

PRIMARY SCHOOL

School System

The Japanese school system is based on six years in primary school, three in junior high school, three in high school and four in university. Education at primary and junior high schools is compulsory.

Children from 6 to 12 years of age (1st to 6th grade) are required to go to primary school. There are 9 public primary schools in Moriya, and about 300 children walk to each local primary school in groups every day. They do not have a uniform but a yellow hat or cap, and carry their school things in a 'Randoseru', which is a special knapsack for school, made of leather.

Same-age children study together in classrooms, and there is no skipping of classes.

One teacher takes charge of a class of max. 40 students and generally teaches all subjects.

Curriculum

The curriculum guidance is provided by the Ministry of Education, and all public primary schools follow this. In Moriya, all the primary school children use the same textbooks. The subjects are as follows:

Japanese	Physical Education	Calligraphy
Mathematics	Art	English
Social Studies	Music	Ethics
Science	Home Economics (5,6 th grades)	"Sogo"(General)

In "Sogo" classes, children study one subject that each school has previously prepared, throughout the whole year. For example, this year, all the 5th grade children of some schools in Moriya study "Shokuiku"(Education for good diet). They even grow rice in rice fields

outside school, and then cook and eat it at school.

Facilities

With the fast increase of the population in Moriya, the number of primary schools has also increased. As a result, some of the schools are very old, some are new. However, every school in Moriya has almost the same facilities and occupies a huge area, and it is also well equipped.

Let me describe one of them. The school has three school gates, which are kept closed all the time for security reasons. The school building is located in the center of the site, and faces the south.

On the ground floor are three entrances, the nurse's room, the principal's office, the conference room, the teachers' work room (all the teachers work at individual desks), the lunch service room, the science laboratory, the home economics room (8 kitchen tables are equipped), the English room, the PTA room (for PTA activities) and the guest room, where local people gather for recreation activities.

On the second floor are some classrooms, two libraries, the art room and the computer room (30 computers are available). On the third floor are some classrooms and the music room.

The school has a very large playground south of the school building, which can be used as a two hundred meters oval track, a football pitch and so on. Beside the ground is some playground equipment, such as a jungle gym, climbing poles, a sandpit and iron bars. Between the playground and the school building are the large flower and vegetable gardens (some plants are for science projects) and the rabbit house.

On the north of the school building, there are the gymnasium (for some sports activities, including basketball, volleyball, table tennis and badminton, and also for school assemblies), the 25 meters swimming pool and the parking lot.

In 2006, surveillance cameras were installed at several spots for security reasons.

School Lunch

For children, the most enjoyable time during a school day might be lunchtime. Parents pay about ¥4000 per month, and children receive hot lunch delivered from ‘Kyushoku Center’ in Moriya, where all the school lunch for 9 primary schools and 3 junior high schools is prepared everyday.

They eat hot lunch in their classroom, and they have to take turns serving food wearing a uniform, a white smock, a cap and a mask. There is one lunch menu per day, but it changes every day. The students also have to bring their own chopsticks or fork, spoon and luncheon mat.

Monthly lists of the lunch menu are prepared by nutritionists, so the nutritional value of each menu is well balanced and calorie-controlled. Here is an example of the menu for three days:

	CEREALS	DRINK	FOOD
1.	Milk bread	Milk	Tandori chicken, Potato salad Seaweed soup
2.	Dried seaweed & rice	Milk	Miso-braised mackerel, Yogurt Simmered potato with ground pork
3.	Butter roll	Milk	Meat balls, Sautéed prawn & veg. Spaghetti with mushroom sauce