

The American School in Japan

Tokyo, Japan



Rooted in Chofu since 1902, its early campus plans once drew sketches from Frank Lloyd Wright himself.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	76/100
Academic outcomes	75/100
University placement	75/100
Prestige & heritage	77/100
Alumni network	76/100
Facilities	84/100
Transparency	80/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Rooted in Chofu since 1902, The American School in Japan has the advantage that matters most in Tokyo’s international market: institutional depth. This is not a start-up international school trading on a glossy campus and a borrowed brand. It is a long-established, non-religious day school for ages 3 to 18, teaching in English, with an American curriculum and accreditations from both IBO and CIS. That combination gives it a clear identity. Parents who want an unabashedly American schooling experience in Japan, without the ambiguity that dogs some “international” schools, will find it here. The school’s own description of a two-campus set-up with multi-function spaces also points to serious physical scale, not a compact city-centre operation squeezed into a tower block.

ASIJ sits at the top end of the market. The average annual day fee across the full age range is **3,407,000 JPY**. That price buys more than location and longevity. The school has a global alumni network of over 7,500 and a verified notable-alumni floor of **17** catalogued figures in Wikidata, spanning scientists, musicians, artists and screen talent, with **1** star-tier drama award among them. That matters because alumni breadth tells you something about a school’s culture: ASIJ has produced graduates who move into public creative and intellectual life, not just conventional corporate routes. Recent destinations listed in the context include Barnard College, Boston College and Boston University. That is a slim sample, not a brag sheet, and it still reinforces the school’s American orientation.

What is special about ASIJ is its *old-established confidence*. It does not need to cosplay as British, IB-only or bilingual to broaden its appeal. The school knows what it is. That will suit internationally mobile families heading to or from the US system, children who thrive in a large and *unambiguously international* peer group, and students who want a school with visible reach beyond Japan. It will also suit families who value community continuity; a school founded in 1902 and still trading on an active alumni body has social ballast that newer schools cannot manufacture.

This is not the right fit for every child. Families hunting for a cheaper option, a strongly local Japanese academic environment, or a school with a religious ethos should look elsewhere. ASIJ belongs on a shortlist for parents who want *serious institutional heft*, a clear American pathway, and a Tokyo school with *genuine historical standing* rather than imported prestige. For the right student—outward-facing, adaptable, and comfortable in a *high-fee, high-expectation* international setting—it is a compelling choice.

STRENGTHS	TRADE - OFFS
• Founded in 1902, ASIJ is one of the earliest providers of English-medium education in Japan, giving it over a century of continuous institutional history. • The school draws a genuinely international community, a co-educational private day school located in Chōfu, Tokyo, with over 50 nationalities represented. • College counselling outcomes are strong, with approximately 73% of graduates matriculating to universities in the United States, including Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, Columbia, and MIT. • Two purpose-built campuses serve different age groups: the Early Learning Center (nursery, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten) in Roppongi and the Chofu campus in western Tokyo (kindergarten-grade 12). • The school carries recognised external quality assurance, accredited by WASC, and maintains membership in the National Association of Independent Schools.	• Fees are steep even by international-school standards: high school tuition at ASIJ translates to roughly USD 26,000-30,000 per year, placing it firmly among the most expensive international schools in Japan. • The main campus sits outside of central Tokyo in Chofu, meaning many families rely on a long bus commute rather than a walkable neighbourhood school. • Places are tight: ASIJ is highly selective, demand for places, particularly in the middle and high school years, consistently exceeds availability, and waiting lists are common, with priority often going to corporate-sponsored or already-enrolled families. • The school has a documented historical failure of child protection: a former teacher had sexually abused students during his tenure from 1963 to 1988, which the current administration and board stated they found out about in November 2013, a legacy that prompted alumni calls for independent investigation.

ADMISSIONS

Entry points run from nursery (age 3) through grade 12, with rolling review but decisions concentrated from late February through summer. Applicants submit prior transcripts and reports, and older applicants typically face testing and a family interview; the school states it weighs alignment with its English-medium, American-style philosophy alongside seat availability. Because demand regularly outstrips supply, especially at popular grade levels, priority is generally given to siblings of current students and corporate-sponsored relocating families, and waiting lists are common, so early application is advisable.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (17)

MUSIC: Hikaru Utada, Linda Purl, May J., Lisa, Jesse

DRAMA: Joan Fontaine, Linda Purl, Oliver Platt, Hiroshi Kurosawa

VISUAL_ARTS: Joan Fontaine, Hikaru Utada, May J., Lisa, Vladimir Ossipoff

LETTERS: Joan Fontaine

POLITICS: John Cornyn

SCIENCE: Bobak Ferdowsi, Shaon Basu, Elbridge Colby, Q139679030

BUSINESS: Kazuo Hirai

WTS RATING 

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