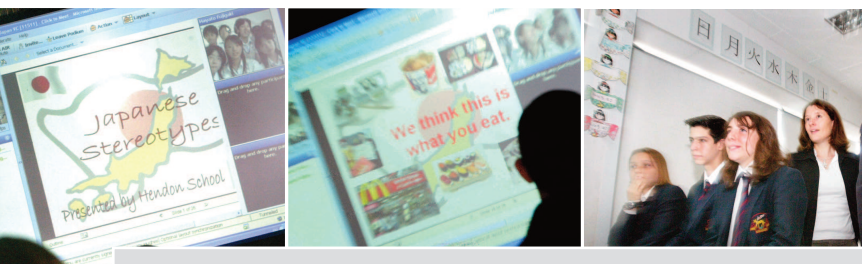


# Hendon Secondary School embraces Japanese culture with Video Conferencing



Hendon Secondary School has twinned with Yasaka Junior High School as part of a project based on Geography and Japanese language lessons.

**The project is providing pupils with a truly international learning experience using interactive technologies.**

The Hendon secondary school is a large, mixed comprehensive school, which caters for students from 11 – 18 year olds and has special school status as a language college. The school has 1,222 pupils on roll, including 197 sixth form students. The pupil population is culturally diverse, multi-faith and multi-lingual and more than half the children have a mother tongue other than English, so it is no surprise that a twinning project with Japan would prove so popular.

Hendon Secondary School has twinned with Yasaka Junior High School as part of a Geography and Japanese 'Gifted and Talented' project led by the teachers at Hendon. The project is providing pupils with a truly international learning experience using video conferencing provided by London Grid for Learning (LGfL), enabling pupils to communicate in real time with two or more people in Japan via video, and interactive technology provided by Hitachi Interactive Solutions.

Combining these technologies with curriculum Geography modules and encouraging use of Modern Foreign Languages, the children can use

geographical theory and real life experiences to gain a true insight into other countries and cultures.

**Linguistic and cultural exchange through the video conference**

Working hard to prepare for the first video conference the pupils at Hendon took part in after school lessons to ensure they were ready for the big day. The pupils prepared a PowerPoint presentation to present to Yasaka Junior High School, detailing their views on stereotypical Japanese life. This was presented on the day via interactive whiteboard to the Japanese children, who were

"See beyond the tourist view of Japan, learning through a real dialogue and expanding horizons..."

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given the chance to ask and answer questions. The children from both schools took turns to introduce themselves and gave a little information about themselves such as favourite food or sport. The Japanese students had varying levels of English, but tried to use the language wherever they could.

The pupils researched life in Japan using the Internet and devised their views on how they saw Japanese schools, traditionalism, culture, music, work and food. The Japanese students reacted by agreeing with the pupils views or responding with loud 'no's'. The Japanese students agreed wholeheartedly with the views on music, school, work and food, but not so much on traditionalism. The pupils at Hendon discovered that Japanese pupils do not value traditional Japanese culture to the extent that many of English people may believe. The pupils in Tokyo explained that they did not dress in traditional kimonos and didn't believe that men should work more than women.

Rebecca Phillips, a year 9 pupil involved in the project, enthused: "It was quite good fun and I found it exciting to use the technology and to see and speak to other children in a completely different country. We have a really good opportunity to see Japanese

culture and I feel this has given me a real insight into Japanese life."

### **The twinning project involves pupils in collaborative working**

The style of work involved in video conferencing is of a collaborative nature, and frequently much more practical than every day class work. This encourages the pupils to discuss their work with each other and their teachers.

### **Global gateway into a world citizenship**

Helen Langsam, Head of Japanese, commented: "This project is a great opportunity for the pupils at Hendon Secondary School to share what it is like to live in Japan and understand the equivalent of their peers. It will enable children in the participating schools in London to see beyond the tourist view of Japan, learning through real dialogue and expanding their horizons as a future world citizen."

"Video conferencing is a global gateway and it is part of our job as educators, to ensure the children in our care are fully prepared for their role in a truly global economy. The pupils are able to take an hour for a

conversation with pupils in Tokyo and then return to their usual lessons. The twinning initiative offers our pupils the perfect opportunity to enhance their curriculum offerings, whilst raising interest in modern foreign languages and Geography."

Helen concludes: "The pupils in the Gifted and Talented group have been really great and just bubbling with enthusiasm. Each one of them now has a genuine interest in Japanese and we hope many will go onto study the language as an A Level or at university".

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