

## Curriculum Enrichment: Manga Week – Exploring Japanese Culture Ahead of the Tokyo Olympics

As part of our commitment to providing a broad, ambitious and inclusive curriculum, pupils took part in a Manga Week enrichment project ahead of the Tokyo 2021 Olympic Games. This themed week offered pupils a rich cultural experience that combined art, literacy, history and global awareness, supporting Ofsted's focus on cultural capital, creativity and personal development.

### Curriculum Intent

The intent of Manga Week was to deepen pupils' understanding of Japanese culture and to introduce them to manga as an important and influential art form. Manga is widely accessible and reflects a wide range of voices, identities and experiences, making it a powerful medium through which pupils can explore storytelling, representation and empathy.

By linking the project to the Tokyo Olympics, pupils were encouraged to see sport and culture as interconnected, helping them place learning in a real-world, global context. The week aimed to:

- Widen pupils' cultural knowledge beyond the UK
- Promote creativity, imagination and self-expression
- Strengthen reading, writing and visual literacy skills
- Encourage empathy and discussion of challenging themes in an age-appropriate way

### Curriculum Implementation

Throughout the week, pupils explored manga through a series of carefully planned activities across year groups. They examined examples of manga artwork and text, including themes such as "*A Manga for Everyone*" and "*The Power of Manga*", learning how the genre reflects different ages, identities and experiences within Japanese society.

Pupils learned that manga is not just entertainment, but a powerful communication tool used to:

- Share public messages
- Teach and inform
- Respond to historical events and national trauma
- Encourage reflection and discussion

In class, pupils:

- Studied manga storytelling techniques such as panel layout, expression, symbolism and visual sequencing
- Created their own manga characters and short stories
- Explored how images and text work together to convey emotion and meaning
- Discussed how manga can help people understand the lives and experiences of others

Older pupils also explored how manga has been used to address difficult themes such as war, loss and resilience in a sensitive and thoughtful way, supporting the development of empathy and critical thinking.

### Curriculum Impact

The impact of Manga Week was evident in pupils' high levels of engagement, creativity and discussion. Many pupils who may not always see themselves as confident writers were particularly motivated by the visual nature of manga, supporting inclusive practice and alternative ways of expressing ideas.

Pupils developed:

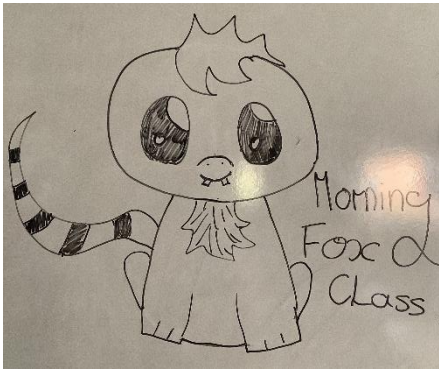
- Greater confidence in storytelling and creative writing
- Improved visual literacy and understanding of how images convey meaning
- Increased cultural awareness and curiosity about the wider world
- Respectful understanding of different perspectives and experiences

The project also supported pupils' reading for pleasure, introducing them to a globally popular literary form and reinforcing the message that reading comes in many forms.

### Personal Development and Cultural Capital

Manga Week made a strong contribution to pupils' personal development by encouraging reflection, discussion and empathy. By exploring manga that focuses on real-life experiences and historical events, pupils developed emotional awareness and an understanding of how art can be used to make a difference.

This enrichment opportunity added to pupils' cultural capital, ensuring that all learners—regardless of background—had access to meaningful cultural experiences linked to global events.



すべての人に  
マンガがある  
**A manga  
for everyone**

Manga reflects different voices, ages and identities, and encompasses a wide variety of styles. It is immensely popular in Japan and increasingly across the world. With hundreds of genres covering every conceivable topic and theme, there is a manga for everyone.

マンガのちから  
**Power  
of manga**

Manga is part of the fabric of life in Japan. Extremely popular, it is widely consumed by people of all ages. From its use as a teaching tool and a means to cope with tragedy, to charting the development of the nation and communicating public messages, manga's impact on culture and society is profound.

変化をもたらす  
**Making  
a difference**

Manga is not just entertainment, it reflects the realities of human life and gives voice to those who may not otherwise be heard or represented. Through immersive imagery and personalised storytelling, it can help us enter other people's worlds, to understand and empathise.

Manga exploring the aftermath of disasters act as a vehicle to reveal the day-to-day impact on human existence. By bringing such stories to public attention, manga can vividly depict the experience of trauma and the reality of an altered daily life.

Beyond words, manga encourages discussion of challenging topics in a vital and vivid way. Kōno Fumiyo's moving story about a family living with the effects of the 1945 atomic bombing of Hiroshima won international praise for its gentle yet powerful anti-war message.

