co-owner in Japan to discuss curriculum, resourcing and finances. As a result, ownership and oversight are well communicated and effectively discharged between the co-owners and senior staff at the academy.

5.2 The proprietors have a clear vision for the future of the academy and are currently considering diversifying their current curriculum offer. The managing director prepares a monthly financial report which ensures that the academy is able to provide suitable investment in the programme.

5.3 The academy has all appropriate legal permissions in place, including those for planning, copyright, examinations and insurance.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

5.4 Excellent communication ensures management structures and responsibilities within the academy are highly effective and match the aim of providing a world-class education in homoeopathy. The managing director and senior staff provide clear and effective educational direction in relation to the aims of the academy, the educational direction of students in the field of homoeopathy and in their outstanding personal and academic development. The academy's self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory. Formal self-evaluation is a fairly new process for JRAH, though effective informal identification of strengths and areas for improvement has been in place since the academy's inception. Senior leaders and managers discharge their responsibilities effectively, particularly for the implementation of a range of suitable policies and procedures and, when necessary, the safeguarding of vulnerable students.

5.5 The senior leadership team is successful in securing, supporting and developing high quality staff. Teachers are very complimentary about the academy and its leaders. Observation of teaching and learning is regularly undertaken on an informal basis, as is the appraisal of staff. New documentation has been developed to formalise the appraisal process and, where applicable, link to the observation process, though this was only beginning to be implemented during the inspection. Teachers have regular and effective opportunities for continuing professional development to develop their skills in supporting teaching and learning through the delivery of the latest homoeopathic techniques.

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5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

5.6 The arrangements for quality assurance are extremely effective. Student feedback is collected and analysed at the end of each core unit. Actions for improvement are then implemented when the unit is next delivered. Students provide informal feedback at the end of each session and teaching is adjusted accordingly. There was a nil response to the pre-inspection questionnaire from students, though feedback gathered from students during the inspection highlights high levels of satisfaction with the academy, their course and the strong support that is provided. All students would recommend the academy to others. No issues or concerns were raised by students during the inspection. Inspection findings support student views.

5.7 A comprehensive range of rigorous policies and procedures are in place and are updated at least annually. They are clear, detailed and implemented effectively.

5.8 Observation of teaching and learning is regularly undertaken within the classroom and also through the review of video recordings that are conducted during every session. Teachers are provided with appropriate verbal feedback.

5.9 Students' issues and concerns are dealt with sensitively by the academy. The managing director is available at all times and is freely accessible to deal with issues and concerns. All concerns to date have been resolved at an informal stage. A detailed complaints policy is in place, which is communicated to all students during induction and through the student handbook. The complaints procedure lacked details regarding referral to an external independent adjudicator; this was updated during the inspection.

5.(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks

5.10 Staff recruitment procedures and suitability checks are rigorous, which leads to staff with outstanding skills and experience being employed. Detailed policies and procedures are in place for staff recruitment. All teaching staff are well qualified in their specialist subject and are very experienced in the field of homoeopathy. Well-maintained staff files are regularly updated and include information of visiting lecturers. Continuing professional development includes attendance and delivery at specialist homoeopathy conferences.

5.(e) Provision of information

5.11 The provision of information to students is clear, detailed and highly effective. The academy's website is user-friendly and contains clear information about the course on offer, policies and procedures and information regarding the academic performance of cohorts of students. The website provides all information required in the Standards for educational oversight.

5.12 The provision of information before and during the inspection was appropriate. Staff were responsive in providing information and provided inspectors with a range of documentation to support judgements made about the academy.

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INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietor and attended registration sessions. The inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the college.

Inspectors

Mrs Anita Pyrkotsch-Jones	Lead Inspector
Ms Christine-Reba Edge	Team Inspector

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