

# Case Study – UK Schools Teaching Japanese



Luton Sixth Form Bedfordshire



JAPAN FOUNDATION

## Key Facts about the School:

Address: Bradgers Hill Road, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU2 7EW  
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Email: college@lutonsfc.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.lutonsfc.ac.uk>

Number of students: 2249 (as of March 2012)

Age range: 16-19

Type of school: Sixth Form College (General)

## Brief description of the school:

Luton Sixth Form College, located close to the center of Luton was the first Sixth Form College in the UK when it was founded in 1966. Prior to this time the building had been the Luton Boys' Grammar School. In 2010 the College moved to a brand new state-of-the-art building, built on the original playing fields.

The College serves an ethnically diverse area and has an inclusive admissions policy which has allowed it to grow to a population of over 2,000 students. It provides a mixture of A Level and vocational courses, with an emphasis on academic courses. Luton Sixth Form students often go on to gain excellent exam results which enable a large proportion of them to move on to University. Ofsted describes learners' outcomes as "good overall, and outstanding for many subjects."

## Japanese set up:

There are currently 41 learners of Japanese, all of whom attend the classes voluntarily, in their own time. The main class is for Luton Sixth Form students, and there is also another class for pupils that attend secondary schools in the surrounding area. Both classes learn Japanese language along with studying aspects of Japanese culture.

The success of the first year has proved that there is an appetite for Japanese at the school, and ensured that Japanese will be offered as part of the curriculum in the next academic year (2012-13) as well.

## Japanese time-table:

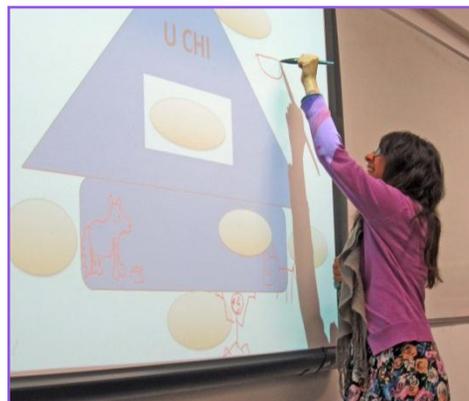
Year Group	Study Hours per Week	Number of Students	Number of Groups
Year 12 & 13	2	27	1
7-11 mixed	0.75	14	1

## Japanese compared to other MFLs:

The school teaches several languages for beginners including Japanese, Mandarin, Italian, Spanish and Arabic. Spanish has been taught for many years; Italian and Mandarin were added three years ago; and Japanese and Arabic started from September 2011.

As the number of students wanting to study traditional languages at A Level (Spanish, French and German) has either shown no increase

Case study updated: Spring 2012



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## Benefits to the students

“Languages are always beneficial to students in terms of their personal and academic development. It is a good challenge for the Gifted and Talented and also a fresh start to those who were disillusioned with European languages at school. It will be a help when applying for a university place or employment.

It is interesting to note that Japanese has encouraged more boys to learn a language; the proportion of boys in the Japanese group is far higher than that in European language classes.”



(Spanish) or declined (German and French), the College has widened their choice of beginners' languages.

Luton Sixth Form students have a total of 45 hours of Japanese in their first year of study. This includes a weekly 45 minute computer-based lesson with a non-specialist teacher, in addition to the main lesson with the Japanese tutor.

## Exams (General):

2011: 635 students passed 1829 A level subject entries, with an impressive 76 students achieving the coveted A\*, which required students to gain marks of over 90% in their second year exams. 334 students passed two or more subjects with high grade passes in all subjects.

AS Level: Success rate: 83.5 High grades: 28.4

A Level: Success rate: 97.0 High grades: 43.4

## Japanese Exam Results:

After one year of Japanese, 24 students took the Asset Languages Breakthrough listening exam, and eight took the speaking exam in addition to this. One student also took both speaking and listening exams at the preliminary level as well.

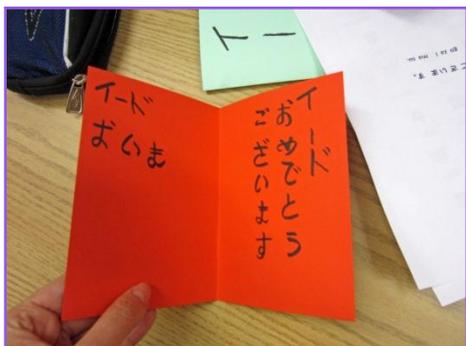
## History of Japanese:

As part of the college policy of increasing participation in beginners' languages, the college included Japanese Taster Sessions, arranged by the Japan Foundation, in their first Languages Festival in July 2011. Following this taster, Japanese was introduced into Luton Sixth Form in September 2011, using a grant from the Japan Foundation's Local Project Support Programme.

Luton Sixth Form has been forging stronger links with the local secondary schools, to encourage more pupils to take up and/or continue with languages. For this reason the Japanese classes were offered to pupils from 3 local high schools in addition to Luton Sixth Form students. So far, the number of pupils on the Japanese course has remained strong, despite being taught during twilight sessions.

## Support:

In order to gauge interest in Japanese as a potential new course, Luton Sixth Form organised a Japanese language taster through the Japan Foundation's JTS programme in Summer 2011. The following September, the College applied for and received a grant from the Japan Foundation to support the establishment of a new language course. The funding helped pay for the first year of a part-time tutor and purchase some Japanese language resources.



# Case Study – Luton Sixth Form



## Quotes from Students:

"I really enjoyed the lessons and showing off my language skills"  
"I wanted to learn Japanese because it's the most epic country in the world."

## Challenges of Japanese:

According to the Japanese language coordinator, "Any non-European language is a challenge as there is no prior knowledge on which to draw." However both the High School and Sixth Form students have taken up Japanese with enthusiasm and are doing well.

## Hurdles the school has overcome:

As with most schools it is difficult to start a new language course as budgets are already tight. The grant received from the Japan Foundation meant that the college could advertise the course without fear that it would not run if a critical number of students were not recruited. As the course has proved popular, it is easier to keep it going.



## Other opportunities that Japanese has brought to the school

Luton Sixth Form, entered the Japan Webpage Contest for Schools ([www.japanwebpagecontest.org.uk](http://www.japanwebpagecontest.org.uk)), in which it won the Design Prize. The aim of the website was to create a way to for the Sixth Form and High School students to interact and work together on a larger project. Students from all age groups submitted to the contest, and the judges noted, the website had "great content" and a "original, eye-catching and 'cool' design." You can view the site here: <http://japanportal.moonfruit.com/>

## Other Japan-related projects

The students run an Anime Club on Tuesday evenings. This has been integrated into the College's Japan-related website, mentioned above.

## Japanese Teaching Staff 2011-2012:

One native teacher of Japanese teaches at the College for two hours every week. This teacher trained in Japan, but also has a Masters in Applied Linguistics from the UK. She found out about this position on *JLE-UK*, the Japan Foundation's mailing list for teachers of Japanese.

From autumn 2011 to spring 2012 the students also had access to two non-Japanese speaking language teachers, one of whom ran a weekly computer session to study Japanese, and the other who looked after all administrative matters (and who picked up enough Japanese to take the Asset language breakthrough speaking exam!)



## Long-term future:

The college is confident that they will be able to take Japanese forward in subsequent academic years. According to one of the school's language teachers, "the number of this years' students who have expressed an interest in continuing further, suggests the creation of an intermediate class maybe a possibility."

## Advice to other schools in a similar position:

"Contact the Japan Foundation! Their help and support is invaluable, particularly the fact that they will send a tutor to run a taster and also help with recruitment to permanent positions."



“Some second year students who took the course have expressed a desire to take Japanese as part of their University studies. How wonderful it is that they have had the chance to turn their interest in Japanese anime and manga into recognised qualifications!”

Samantha Fabbro, Teacher at Luton Sixth Form



**Would you like to know more about how the Japan Foundation can support Japanese at your school?**

Contact us today to find out how we can help you:

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