

## An interview with Chika Kondo – Gotanda School



Chika Kondo's daughter, Yulika, is currently in Grade 3 and has been attending Jupiter program lessons since she was in Grade 1. Her son, Eugene, is currently in K3 and has been attending PAP since he was K1 age.

### 1. Why did you choose our school?

My daughter had been living abroad until the age of five. She had attended an international school there, so I believed her speaking and listening to be on par with a native English level. I had been searching for a school where my daughter could attend a returnee level afternoon class, as well as a kindergarten where my son could attend for long hours of the day since I work full time. I had wanted to find a school that I could enroll both of my children in. The fact that I could pick them both up at the same time was one of the biggest reasons for choosing this school.

### 2. Tell us about your child at the start of the program.

When we did the level check upon joining, we were told that while our daughter's speaking was not a problem, but her writing ability was not that strong. Compared to her classmates that had been attending the PAP program, she faced some difficulty when it came to writing.

Our son had already been attending an English kindergarten, so there weren't any problems and he was able to enter the program without any issues.

### 3. Tell us about your child now.

Yulika is currently attending a public school where her lessons, play with friends, and general daily life are all conducted in Japanese. She does seem to favor Japanese first now than in comparison to when we first came back to Japan. However, three years after returning, her listening ability has not decreased and her reading and writing ability have continued to improve to a level suitable for her age. She attends Jupiter lessons four times a week and is gaining a high level of knowledge through studying difficult topics such as

Nelson Mandela's life story.

4. What activities does your child most enjoy doing at our school?

Our son loves the field trips taken on the school bus and the special events done on Fun Fun Fridays. He thoroughly enjoyed an activity where he got to carry around a passport and get stamps, while learning about different countries. Experiencing things like trying the tea and cookies Tuli brought from New Zealand allows him to become more familiar with the countries his teachers are from.

As for Science, he has always loved topics like bugs and dinosaurs. He told me with great excitement all about what he learned about sea animals during the Monthly Theme study in the summer.

5. What are your plans for your child in the future?

While it is just a possibility at this stage, we are considering if it might be good for our children to go to Junior High School or High School overseas. Right now, we are doing what we can to prepare our children to have as many opportunities as possible. This includes continuing their studies of English. We plan to follow the wishes of our children.

6. Do you have any advice for parents thinking of enrolling their child in the PAP program?

I completely agree with the principal's submission given during the explanatory meetings on how you can raise a bilingual child within Japan, and how it can be accomplished using a curriculum created and based on a sound theory. To retain and continually progress a child's English level while they attend a Japanese school, reading and writing is necessary in order to develop an English-thinking mind while they are still young. I thought this was an important point that she made.

It feels like such a waste for a child to discontinue their English studies after graduating kindergarten. With PAP, there are afternoon classes for graduates to attend. Not only that, but these classes are geared towards the level of each student's needs. This is why I believe PAP to be a school that you can feel confident enrolling your child, even after graduating kindergarten.