

# English-Based Junior High Entrance Exams Now Open to Non-Returnee Students

Kikokushijo Academy Launches New Program Built on Methods Behind 75% of Top-School Pass Rates



The belief that “only returnee students can take junior high entrance exams in English” is quickly becoming outdated. Today, approximately 140 schools in the Tokyo metropolitan area offer English-based entrance exams, making this pathway a realistic option for students who have been educated entirely in Japan.

At the same time, many families are unsure how their children can develop the level of English required for these exams. To address these concerns, Kikokushijo Academy has launched the *Rising Stars* program, designed specifically for domestic elementary students preparing for English-based admissions.

Enrollment is now open. The **Rising Stars Advanced** course, for students who can already communicate in English, will open with an early launch in **December 2025**, while the **Rising Stars** course for beginner learners will begin in **March 2026**. As this is the program’s first year, registration will close once all seats have been filled.

## Program details and free trial information:

- For students who can already communicate in English > [Rising Stars Advanced](#)
- For students who want to build English foundations > [Rising Stars](#)

# English-Based Exams Are Becoming a Realistic Second Admissions Route, Now Adopted by 140 Schools in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area

The number of junior high schools adopting English-based entrance exams continues to grow, with nearly half of the approximately 300 private schools in the Tokyo metropolitan area now offering some form of English examination. Current trends include:

- Approximately **140 schools** now offer admissions formats that allow students to take exams *in English*.
- English-based exams are becoming firmly established as a **second major admissions route**, alongside the traditional 2-subject and 4-subject exams.
- However, there are still **limited opportunities** for domestic students to develop exam-level English skills in a structured, systematic way.

Against this backdrop, there is increasing demand for learning environments that allow students to build their English ability steadily, from foundational skills through to the level required for entrance exams.

## What Is the Rising Stars Program? A results-based curriculum directly connected to entrance exam success

Kikokushijo Academy has redesigned the instruction methods it has developed over more than 20 years of preparing students for competitive English-based entrance exams, creating a format that is accessible for students educated entirely in Japan.

In the 2025 admissions cycle, KA students accounted for **over 75 percent of successful applicants** to top schools such as Shibuya Kyoiku Gakuen Shibuya, Shibuya Kyoiku Gakuen Makuhari, Hiroo Gakuen, and Keio Shonan Fujisawa (SFC).

The *Rising Stars Program* opens this proven methodology to domestic elementary school students who wish to make English a strength in the entrance exam process.

## Two Starting Points to Match Each Student's English Level

All classes are conducted in a full English environment, and both courses are designed to help students progressively build the ability to *learn in English*.

## **Rising Stars | For beginner learners**

This course builds essential foundations in vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing, all of which are necessary for future English-based entrance exams. Instead of emphasizing conversational English, the program strengthens the core skills required to learn through English.

**Target:** Beginners to early learners

**Focus:** Developing reading, writing, and thinking skills; establishing learning habits

**Target Level by Grade 6:** Eiken Grade 4–3

[Program details and free trial](#) >

## **Rising Stars Advanced | Students who can study comfortably in English**

This course strengthens the ability to read, think, and write in English, and develops the reading comprehension, written expression, and logical thinking skills required for English entrance exams.

**Target:** Intermediate learners who can communicate in English

**Focus:** Exam preparation through reading, writing, reasoning, and expression

**Target Level by Grade 6:** Eiken Grade Pre-2–3

[Program details and free trial](#) >

If families are uncertain which course is most appropriate, placement will be determined through a level check conducted before the trial session, ensuring each child is guided to the course that best matches their needs.

## **A Learning Design That Makes Growth Clear and Builds Confidence**

The program is structured so that students, instructors, and parents can clearly see the learning process and share the same goals.

- Placement assessments and ability-based classes

- Twice-weekly lessons (in person and online) supported by structured home study  
Regular reports and conferences that make progress visible
- Measurement of outcomes using tools such as Lexile reading indicators and writing assessments

By clearly showing where each student is in their learning and what they need next, the program allows families to move forward with confidence.

## Program Overview

| Item                              | Details   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Program Name</b>               | Rising Stars Program  |
| <b>Target Students</b>            | Elementary school students in Japan (English level: beginner to intermediate)   |
| <b>Structure</b>                  | <a href="#">Rising Stars</a> : For students beginning to build English foundations<br><a href="#">Rising Stars Advanced</a> : For students who can communicate in English |
| <b>Launch Schedule</b>            | Rising Stars: Opens March 2026<br>Rising Stars Advanced: Early launch December 2025; full launch March 2026   |
| <b>Campuses</b>                   | Rising Stars: Fukasawa, Mejiro, Futako-Tamagawa<br>Rising Stars Advanced: Mita, Shibuya, Online   |
| <b>Format</b>                     | Weekly lessons (in-person + online) with home study support   |
| <b>Objective</b>                  | To build the English proficiency required for junior high English entrance exams  |
| <b>Details &amp; Registration</b> | <a href="#">Rising Stars</a> : For students beginning to build English foundations<br><a href="#">Rising Stars Advanced</a> : For students who can communicate in English |
|                                   |   |

## Founder's Message

“English-based entrance exams are creating new opportunities not only for returnee students but also for children in Japan who have worked hard to build their English skills. We designed the Rising Stars Program by adapting the proven methods that have supported returnee students for so many years, making them accessible to a new generation of domestic learners.

Our goal is to help motivated beginners build solid foundations, grow in confidence, and take on the best opportunities available to them in Japan and around the world.”

— Charles Knudsen

Founder, Kikokushijo Academy / CEO, Global KA Holdings

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