

Tamagawa Academy - IB Division

NEWSLETTER

Issue 02 June 2026

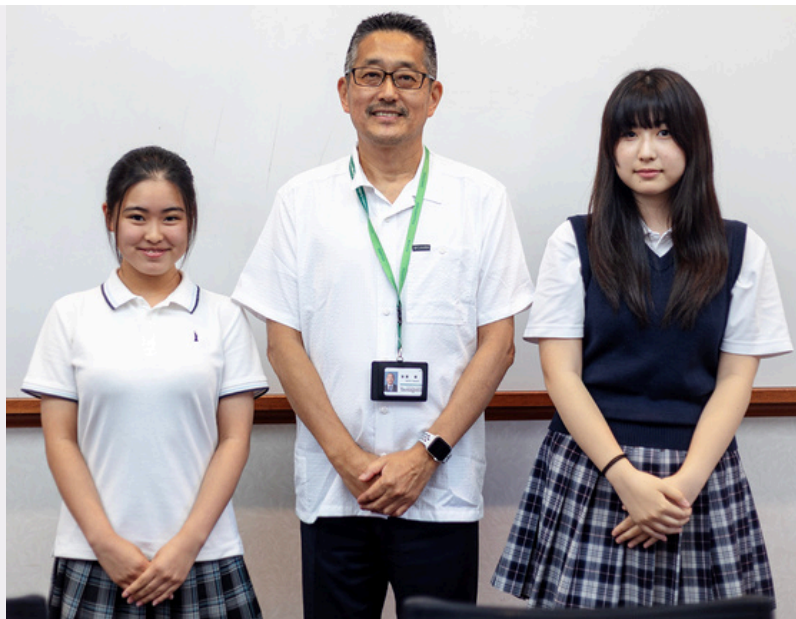
Business Day

Our students took part in the KING Business contest, one of Japan's largest and oldest student-run business contest organizations!

Learner Profile awards

Small actions and positive attitudes can make a lasting impact on our community!

Mr. Furnival's Message



Education and the Future

In this month's featured interview, students sat down with Mr Goto, the Dean of K-12 to discuss his educational vision, the importance of compassionate teaching, and how schools can help students grow not only academically, but also as thoughtful and responsible individuals.

Student Council

This month's update highlights their recent projects and future plans.

Trial lessons

This month, future students visited our campus to experience trial lessons and discover what makes the IB Division at Tamagawa Academy so special.

Parent Class Observation Day

On 13th May, we held our first Parents Class Observation of the year. We were delighted to welcome many parents to the campus to see our students in action! We also gave presentations on college guidance and the integration of AI in education.

Mother's Day charity bouquet project

Sophia Refugee Support Group

WSC Tokyo round

English Drama Club

Book of the month



Mr. Furnival's message

Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter.

May has been a busy month in the IB Division and I hope you enjoy reading about our students' achievements and experiences.

One of the most rewarding aspects of being a teacher is seeing students develop leadership skills. Our student volunteers demonstrated the very best of our IB community during the recent trial lessons for prospective parents and students. They showed outstanding leadership by welcoming visitors with confidence, supporting activities with enthusiasm, and helping others feel comfortable in a new environment. Throughout the day, they acted as exemplary role models, representing the values of our school through their kindness, maturity, and professionalism. Their responsible attitude meant that lessons ran smoothly, while their community-minded approach helped create a warm and positive atmosphere for families considering joining Tamagawa. We are incredibly proud of the way our students stepped forward and showed what it means to be active, caring members of our school community, and I hope their actions inspire others to show the very best of themselves and make a positive contribution to those around them.

We are also incredibly proud of the service work our students continue to undertake and the positive impact they have both within and beyond our school community. Their actions reflect the values at the heart of both the IB and Tamagawa's Zenjin Education philosophy by encouraging students to develop not only academically, but also as caring, responsible and active contributors to society. Through service, our students demonstrate empathy, leadership and a commitment to making a meaningful difference in the lives of others. I hope the stories in this newsletter give readers an insight into these experiences and inspire our community as they read about our students' latest activities, reflections and contributions.

One highlight for me this month was watching R and M in Grade 11 interview Mr Goto about his experiences here at Tamagawa. It was a wonderful moment to see our students lead such thoughtful conversations and engage so confidently with a member of staff. The interview also brought back many happy memories for Mr Goto, who reflected on the fact that he had taught both students when they were in Grade 1. Moments like these capture something special about life at Tamagawa and reflect the strong relationships and sense of community that develop over time across our school.

As we enter the second half of Term 1, assessments may become more frequent and it is important that our students begin to prepare for them in a proactive and balanced way. While strong subject knowledge is important, there is no substitute for strong self-management skills. Taking time to organise notes, plan revision carefully, and manage time effectively will be vital over the next couple of months. These habits not only support academic success but also reflect the IB Approaches to Learning by helping students become more independent, reflective and responsible learners.

Oliver Furnival
Head of IB Division

LEADERSHIP COMMENTS

The Leap to Grade 7: New Challenges, Fresh Spaces, and the Beautiful Game



Mr. Cook

The transition into Junior High School is always a milestone moment, and this year's Grade 7 cohort has officially found their rhythm. Moving up brings a shift in scenery, expectations, and daily life—and our students have some brilliant insights on what the experience has been like so far.

Raising the Academic Bar

One of the most noticeable shifts for the Grade 7s this year has been in the classroom. Students have quickly realized that academic expectations have leveled up, particularly as they transition to the MYP Year 3 rubrics.

While the criteria are undoubtedly more challenging, the students have met the rise in rigor with impressive maturity, recognizing that these new benchmarks are designed to stretch their thinking and deepen their skills.

It hasn't been all hard work, though! Junior High brings new perks, and a massive favorite among the cohort is the classroom terrace. Having a dedicated outdoor space right outside their door has become a game-changer for student well-being.

Fresh Air: Perfect for catching a quick breeze between periods.

Social Time: A great spot for chatting and catching up with friends.

Recharge: The ultimate place to unwind before the next challenge.

Summing It Up: The Beautiful Game

When asked to summarize the Grade 7 experience so far, some students kept it incredibly brief and honest. For many, the absolute highlight of their transition can be summed up in just one word: "Soccer."

Whether it's the fierce midday matches, the camaraderie on the pitch, or just a chance to run off some energy, sport remains the ultimate universal language and bond for this year group.

Looking Ahead...

We are incredibly proud of how smoothly our Grade 7s have navigated their transition. From tackling tougher rubrics to mastering the art of the terrace chill—and, of course, dominating the soccer field—they are truly making Junior High their own!

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LEADERSHIP COMMENTS



Ms. Takahashi

Mid-term 1 has finished. Through this first important stage since moving up to the next grade, I have felt encouraged every day seeing each student steadily working hard and moving forward in their new environment.

Of course, it is important for students to set new academic goals and continue making daily efforts towards them. However, I also hope they will value in “taking on new challenges” just as much. Not acting in order to be praised or

evaluated by others, but taking action for someone else even when nobody is watching. Stepping beyond one’s assigned role and taking initiative. I believe that the accumulation of these experiences leads to growth as a person.

The concept of “Rōsaku” (learning through work and service) in Tamagawa Academy’s Zenjin Education is not simply about tasks or volunteer activities. It is an important form of learning through which students think for themselves, take action, and devote their efforts to their classmates and society, thereby developing character, responsibility, and consideration for others. I feel it nurtures the kind of “life skills” that cannot be gained through knowledge alone.

In May, we were able to see many examples of students acting proactively, such as taking on the challenge of the business contest and supporting trial lessons. It was wonderful to see students volunteering, challenging themselves, and acting for the benefit of others.

In June, preparations for the Music Festival will finally begin in earnest. Through the process of creating something together as a class, I hope students will experience both the difficulties and joys of cooperation and show even further growth.

The Grade 10 students are in the process of learning about the DP. Subject teachers from different departments have been giving presentations about the DP subject choices. On Wednesday, June 3rd, the Grade 10 students will be able to ask the Grade 12 students questions about their DP experience. On Wednesday, July 8th, the Grade 10 parents and students will be able to book meetings with the DP subject teachers if they have any questions.

The Grade 12 mock exams are fast approaching. The students have been working very hard to finish their IAs and study for the upcoming exams. We wish them the best!



Ms. Wei

LEADERSHIP COMMENTS



Mr. Serpico

This year, at both the MYP and DP levels, there has been a strong focus on further developing our teacher mentor program. In summary, the teacher mentor program assigns one specific teacher or staff member (often a homeroom teacher) to support a student's academic progress, social-emotional wellbeing, and overall school experience.

Research consistently shows that students who feel connected to school experience stronger academic and wellbeing outcomes. Students with a stronger sense of school belonging are more likely to achieve higher grades and test scores, attend school regularly, and remain engaged in learning.

A large meta-analysis examining 82 studies found a consistent positive relationship between school belonging and academic achievement across secondary schools. While larger schools and classes provide students with opportunities to build a wide range of social connections, it can sometimes be more difficult for students to form meaningful relationships with teachers and staff members. The mentor program is designed to help address this by ensuring that every student has a trusted adult who regularly checks in with them, advocates for them, and supports them throughout their time in the programme.

I look forward to continuing to develop this program further and working together to build stronger, more meaningful relationships with students that foster confidence, belonging, resilience, and long-term success both academically and personally.



Mr. Iizuka

It has been two months since the start of the new school year. Now that Golden Week is over, the initial sense of tension has faded, and minor issues are beginning to surface. Whether it's a student's attire, their words and actions toward others, or their behavior in class, it's important for the adults around them to speak up immediately whenever they notice something amiss. Of course, the ideal scenario is for students to recognize these issues on their own and correct their behavior, and our interventions should be designed to help them do just that.

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LEADERSHIP COMMENTS

It's already been two months since the start of the new school year. Seeing the Grade 6-9 students staying so active and energetic—both on the field and in the classroom—gives me a huge boost of energy every day!

As we've been running at full speed for these past two months, this is the time when fatigue can start to settle in, both physically and mentally. Remember, your "body" and "mind" are deeply connected. Just like we discuss in PE class, proper "recovery" is essential to maintaining your best performance. Please make sure to eat well, get enough sleep, and take a moment to listen to what your body and heart are telling you.

I am always here to support you so that you can stay tough, stay healthy, and truly shine as yourself here. If you ever need anything, please feel free to come and talk to me anytime!



Mr. Osawa



Mr. Soai

Do not lose your mind when you are busy. Respect others, and appreciate our diversity...!

In G6 the students are getting into the groove of being prepared for class with the appropriate materials and being organized. Teachers have noticed that the IB MYP Planners are being used frequently and are part of a student's daily kit. It is nice to see such self-management in the first year of the MYP program.



Mr. Hinchey

GOTO - SENSEI:

“...be a proud Tamagawa-ko!”



R.K. and M.N. in Grade 11 interviewed Mr Goto, the Dean of K-12, who was the Head of the Primary Division when they were in Grade 1! Mr Goto has extensive knowledge of Tamagawa's philosophy and was happy to share his ideas and advice with the girls.

How do you believe Tamagawa can prepare students not just for university and future careers, but for life itself?

At Tamagawa Academy, we prioritize "how to live as a human being" over mere knowledge and academic ability. At the heart of our philosophy is the teaching of Kuniyoshi Obara:

"Be a person who brings joy to both God and others."

To me, this means becoming someone who doesn't just act out of self-interest, but truly values doing the right thing, caring for those around them, and contributing to society. I firmly believe that such individuals will earn trust and find success in any situation once they enter the workforce. The education we cherish at Tamagawa Academy is not simply for passing entrance exams or finding a job; it is about building a foundation to live a rich and meaningful life.

Can you share a moment when a teacher changed your life or inspired you personally?

A teacher who deeply inspired me was an elementary school music teacher I met during my first year at Tamagawa. Although he was responsible for around 320 students, he carefully created a portfolio for every single child. These portfolios included photos of our work, his comments, and encouraging messages, which were given to us when we graduated.

I was profoundly impressed by his dedication and thought to myself, "I wish I could become a teacher like that." While I found it difficult to fully replicate his approach, the experience heavily influenced my own teaching. When I became a homeroom teacher, I tried to honor my students' writing and daily reflections by keeping and sharing records of their work. Looking back, Tamagawa has long valued portfolios and student learning records, an approach that connects closely with the core ideas of an IB education.

What is your favourite memory from school life?

My strongest memories are of my club activities. I started playing the trumpet in high school, and I was actually influenced to come to Tamagawa University because their high school brass band had won gold awards for five consecutive years.

When I was in university, I played the trumpet in the cheering band for the former Yokohama Taiyo Whales baseball team. We traveled to various stadiums to support the team, and sometimes our music could even be heard on television. These experiences remain completely unforgettable to me, even now.



What qualities are necessary to become a great teacher?

I believe that the most essential quality for a good teacher is "to truly love children." In this context, I often recall a famous quote by Mr. Obara:

"Only those who can play with children have the right to educate them."

To me, "playing" here does not just mean recreational play. It means standing at the same eye level as the students—thinking with them, learning with them, and striving to understand their feelings. I believe that because Tamagawa has so many teachers who embody this philosophy, our students are able to enjoy their school life to the fullest. A teacher should not merely stand above students, but should be a presence that joins them and grows alongside them.

What is your vision for the future of Tamagawa Academy?

My wish for Tamagawa Academy is for it to be "the best school in Japan, and the best in the world." For me, being "number one in the world" does not simply refer to academic rankings or university placement results. Instead, it means being a school that students, parents, and teachers can all truly take pride in.

I also hope that the students who graduate from our school will continue to cherish what they learned at Tamagawa and spread its virtues, leading to a growing community of "Tamagawa fans." We already see this beautifully illustrated by families who have attended Tamagawa for three generations, and it is my deepest desire for the school to remain beloved throughout its long history.

Through Tamagawa, what kinds of developments do you hope to see in the future?

I hope that Tamagawa will continue developing the ideas that have always been important to our school. I believe the IB program was introduced because its educational philosophy is so remarkably similar to Tamagawa's own values—especially regarding international understanding.

Tamagawa has held a global mindset for many years, a tradition that goes back to our founder, Mr. Kuniyoshi Obara, who always encouraged students to look beyond Japan. We also cherish traditions like experiential and labor education, where students learn through genuine, real-world experiences.

One part of Tamagawa that I especially value is our culture of music and singing. I love hearing our students sing around campus and truly believe this is one of Tamagawa's greatest strengths. Overall, my hope is that Tamagawa will continue growing and nurturing the rich traditions that have shaped our school's identity.



Do you have a message for the students?

I want to offer some words of encouragement. While I know that the IB DP curriculum is very challenging, there is immense meaning in overcoming it.

In particular, the effort you are putting in right now will certainly be useful in your future, as it develops your ability to think independently, overcome difficulties, and continue learning throughout your life. To all of our students, I send this warm message: "Please overcome these challenges under the guidance of your teachers and graduate as proud Tamagawa-ko (children of Tamagawa)."

STUDENT COUNCIL



At this month's IB Assembly, we introduced some of the new ideas and projects we'll be bringing to the IB community this year. From updates to the House System and upcoming competitions to Student Council and prefect recruitment, the presentation focused on creating a school environment where more students feel encouraged to participate, connect across grades, and actually enjoy being involved in the community around them.

This year, we want IB to be remembered not only for academics, but also for the experiences created outside the classroom, the events, friendships, challenges, ideas, and moments that make school life memorable. We hope more students will feel comfortable stepping forward, trying something new, and becoming part of the community in their own way.

And yes... the "WE WANT YOU" posters were 100% intentional!





The KING Business Contest, organised by university students from across Japan and supported by Tamagawa IB graduate K.K., gave us the opportunity to experience the process of developing a real business idea in just one day. Working in mixed groups alongside university mentors, we were challenged to create a business plan in response to the theme: “Devise a business plan that solves problems and inconveniences experienced by yourself, your family, or those close to you.”

Each group explored different issues. Our group focused on improving accessibility to allergy-safe food after hearing about the personal experiences of one student who had struggled with this issue. Through research, discussion, and analysis of existing solutions, each team developed a proposal aimed at addressing a specific challenge and creating meaningful support for their target audience. Although the experience was challenging due to the strict time limit and being completely new to many of us, it taught us the importance of collaboration, communication, and critical thinking when developing realistic business solutions. Presenting our final idea to the judges during the four-minute presentation and Q&A session was nerve-racking but also incredibly rewarding.



Throughout the contest, we developed key IB Learner Profile attributes such as being communicators and open-minded learners by sharing ideas with students from different grades and backgrounds and considering multiple perspectives on everyday problems. We also strengthened ATL skills including collaboration, research, and critical thinking, particularly when

analysing our target audience and evaluating existing market solutions. One of the biggest challenges was learning to contribute confidently in discussions with people we had never met before, but over time our teamwork became much stronger. Overall, the contest gave us a deeper understanding of business, ethical problem-solving, and presentation skills that will support future academic opportunities, careers, and future business competitions.



LEARNER PROFILE AWARDS



F.N. (G6) Knowledgeable, Inquirer - F consistently comes prepared, shares her understanding with others, and shows strong knowledge of mathematical concepts. She works with accuracy and efficiency, often moving ahead of expectations, and confidently tackles more challenging problems.

M.O. (G6) Balanced, Communicator - M's work is consistently organized, clear, and easy to follow, showing care in how she presents her mathematical thinking. She is able to explain her solutions and concepts using appropriate mathematical language, which helps communicate her understanding effectively. She also approaches tasks calmly and thoughtfully, without rushing, and shows a positive balance between careful independent work and active participation in class.

K.F. (G7) Caring - As a caring classmate, K offered his help to his classmates with opening links and downloading materials from Google Classroom and getting ready for the class

M.N. (G7) Knowledgeable - M has shown a solid understanding of the key mathematical knowledge and skills in Unit 1, and has applied them accurately to solve problems.

R.Y. (G8) Caring -R has shown true commitment towards service for the environment. He initiated picking up garbage and threw away litter on the day of the grade 6-8 school trip.

Y.O. (G8) Communicator - Y has shown dedication and persistence in developing the class goals for Rocky "STRIVE" 's class.



LEARNER PROFILE AWARDS



S.O. (G9) **Principled** - S demonstrates a strong ability to understand tasks and improve their work through revision, and she also shows an excellent attitude toward group work and collaboration. These qualities are consistently demonstrated not only in class, but also in homeroom activities and school events, reflecting outstanding qualities as a learner.

R.K. (G9) **Self-management** - R has shown resilience this year by facing challenges in science with a positive and "I will do it" attitude, managing her distractions and focusing on completion of tasks.

M.M. (G10) **Inquirer, Risk-taker** - M approaches learning with enthusiasm and perseverance, even when the skills are challenging. During practice time, she asks thoughtful questions and actively seeks support to strengthen her understanding. Her determination to improve, willingness to clarify her thinking, and consistent effort to master new concepts make her growth in mathematics especially impressive.

Y.K. (G11) **Communication skills** - Y used a variety of speaking techniques (such as in his recent IO and classroom presentation) to effectively communicate with different audiences.

B.I. (G12) **Caring, Open-minded** - B was open-minded when she explained the difficulties she faced on her EE journey, which helped the Grade 11s rethink their choices. In her CAS activity, Refugee Cafe, she took good care of younger students and often acted as a liaison between different people.

S.I. (G12) **Inquirer, Communicator** - S always takes an active lead in discussions and tries to think deeply and critically about the works being studied.



EXCHANGE STUDENTS

We have been very lucky to have exchange students from Canada, Germany, South Africa and the United States of America in the IB Division since April. The students were a credit to their schools and brought a wide range of experiences and ideas into our Grade 10 Cohort. We would like to thank the host families, students and teachers for making the students feel so welcome. We can't wait to hear from our Grade 10 students once they have made the return trip to their friends' countries.

P.M. and M.L. have shared their reflections on life at Tamagawa and in Japan.



“My name is P.M. and I am an exchange student from Bridgehouse School in South Africa. I just arrived back in South Africa from a seven-week exchange at Tamagawa and, honestly, I can't even begin to explain what an amazing time it was that I had there.

The school is incredibly beautiful. When I look back on my first day there, I just remember being absolutely blown away by the beauty and magnificence of the campus. Even up to the last day there, I was still finding the most incredible spaces and activities happening in them. I was so inspired by all of the very interesting clubs and activities continuously happening all around us. The students were so friendly, welcoming and made such an effort to include us all and take a big interest in the differences and similarities and interesting things our countries share even though they were not our exchange partners which was so lovely. They really took us under their wings and made us feel so at home.

When it comes to the teachers, they were so inspiring to me. They are such wonderful people and such amazing teachers too. I learnt so much from them as a whole and found myself really delving into classes with such enthusiasm because of them. They always have an amazingly encouraging and positive attitude towards everything which inspires everyone so much.

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EXCHANGE STUDENTS

By the end of the time there I left with a very heavy heart as it felt like I was leaving so many amazing new friends and teachers behind.

If I had the chance to, I would go back in a moment. It has truly been an experience that I shall never forget and hold very close to my heart.

I am incredibly grateful to the school, my awesome host family who really went out of their way for me, all the amazing friends I made and everyone who helped to make my exchange there possible.



I loved every moment of my time with you, thank you!”

P. M.



“Konnichiwa. Boku no nihongo ga amari jyoozu dewa nai desuga, o sewa ni nari mashita.

Tanoshi jikan deshita. Minna sugoku yasashiku shitekurete arigatou! Boku wa ramen to yunikuro to matcha ga daisuki ni narimashita.

My time here was extremely special and I would like to thank everyone for filling it with so many laughs and memories. I can easily say that this trip to Japan has left me with some of the best experiences ever. I am going to

miss everything about this exchange so much. The people, the food, 7-Eleven. Thank you once again to all of you. All the teachers and the train security guard for not deporting me after I illegally ate my tuna mayo onigiri on the train. I can confidently say I will cherish everything Japan and Tamagawa had to offer.”

M. L.

TRIAL LESSONS



Our recent IB Trial Lessons were a fantastic opportunity to welcome prospective families into our community and showcase life in the IB Division at Tamagawa. We were delighted to welcome around 30 families to the event and would like to thank all of the teachers who planned and delivered engaging trial lessons that gave visitors a real insight into learning in the IB.



One of the highlights of the day was the contribution made by our 36 student volunteers, who were truly exemplary throughout the event. Our students worked alongside visiting students during lessons, helping them complete activities, supporting communication and language where needed, and assisting teachers to ensure that everyone felt included and able to participate. Beyond the classroom activities, our students acted as outstanding ambassadors for Tamagawa.

They were friendly, approachable and highly communicative, taking time to speak with families and answer questions about student life, learning experiences and what it means to be part of the IB community. Their warmth and openness helped visitors feel welcomed and gave families an authentic insight into daily life at our school.



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TRIAL LESSONS



Most importantly, our students represented Tamagawa in an extremely positive light. They demonstrated leadership by stepping forward to support others, responsibility by taking ownership of their roles, and a strong sense of community by making visitors feel valued and included. These qualities reflect both the values of the IB and Tamagawa's commitment to developing caring and active young people through Zenjin Education.

We are incredibly proud of our students and grateful for the maturity, enthusiasm and professionalism they showed throughout the day. We hope their actions inspire others to show the very best of themselves and continue building the welcoming and supportive community that makes Tamagawa such a special place.





PARENT CLASS OBSERVATION DAY

On May 13th, we were delighted to welcome parents to the IB Division for our Parent Observation Day. It was wonderful to see so many families visiting lessons and experiencing firsthand the learning taking place across our classrooms.

Parent Observation Day provides an important opportunity for parents to gain a deeper understanding of the wide range of learning experiences, activities, and interactions that take place each day within the IB Division. From collaborative discussions and inquiry-based learning to practical activities and student presentations, the day offered a valuable insight into our students' educational journey. It was great to see so many parents joining in during the lessons.

Following the lesson observations, parents attended a series of presentations. Ms Tokiwa, together with two IB alumni, shared their experiences and advice on applying to universities, providing valuable insights into the application process and life after graduation. Mr Furnival also delivered a presentation on Artificial Intelligence, explaining how students can and can't use it within their lessons and assessments.



We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all parents who attended and helped make the day such a success. The strong partnership between home and school plays a vital role in supporting student learning and wellbeing.

Following the event, parents were invited to complete a feedback survey. We greatly value the opinions and suggestions of our parent community and appreciate the thoughtful feedback received. On the following page, two of our Parent Association Vice Presidents have kindly shared their comments. These comments will help us continue to improve future Parent Observation Days and ensure they remain meaningful experiences for both students and families.

Thank you once again for your continued support of the IB Division.

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**Parent Association
Ms. N.S.**

PARENT CLASS OBSERVATION DAY

**Parent Association
Mr.H.K.**

During the recent class observation, I was deeply moved to see how much the students have grown, showing more composure and reliability with each passing year. It was impressive to see them naturally sharing their opinions while respecting one another's perspectives in different subjects. The sight of them learning in such a free and relaxed atmosphere truly warmed my heart.

I also felt their growth through the cheerful greetings from students I've known since they were young, and even in their slightly shy smiles. My sincere thanks go to the teachers for their warm and constant guidance.

I was truly impressed by the students, who tackled such complex subjects in English—tasks that would be challenging even in Japanese—with such composure. My heartfelt gratitude goes to the teachers for cultivating a learning environment that enables students to achieve this level of language proficiency.

In Mathematics, it was a fresh discovery to see students learning methods entirely different from the ones I studied decades ago. At the same time, seeing highly specialized Science lessons and Social Studies topics—such as Japanese economy and history—conducted in English led me to reflect on the necessity of learning these specific subjects in a second language.

Since I believe that prioritizing English is not the only path to success, I am eager to see how lessons taught in our mother tongue will evolve in the future. I look forward to attending more class observations to see this development.





During the 77th Tokyo Junior High School Regional Track and Field Championships (Tama Region Tournament) held on Sunday, May 10, Grade 8 Y.H. delivered an impressive performance representing the Track & Field Club. Competing in the Tama West Area Women's Open 100m Hurdles—a highly competitive event where students from Grades 7 through 9 race together regardless of school grade—she clocked a time of 16.35 seconds, securing a 6th-place finish overall and earning distinction as an official prize winner.



With this result, she has qualified for the Tokyo Metropolitan Tournaments held at the end of June and late July.

In addition to Y, many other Junior High School members (Secondary) have also qualified for the Tokyo Metropolitan Tournaments. This coming weekend, Grade 7 IB students will also be making their official tournament debut at the same competition.

While they are not IB students, a high school club member finished 6th in the Men's Javelin Throw at the High School Metropolitan Tournament held at a different venue on the same day, earning a spot in the South Kanto Regional Tournament. The following week, another member placed 8th in the Women's Heptathlon.

DEPARTMENT FOCUS: LANGUAGE A

In this new monthly article, students will let us know what is going on throughout the curriculum. We will start with Language and Literature classes!

In our English Language and Literature class we have been reading the novel “The Giver” by Lois Lowry. It is an example of dystopian literature. A dystopian story is set in a place where everything in a society has gone wrong. In this story, everything seems to be perfect at first, but the reader realises that isn’t true at all. We are reading the book to identify how the story is both similar and different from our own lives, and how we should feel gratitude for our world. The book is helping us realise how individuality and freedom are important to our lives.

We have all enjoyed reading and discussing “The Giver”. Every time we do comprehension tasks and write our opinion, there are no rights or wrongs. We each have different interpretations and creative ideas. We love sharing thoughts, and understanding other people's perspectives is a very important and interesting thing to do.

The ATL skills that we use are “thinking skills” and “communication skills” to come up with insightful opinions. This may lead everybody one step closer to a deeper understanding of the author’s intention and a meaning hidden behind the dystopian story.

One thing I especially enjoy about English classes is that the teacher encourages us to think deeply about society and human nature, not just reading the book. If ever we are struggling or are confused, the teacher gives us practical and precise advice that we can use in our future learning.

S.Y. - Grade 7 English Language Literature class

This month, in IBDP English Language and Literature, we studied and examined the novels Things Fall Apart and Chronicle of a Death Foretold. We have also studied the documentary Tough Guise 2 and, more recently, Men’s Health magazine front covers. Although the texts are very different, they all show how society constructs notions and expectations of masculinity.

One part I enjoy about the course is the class discussions. I find it interesting how a text can have different interpretations depending on who reads or analyzes it. Listening to these different perspectives, or simply having new thoughts, helps me understand the texts on a deeper level and develop ATL communication and critical thinking skills. Discussions often make me notice ideas that I would not have thought of on my own.

I also really enjoy creating and presenting presentations in class because teaching ideas to others helps strengthen my own understanding. The Q&A sessions are especially helpful because they reveal any gaps in my knowledge or analysis.

Of course, there are difficult aspects like literary analysis and essay writing, which have always been quite challenging for me, but that only motivates me to focus more on improving and continue putting effort.

Overall, the course has been both enjoyable and challenging, and it has definitely taught me more than simply studying literature. It has helped me to apply my critical thinking in ways I usually don’t with other courses.

Y.K. - Grade 11 English Language and Literature

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DEPARTMENT FOCUS: LANGUAGE A

In Unit 1 of Grade 9 Japanese A, students studied the theme "Things That Remain Unchanged Across Time" through an analysis of the classical literary work Oku no Hosomichi (The Narrow Road to the Deep North). During the unit, students prepared and delivered presentations explaining sections of the text, examining the work from a variety of perspectives. These included the author Matsuo Bashō's thoughts and motivations for travelling, the historical context of the period, his intentions as a writer, and connections between the text and the present day.

Students also completed an assessment in which they wrote about the emotions and values expressed by the author in the work. They considered the question, "Why was Bashō moved by this particular scene?" and explored the universal nature of the emotions and experiences described in the text. Through this process, students enjoyed discovering ideas and feelings within this traditional haiku travel diary genre that they could still relate to despite its distance from modern life.

When working collaboratively to analyse and explain the literature, students developed and applied ATL skills such as research and communication. In preparing for the written assessment, they also demonstrated growth in the Learner Profile attributes of Inquirer and Reflective, deepening their ability to explore ideas and thoughtfully reflect on their learning.

Y.K. - Grade 9 Japanese A

Presently, in Japanese Language and Literature, SL students are studying the play A Doll's House, while HL students are studying the novel Never Let Me Go. Although both works are set in different times and contexts from modern society, our class discussions and analyses have given us many opportunities to reflect on social issues, human relationships, and values that are still relevant today.

One particularly memorable activity in A Doll's House was a dramatic performance that included an interview section. We analysed the perspectives and motivations of the different characters and then presented our own interpretations. By acting out scenes and sharing our ideas with others, I felt that we were able to develop a much deeper understanding of the work. Presenting in front of a large audience also connected strongly to the Learner Profile attribute of being a Risk-Taker. It was a valuable experience that helped me develop my ability to express and communicate my own ideas with confidence.

In addition, learning about the historical background of A Doll's House and the ethical issues raised in Never Let Me Go helped me broaden my understanding of the world and develop as a Knowledgeable learner. Through studying these literary works, I have gained a greater appreciation of different perspectives and ways of thinking. I hope to continue exploring diverse values and ideas through literature in the future.

S.S. - Grade 11 Japanese Literature

DEPARTMENT FOCUS: LANGUAGE A

We are currently studying a unit called “How We Communicate Our Identity.” In this unit, we have been analysing Japanese banknotes and will eventually write an explanatory essay on them. In April, we analysed modern Japanese banknotes and compared older banknotes with current ones. In May, we compared Japanese currency with banknotes from around the world and analysed examples from different countries. As practice, we designed our own Tamagawa Academy banknotes and selected new portraits for them. For the final assessment, we will create a proposal for a new portrait to appear on a Japanese banknote and write an explanation to support our choice; we are currently preparing for this task.

Personally, I have enjoyed learning about how banknotes have changed over time, as well as discovering the similarities and differences between old and modern designs. I have also found it interesting to learn that banknotes from other countries feature different people and symbols from those used in Japan. Before this unit, I had never really thought about how the portraits on Japanese banknotes are selected. Now, whenever I use money, I pay much closer attention to the details and observe the designs carefully. One of my classmates even brought some old Japanese banknotes to class, which allowed us to see real examples. I was impressed to discover that while some features are similar to modern banknotes, many aspects have evolved over time. In the past, I was not very confident in my ability to analyse texts and ideas, but through this unit I feel that I am gradually overcoming that challenge.

In this unit, we have been developing our Thinking Skills and Research Skills. To improve my ability to analyse information, I have particularly focused on Thinking Skills and Communication Skills. Through Thinking Skills, I have analysed different banknotes and considered why certain people and designs were chosen. This helps me generate original ideas that I can use in the final assessment. Through Communication Skills, I have worked with partners, listened to their ideas and perspectives, and compared them with my own. This has helped me broaden my thinking and learn from others. Since the unit also involves learning about history, I believe it connects strongly to the Learner Profile attribute of being reflective.

Language and Literature is a class where we develop a deeper understanding of the Japanese language while learning to analyse texts and ideas. The skills we learn can be applied not only to everyday conversations but also to a wide range of subjects and situations. I used to find explanatory writing and analysis difficult, but rewriting and improving my essays during this unit has helped me discover the enjoyment of explanatory writing. I am working hard to overcome the challenges I faced in elementary school, particularly with essay writing, explanatory writing, and analysis.

L.K. - Grade 7 Japanese A

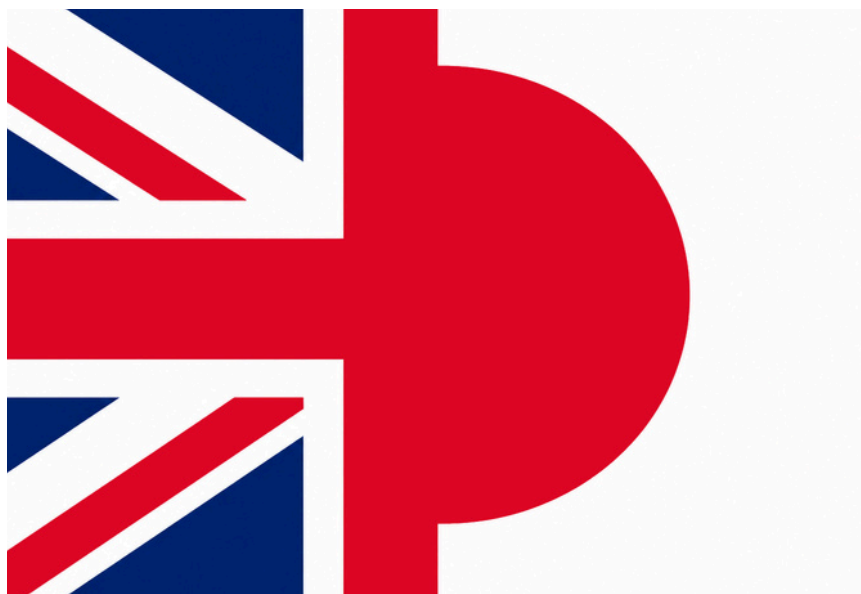
DEPARTMENT FOCUS: LANGUAGE A

In our Language and Literature class, we have been studying dystopian short stories such as “Harrison Bergeron” and “All Summer in a Day.” We explored how authors use point of view and theme to challenge socially constructed ideas of reality. Through reading and analyzing these stories, we examined how societies can be shaped by ideas about control, conformity, power, and freedom. One of the most interesting things I learned was how a narrator’s perspective influences readers’ understanding of a story. By looking closely at different literary techniques, we saw how authors can encourage readers to question assumptions that might otherwise seem normal.

One of my favorite parts of this unit was creating my own dystopian short story. For the assessment, we took ideas and themes from the stories we studied in class and used them to create our own original stories. I really enjoyed coming up with the characters, the plot, and the world of the story myself. It gave me the freedom to be creative while also thinking carefully about the message I wanted to communicate. We usually analyze stories from a reader’s perspective, so it was interesting to experience what it was like to write from a writer’s perspective. Through this experience, I learned that writing a story is much more challenging than it seems, especially when trying to convey a meaningful message while keeping the story engaging.

This unit helped us develop several ATL skills. We used thinking skills when analyzing dystopian fiction and considering why authors made certain choices and how those choices affected readers. We also developed communication skills by sharing our interpretations and listening to different perspectives during class discussions. In addition, we demonstrated the IB Learner Profile attribute of being inquirers by questioning how social systems influence people’s thoughts, behaviors, and freedoms. Reading and writing dystopian fiction encouraged us to think more deeply about society and helped us become more aware of how literature can reflect and challenge real-world issues.

M.S. - Grade 9 English Language and Literature



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S.Y., R.Y. and S.S.

MOTHER'S DAY CHARITY BOUQUET PROJECT



For this project, we sold handmade bouquets for Mother's Day. We sold a total of 64 bouquets and generated a profit of 25,320 yen. We carefully arranged all the bouquets ourselves and sold them during lunch break on May 8th. Additionally, because we sourced the flowers directly from a wholesale market, we were able to offer fresh flowers at low prices.

Our Objectives

Spreading Gratitude: Through this initiative, we wanted to create an opportunity for people to pause and express their appreciation to their loved ones.

Donating to a Worthy Cause: All profits gained from this project were donated to Japan Heart, an organization that provides medical support to regions where receiving adequate medical care is difficult, such as developing nations, isolated islands, and disaster areas.

Every single person who purchased a bouquet not only brought a smile to someone they care about, but also helped support people in need of medical care somewhere in the world.

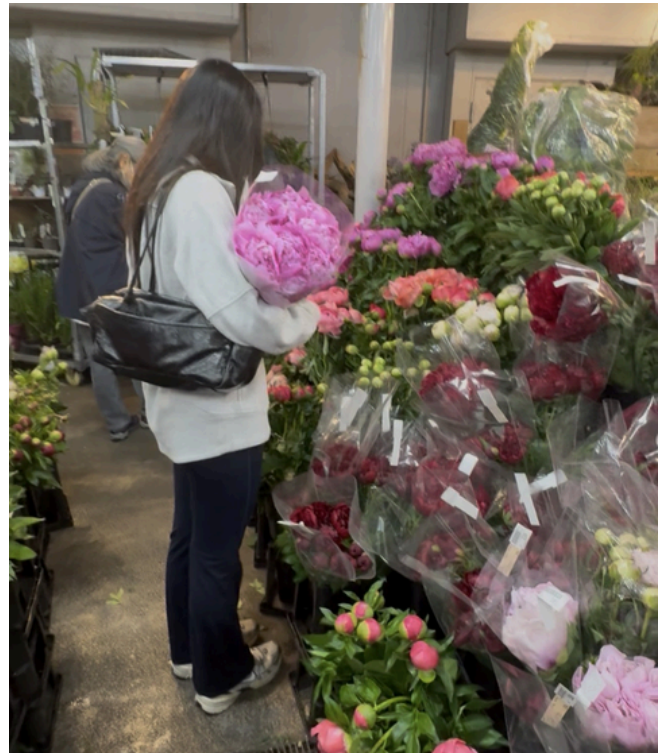
What We Learned

After the project, we received many warm words of appreciation from both the recipients of the bouquets and the students who purchased them. Through this activity, we learned the joy of bringing kindness to others.

We also realized the importance of staying responsible and seeing a project through to the end during the process of preparing all 64 bouquets. Furthermore, selling a product taught us about how the real economy works. In order to generate a profit for donation, we had to carefully consider our budget, pricing, and promotional strategies. Deciding on the production costs and selling prices for the bouquets was much more challenging than we had imagined.

In Conclusion

Finally, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who participated in this project. We hope this activity inspires others to take action as well.



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B.I.

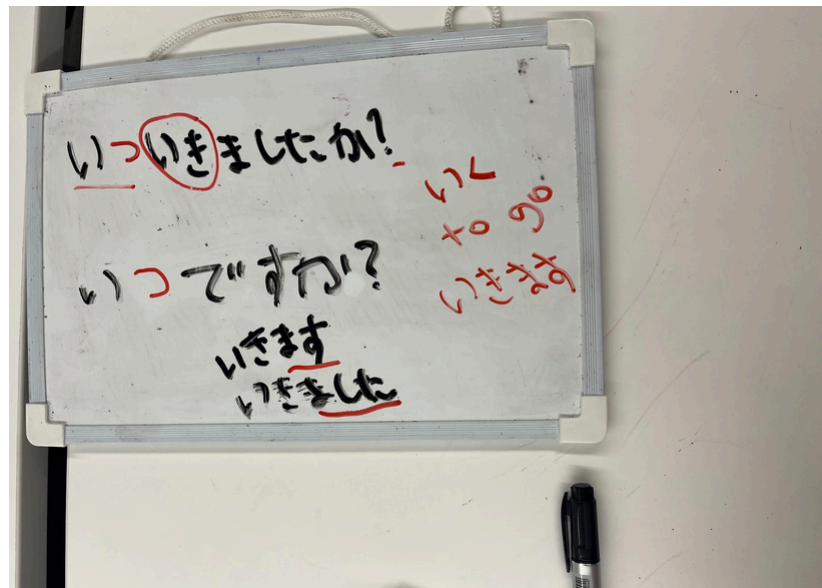
SOPHIA REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP

What is SRSO?

Sophia Refugee Support Group(SRSG) is a non-profit organization, led by Sophia University students intended to bring hope to the refugees living in Japan. The challenges refugees face is living in a Japanese society, a non-native environment, under isolation and societal pressure. To help break down these invisible boundaries, the SRSG aims to teach Japanese to the refugees, build bonds through Refugee Cafe and donate food or clothing.

What sparked my interest?

I want to help refugees learn a second language which can often be challenging. I teach Japanese in an interactive way that is both fun and educational. My goal is to teach Japanese that makes them feel confident even outside SRSG. One student who I taught successfully passed their job interview and this made me feel how **our shared achievement is what makes our bonds stronger and into a community!**



What is my role?

I teach daily conversational Japanese, and conversational skills for job interviews. If the student is learning Japanese for the first time, I start off with an ice breaker activity and once I test their knowledge, I teach them vocabularies or how to structure a sentence, according to their level. However, since this is a refugee support group that aims to solve language barriers that these refugees face, I teach them how to fill in complex forms that are written in Kanji, like medical forms.

My learning?

I have been participating in SRSG for almost one and a half years, and my experience with the refugees is going beyond a CAS activity. I noticed how communication can act as a way to help someone. By communicating with a person who needs direct help, it brings safety, care and confidence to them to live comfortably in a place full of unknowns.



WORLD SCHOLAR'S CUP TOKYO ROUND

Navigating the Intellectual Frontier: The 2026 WSC Tokyo Round

The World Scholar's Cup (WSC) is a global celebration of critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving, and multidisciplinary learning. At the Tokyo Regional Round—which brought together approximately 180 teams and over 500 exceptionally driven students—Team 362 embarked on an intense academic journey, exploring the 2026 overarching theme, "Are We There Yet?" To succeed, the team had to master a demanding, cross-disciplinary curriculum spanning Science & Technology, History, Art & Music, Literature, Social Studies, and a Special Area dedicated to the "Future of Food." They were tested across four intense core formats: Team Debate, Collaborative Writing, the Scholar's Challenge, and the high-energy Scholar's Bowl quiz.

Thanks to their rigorous preparation and seamless chemistry, Team 362 achieved a phenomenal haul of Gold and Silver accolades in the Senior Division, officially qualifying for the upcoming Global Rounds:

Key Accomplishments & Awards

Team Performance: * Team Writing: Gold Medal (15th Place)

Team Bowl: Gold Medal (26th Place)

Team Challenge: Gold Medal (28th Place)

Team Debate: Silver Medal (46th Place)

Individual Writing Champions: * K.M.: 42nd Place (Gold)

S.I.: 61st Place (Gold)

E.I.: 69th Place (Gold)

Individual Debate Champions: * E.I.: 112th Place

K.M.: 125th Place

S.I.: 208th Place (Team Award: Silver)

Growth & Looking Forward

Beyond the medals, the true value of the experience was personal growth. Evolving "from nerves to confidence," the scholars learned to listen deeply, think flexibly, and trust each other's unique strengths. As they prepare to face the world's best at the Global Round, their roadmap is clear: refine their skills, build on their Tokyo success, and embrace the next challenge with curiosity and pride.



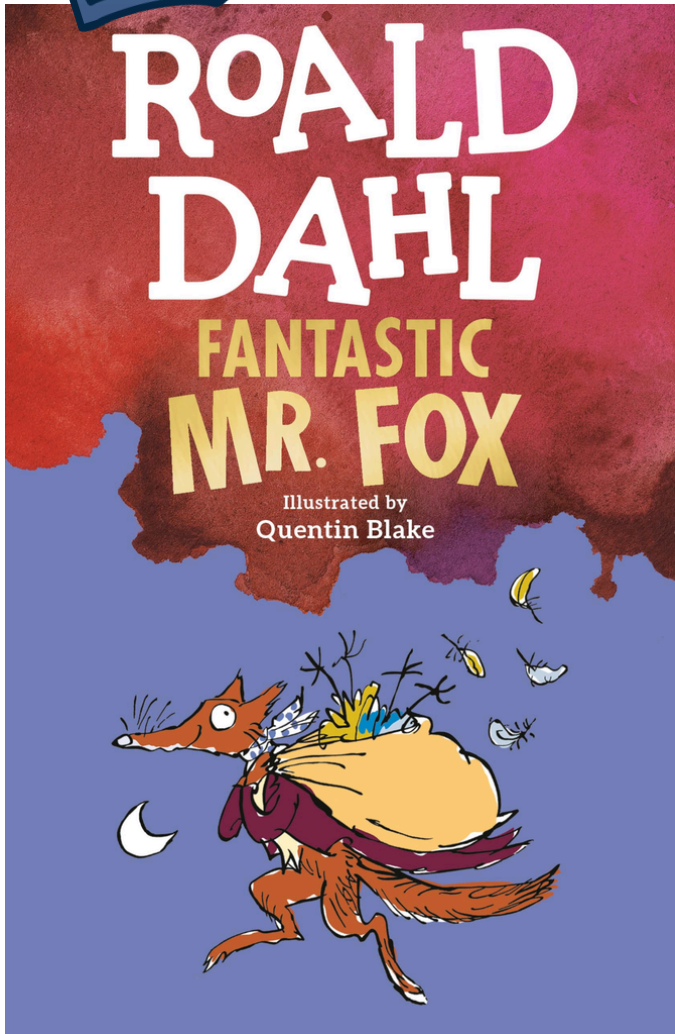


TEACHER'S BOOK RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Furnival's selection:

Fantastic Mr. Fox

by Roald Dahl



The book is full of suspense, clever plans, and memorable characters, especially the brave and intelligent Mr Fox, who reminds readers, “I guess we’ll never give up.” One especially exciting part of the story is when the three farmers surround the foxes’ hill with shovels, tractors, and guns, trying to catch Mr Fox and his family. Instead of giving up, Mr Fox uses his intelligence and courage to dig secret tunnels underground to save the animals from starvation, secretly stealing food from the farmers to feed all of the hungry animals. This part of the story is full of suspense because the animals are trapped underground and running out of food, but Mr Fox stays calm and brave. A great quote from this section is, “I can smell those goons a mile away,” said Mr Fox, showing his confidence and cleverness even in dangerous situations. The underground escape and secret tunnel adventure make the story exciting and funny.

The story teaches important lessons about teamwork, perseverance, kindness, and protecting the people you care about. Readers quickly become interested in the battle between the clever animals and the three horrible farmers described as “Boggis and Bunce and Bean / One fat, one short, one lean.” At the end of the story, Mr Fox proudly says, “My children, this is a fantastic feast,” reminding readers about gratitude, family, and sharing with others.

Roald Dahl is one of the world's most famous children's authors because his books combine humour, adventure, imagination, and unforgettable characters. His stories often show children overcoming unfair adults through intelligence, bravery, and creativity. I loved reading Roald Dahl books with my children, who also loved Matilda, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, and The BFG. Roald Dahl's books are especially good for Grade 6 students because they are entertaining and accessible while still encouraging imagination, empathy, problem-solving, and a love of storytelling.

An exciting, funny, and imaginative story!



Why did you join the EDC?

The primary reason I joined the EDC is that I had a strong admiration for the seniors' performances even before I entered Tamagawa Gakuen. Since students could only join the club starting from the 9th grade, I participated in English drama as an independent research project during my elementary school years. Even back then, I had opportunities to watch the practices and actual performances of the seniors active in the English Drama Club. I was deeply drawn to how they tackled the productions with passion alongside their peers, and how they gave their all to what they loved, truly shining on stage. I still vividly remember strongly wishing that I could become just like them one day.

Why do you like performing and what are the types of performance you prefer?

I love musicals because they have the power to move the hearts of both the performers and the audience. Expressing my emotions through music and immersing myself in a character brings me great joy, and it allows me to feel a sense of unity, not only with my fellow cast members but also with the audience. Furthermore, when I give everything I have practiced on stage and hear the applause from the seats or see the smiles of my peers, I feel a massive sense of accomplishment.

Why the Greatest Showman was chosen?

We chose this show because all the 12th graders graduating this year unanimously felt it was the most fitting production for our graduation performance.

Another major reason was simply that all of us in the 12th grade love this piece; we have drawn courage and energy from this musical film countless times. Because we had been so encouraged by the message embedded in the work and its powerful songs, we wanted to deliver that same energy to the audience through a piece that has given us strength, especially on the special stage of our final graduation performance.

The Greatest Showman carries the theme of unique characters overcoming their respective struggles and finding a place where they can truly be themselves and shine. We, the 12th graders, were also frequently told by our seniors that we were a "highly unique grade," and we felt that each of us possessed different strengths and personalities. That is exactly why I believe each of us was able to find our own identity and grow while facing different worries and obstacles. We felt it would be highly meaningful for us to proudly express the skills and individuality we have cultivated through *The Greatest Showman*, making this piece the perfect choice.

Furthermore, I feel this work conveys a message that we must never forget to care for our peers and appreciate the love around us. Through this graduation performance, we also wanted to express our gratitude to everyone who has supported us: our classmates, seniors, juniors, teachers, parents, and the broadcasting and stage technology staff. Our desire to stay united until the very end and achieve this together as a team also perfectly mirrored the themes of this production.

Additionally, **The Greatest Showman** is a piece that concludes on a bright and positive note, ending with everyone singing "This is the Greatest Show." While graduation performances often choose works with heavy or dark endings, another big reason for this selection was the feeling that this particular show would allow us to finish our final performance with a sense of accomplishment and confidence.



How did you practice?

Since this production was also our graduation performance, auditions for the principal roles were held exclusively among the 12th graders. On the other hand, to prepare for emergencies—such as if a 12th grader could not perform due to a lack of practice, insufficient skill, or unexpected trouble—we had understudies from the junior grades take on the roles as well. Because of this, we approached our principal roles with a deep sense of responsibility. For roles other than the principals, we 12th graders watched the juniors' auditions and made selections in consultation with our coach.

Even before practices officially began, the 12th graders took the initiative in preparation, handling stage composition, dance choreography, scriptwriting, audio production, and creating harmony arrangements. Even after practice started, tasks outside of performing—such as creating costumes and props—were completely student-led. Therefore, we held repeated discussions among club members and formulated detailed plans to move forward with preparations.

In the early stages of practice, we focused primarily on raising the quality of our singing. After that, we gradually added dancing, facial expressions, lines, and acting to complete each scene. To maintain practice motivation and improve the overall quality of the show, we also conducted vocal dress rehearsals and dance tests along the way. By establishing regular opportunities to review our progress, we aimed to create an environment where each individual could face their own challenges and engage in practice more proactively.

Furthermore, as seniors, the 12th graders put a lot of effort into providing feedback to the juniors. Rather than just giving verbal corrections, we made adjustments to ensure our points were easier to understand, such as organizing critiques into documents and sharing specific feedback using actual videos.

Midway through the process, we worked on "character reports," which involved analyzing and reflecting deeply on our roles. This allowed us to deeply connect not only with the characters we were portraying but also with their relationships to other characters and club members.

At the same time, because this was also the first performance welcoming the new 9th-grade provisional members, we coached our juniors concurrently.

In the final stages, we received a lot of advice from graduated seniors and actively exchanged opinions with our classmates, conducting repeated run-throughs to polish the performance. We also adjusted the timing of the audio tracks and lighting effects down to the finest detail through consultations with the broadcasting and stage technology staff.

Give us a review of the show.

Because this performance had a limited preparation window of about one month—which was shorter than expected—practices did not progress as smoothly as we hoped in the beginning, and we frequently faced unexpected events and hurdles. Amidst that, there were moments when we felt anxiety, impatience, and frustration. However, through that experience, I deeply realized once again the importance of sharing opinions and feelings with others. By holding repeated discussions, I was able to gain perspectives I didn't have before, organize areas for improvement alongside what I needed to do next, and experience firsthand the value of collaboration in lifting each other up to lighten the burden.

Personally, while playing a challenging role, I also faced struggles and wrestled specifically with my solo parts. However, through that process, I learned the importance of understanding my actual, current abilities, accepting them, and working to deliver the best possible performance within my capacity.

Furthermore, as a 12th grader, I had to manage the entire production and run practices while keeping an eye on each individual junior student, which made me acutely realize how difficult it is to lead a group. I learned that leadership requires both a sense of responsibility and consideration for those around you, as we had to act while thinking not just about delivering a good performance ourselves, but also about the overall atmosphere, growth, and motivation of the entire club.

Precisely because we built up so much practice, when we finally felt everyone's collective passion, sang "This is the Greatest Show" under the spotlight, and received thunderous applause and cheers from the audience, I was able to feel an immense sense of accomplishment.



"I LOVE STAR WARS!"

Mr. SOAI

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Yokohama and grew up in Niiza city, Saitama.

What inspired you to become a teacher?

When I was a junior high school student, I was living in a boy's dormitory on Tamagawa campus for 2.5 years. Sometimes my friends asked me about homework, then when I taught it, they were happy and thankful to me.

What subject do you teach and why do you love it?

I teach I&S! I&S is very lively and stimulative. It is a deeply connected subject to our lives and I love following news all over the world.

What advice do you have for students on how to do well in your subject?

Watching the news and reading newspapers everyday if possible.

What's your favourite thing about our students?

Tamagawa students are basically kind and respectful.

What's the best thing about working at Tamagawa?

Since I am a graduate of Tamagawa, the environment including people are quite familiar to me. If I make connections to worlds, my Kohai has more benefits. I want to be a bridge between the world and classrooms. Besides, I noticed the working in a diverse environment is my favorite through my internship experience in the United Nations Headquarters in NYC.

What's your favourite school event?

My favorite school event is the Pegasus Festival!

Which IB Learner Profile trait do you value most, and why?

Open-minded and Communicators. Since the population in Japan is going down, our students will need to work in a diverse society in Japan. They have to prepare for the new society.

How do you encourage a global mindset in your classroom?

Introducing our daily phenomena in the present world and past with historical background.

Tell us a surprising fact about yourself.

I love Star Wars!

What's your favourite dessert?

Cream puff.

What's your favourite snack?

Corn chowder.

What's your favourite thing to cook?

Okonomiyaki Hiroshima-style!

What's your favourite city you've visited?

New York City, USA

What's your favourite holiday destination?

Karuizawa, Nagano

What's your favourite movie?

Star Wars series (My most favorite one is Rogue One.), Non fiction movie, Schindler's List

What's your favourite TV show?

Monday Late Show

What's your favourite song?

"Laughter", Official Hige Dandism

What's your favourite hobby?

Playing tennis & pickle ball, watching movies

What's your favourite way to spend a weekend?

Going to nature, particularly in mountain areas.

What's your favourite sport (to play or watch)?

Tennis.

What's your favourite way to learn something new?

Experience! I like experiential learning because after the experience, it is easy for me to draw pictures in my brain. Without drawing pictures in my brain, I cannot understand things. Also John Dewey, an educator/philosopher in the US, recommended it as learning by doing. I do believe that this is the most productive way of learning.

