

Interview with Makiko Nishikawa, Director, Moi Creation, Co. Ltd.

As Long as There Are Public Schools, There'll Always Be an England

By Japan SPOTLIGHT

Charterhouse, Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Shrewsbury, Westminster, Winchester ... these are among the most quintessential of the Public Schools in England. Educational entities are crucial to economic development, as was for example recognized by the Japanese government planners upon undertaking modernization (actually “Westernization” – Japan already had a high level of literacy due to Terakoya, private schools often attached to Buddhist temples, though not exclusively religious, and suchlike institutions). Furthermore, such schools also take on roles within a community and the nation, comprising a vital part of the social fabric. Recently, Rugby and Harrow established public school branches in Japan. Rugby’s was set in Chiba in 2023 and Harrow’s in Iwate in 2025.

We are perhaps prejudiced in thinking of American schools as being culturally close to Japanese schools, rather than of British or European schools. How is it that English public schools, little known to Japanese people in general, could be well accepted in Japan? After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the UK and Japan developed close relations as Japan modernized, as represented by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902. British education and culture was once very popular among the Japanese early in the 20th century, and could prove to be so again with contemporary Japanese and have a positive impact on their development. We asked a Japanese alumna of an English Public School, as well as university, about her experiences in England in her youth.

(Interviewed on Nov. 14, 2025)

Makiko Nishikawa: Educational Consultancy Her Life Work Thanks to Public School Upbringing

JS: You graduated from Shrewsbury School. What was your experience there like?

M. Nishikawa: I began boarding at Shrewsbury just after the 2010s, and I think Shrewsbury was a typical English Public School, steeped in tradition and legacy, which are characteristics of English society. Yet, as with Rugby School which became fully co-educational before Shrewsbury (my brother Ryuki is a Rugby graduate who like me, went on to study at an English university), there have been gradual changes taking hold. Regarding boarding generally, as I was into sports, such as cross-country and swimming, I’d say I was accustomed to such a setting to begin with. The education I gained has been invaluable to me in my career.

JS: So can you tell us about your career path?



Makiko Nishikawa

M. Nishikawa: After Shrewsbury and Imperial College London (ICL), I worked as a tax consultant and then entered the cosmetics industry, where I worked for two different companies. It then dawned on me that many Japanese had little knowledge about the British educational system. In particular, my school has a very low profile in Japan compared to other Public Schools, although Shrewsbury has many outstanding performing arts scholars. Thus I found there was a Blue Ocean market because there was so little information available in Japan concerning transborder educational opportunities.

For example, as far as I know, now there is only one renowned Japanese educational institution with an ongoing “sister school

exchange” with one of the seven Public Schools you mentioned at the beginning. As I understood the British education system well, I could get into a very good public school and university. I started online tutoring for students interested in going to study at such British schools. My service is unique in the sense that I not only provide lessons to students but also guide parents through the process of boarding school entrance exams and university applications. I’ve managed to build up relationships with the schools

through this process and now I am a trusted partner of many renowned schools.

JS: And so you started your “Moi Education” educational consultancy service?

M. Nishikawa: Indeed, with the increased acceptance of international schooling and standards like the International Baccalaureate, GCSE or A-Level there was room for support services to be provided to students and their parents, whether Japanese or otherwise. My start-up company Moi Creation Co., Ltd. was established in 2023, after the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Online lessons became more common during the pandemic, so the timing of our launch after that made us popular. Our company could in the future offer other services, but my core competence and life work at this time is educational consultancy. The Shrewsbury connection has been especially helpful in expanding my business, in spite of rivals looming on the horizon.

JS: I'd like to hear your views regarding the role of Public Schools today.

M. Nishikawa: In England, as everywhere in the world, class distinctions seem to be disappearing and the public schools, a symbol of elite institutions in the past, or educational institutions that believe it is their responsibility to educate future leaders of society, are in some cases changing into schools more open to the general public. This is also true of the whole British academic community, such as with reputable Scottish universities. To my eyes, elitism in school or university education still remains intact both in continental



Photo: Mariko Nishikawa

Shrewsbury School



Image: Mariko Nishikawa

Moi Education Logo

Europe and in the Asia-Pacific region, which encompasses India, Malaysia and of course Japan, such as at the university and graduate school levels. But as democracy progresses among these nations, it is true that education for the masses is rapidly growing.

JS: Are you looking to widen your business to cover other arenas, such as professional schools like business or medical schools, or other educational fields?

M. Nishikawa: I won't say never, but as with locations we would want to be quite familiar with the “territory” since educational needs differ according to the special requirements involved. We would obviously have to thoroughly canvass the market, and we have limited resources to deal with such possibilities. In my case, I did not have the passion to delve deeply into research, and although ICL is well known for its science program, I opted to take a career path unrelated to my university major.

JS



Photo: Mariko Nishikawa

Imperial College London

Makiko Nishikawa runs a Japanese start-up company, Moi Creation. Her educational consulting and remote tutoring services are offered under the Moi Education brand name. She is fluent in English and Chinese.