



Sefydliad Confucius Caerdydd
Cardiff Confucius Institute
卡迪夫孔子学院



Showcasing Mandarin in Welsh Schools

A Case Collection



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our publication of case-studies, written by primary and secondary teachers to help highlight the motivations, challenges and impact of learning and teaching Mandarin in schools.

Since 2007, the Wales China Schools Project has been delivering a myriad of different courses and opportunities, including taster sessions, China clubs, qualifications and trips to China and in the last academic year, (2018-19) just over 10,000 pupils across Wales engaged with Mandarin activities of one kind or another.

With the changing landscape of Modern Foreign Languages in Wales, and the forthcoming introduction of the new curriculum, many primary and secondary schools are now looking to find ways in which to introduce Mandarin into their curriculum, and the case studies contained within this booklet, highlight the ways in which some schools have done this.

The case studies cover Mandarin and inclusivity in the classroom, qualification routes and progression, learning the language through culture, and Project Based Learning.

We hope that these five case studies will help to demonstrate the positive impact of including Mandarin in the curriculum and provide ideas for schools who may be looking to do the same.

R Andrews

Rachel Andrews
Wales China Schools Manager

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LEARNING LANGUAGE THROUGH CULTURE

MELISSA PARRY



As our curriculum evolves to meet the needs of our young people of today and tomorrow, it is vital to keep in mind what is important to our pupils, what do they need and what do they value? The Successful Futures Review and the development of the New Curriculum in Wales aims to answer these questions and guide practitioners in delivering a relevant and inspiring curriculum.

Many primary schools are looking outside Europe in order to meet the needs of learners and enthuse learners and practitioners alike. In Sully Primary School, pupils have been learning about Chinese life and cultural traditions for several years. Prior to this, the school had developed European international links but had not incorporated international languages in the curriculum.

Sully's introduction to China started with a cluster project around the writings of Shakespeare and Confucius. Like many schools, we were looking for ways to improve literacy standards, and additional opportunities to incorporate an international dimension was exciting. The project was very successful; pupils in Wales and China improved their reading, writing, listening, communication, and

performance skills. However, another development we had not anticipated was the level of pupil engagement and impact on independent learning. Pupils were continuing their learning at home, and pupil led learning, combined with pupil initiated home tasks, became an important ethos in the classes involved. This was initiated by pupils and was sustained through their interest and love of the topic.

This hugely positive result caused practitioners to reflect on the project; learners were leading their own learning and developing important skills along the way, surely what we are all aiming for everyday in school? We recognised a measurable impact and knew that this exciting and pupil led learning environment now needed to be maintained and grow throughout the school.

The Cardiff Confucius Institute supported us to introduce a Mandarin tutor following the success of our literacy project. We recognised that it was crucial that pupils continued to learn about Chinese culture and everyday life in China; this is what fascinated them and enthused them to become more independent learners. Our Chinese tutor delivered sessions during which pupils learned about food, dance, festivals, everyday life, religion, history, storytelling, and arts and craft. In a short time, an appreciation and love of Chinese culture was prevalent in Sully Primary.

It was not long before pupils wanted even more opportunities to learn about life in China. We started a China Club for learners which provided extra time to learn more about China, and during this club, pupils throughout the school collaborated and shared their love of another country and culture. With support from the Cardiff Confucius Institute, we also celebrate Chinese New Year each year with a whole week of activities planned to excite pupils and give them a passport to China for the week. During this celebration week, pupils are immersed in learning about China and can cook traditional food, learn stories, try Tai Chi, and learn about many more aspects of life in China.

As with all aspects of the development of learning about China in our school, the introduction of Mandarin in the curriculum came from the learners. Pupils wanted to be able to communicate with our Chinese tutor in Chinese, they asked to start learning Mandarin every week; again taking control of their own learning and being confident enough to know what they needed to learn in order to achieve their goals. Considering recent developments in the New Curriculum in Wales, our pupils were already showing evidence that they were **'ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives'** and **'ethical, informed citizens, ready to be citizens of Wales and the world'**. Our pupils recognised what they wanted to achieve and how they could work towards that; they were becoming **'enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life'**.

Our young people have now been learning Mandarin for 5 years and are very excited to be preparing for their first recognised language qualification, the entry level QCF in Mandarin. The qualification requires them to be able to verbally communicate personal information and share their likes and dislikes. They must be independent enough to prepare for the qualification, and be responsible in their approach to balancing their school work load. They are excited about the prospect of visiting China in their future lives and this shows a huge change in ethos in our school. Prior to learning about China, very little or no pupils

considered visiting China or possibly working there when they were older. Now, many pupils recognise the possibility of working in another country and understand that international collaboration is a positive force to improve our lives and opportunities. Furthermore, some of our teachers have been inspired to learn Mandarin outside school, and that teachers are learning alongside pupils throughout their lives too.

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The practicalities of delivering Mandarin in a primary curriculum need to be considered. Our success is the result of support from senior management; teachers are given flexibility to respond to a pupil led learning environment. Also, teachers recognised the benefit of delivering many skills with a multi-disciplinary approach; in one activity pupils may develop problem solving, numeracy, multi-lingual and digital skills. The six areas of learning that we will be using to guide our pupils' learning experiences will support schools to introduce a multi-lingual approach. Learning about Chinese language and the links between different languages enables learners to develop **language, literacy and communication**. Studying Chinese culture allows pupils to explore the **expressive arts** as they learn about and create their own Chinese inspired art and craft. Cooking and learning about festivals enables pupils to focus on **health and well-being**. A wide range of project based learning opportunities can facilitate the development of **humanities, mathematics and numeracy, and science and technology**. The primary curriculum is richer and more inclusive as a result of learning about Chinese language and culture.



MANDARIN AND INCLUSIVITY

KAREN GREENAWAY & LEANNA POWELL

Ysgol Eirias, Colwyn Bay and Millbrook Primary School, Newport are both Confucius Classrooms, having offered Mandarin from 2012 and 2013 respectively. Both schools have found Mandarin to be a subject that strongly supports inclusivity for all pupils. This case study offers evidence of how Mandarin learning at these two schools has contributed to the personal and social development of its pupils and how it has encouraged inclusivity within the schools.

In 2014 Millbrook introduced Mandarin as a curriculum subject to years 3 to 6. Each class attended Mandarin lessons for 30 minutes a week, with their class teacher. Lessons were delivered by a resident British National teacher assisted by a Chinese Language Assistant through the British Council and, later, a Confucius Institute Chinese Language tutor. At Ysgol Eirias, Mandarin language and Chinese culture lessons are included as part of the project-based learning curriculum in Year 7 which has been in place since 2008. There is also a weekly Chinese club, delivered by the Chinese Language Assistant.

Both schools note how the inclusion of Mandarin has contributed to increased confidence of those pupils who learn it. In the case of the Eirias Chinese club, it was observed that the confidence of individuals who initially had no interaction with other group members, began to grow over the course of a few weeks. Pupils who had been attending for a few months were interviewed and many of the club members said they had made new friends including some from other year groups. The sharing of experiences and discussions about Chinese culture led to increased peer interaction and peer respect.

The growing confidence of pupils can also be seen at Millbrook Primary in the case of one year 6 pupil. This pupil was an academically low achiever with behavioural needs but not eligible for one to one support. He was a talkative, friendly boy who found difficulty in expressing himself and often struggled to interpret social signals, such as another person's mood or feelings. These difficulties often led him into confrontational situations, and he suffered low self-esteem as well as having a perception of himself as a non-learner. When first attending Mandarin, he quickly responded to the oral approach in lessons, being free to learn without the need to write anything down and over the first few weeks he became conscious of the fact that he was learning Mandarin

as quickly, if not quicker, than some of the perceived 'high achievers' in the class. Within a few months his class teacher reported a dramatic change in his attitude and approach to learning in other lessons – displaying a stronger focus, interest and positive view of himself. It was as if he had begun to see himself as a learner for the first time.

As well as a growth in confidence, both schools have seen an improvement in the behaviour of those pupils learning Mandarin. This was seen at Eirias High School in the case of two pupils who were regularly on report cards for behaviour issues across the school. The two Year 9 pupils became the most regular attendees for Chinese Club over the course of two years, and the positive relationship built up over the months with the Chinese Language Assistant, other pupils and the MFL teacher (who also attended) was an opportunity for these pupils to change their self-perception. By Year 11, they took on the roles of promoting the club to younger form classes, volunteering to design leaflets and distributing them to staff and pupils. In the case of the Year 6 Millbrook pupil, the change in perception displayed itself in less frequent behaviour warnings and a richer enjoyment of lessons.

Both schools also report an improvement in pupils 'soft skills.' Eirias High school suggest that the nature of the activities on offer in the Chinese club gives pupils extra practice in 'soft skills' – helping with the development of their emotional intelligence in a safe environment. The development of these skills amongst has enhanced pupils' emotional intelligence which is then transferred to other areas of their lives. One pupil who was recently interviewed on her experience of Chinese Club said, "I hate geography, but hearing about China has made me want to actually learn it."

For pupils at both ends of the academic achievement spectrum, Mandarin has helped attainment. For the higher achievers, Mandarin has provided an opportunity to display and extend skills they might otherwise not have. At Millbrook there have been several pupils identified over the years who have been able to display real linguistic abilities and strengths which they themselves would have been unaware of, had they not had the opportunity to learn Mandarin. With the perception of Mandarin being a 'difficult' language to learn, these pupils have discovered their skills and applied them to other language learning. A previous Millbrook pupil who had just started learning French at high school, in response to his parent asking, "How are you finding French?", replied "Oh, it's easy, not as hard as Mandarin!"



In this same year group, another pupil struggled with severe dyslexia tendencies. Although able to verbalise at a reasonable level of understanding (working at just below average academic ability) she was frustrated by her perceived inability to complete tasks, viewing herself as someone who would always be 'behind' in her learning.

At first, she displayed a lack of confidence in Mandarin class, but her actual ability was in fact higher than her perception. She easily remembered and understood phrases and could speak the language well. When invited to sit the YCT 1, she was at first unsure. When shown an example paper, she began reading the characters in Chinese rather than the pinyin – finding these easier to read than Romanised letters. Going through the vocabulary list for the test convinced her that she knew enough for the test. She passed the test, achieving the second highest score of the group. There was a correlation between her increased confidence and self-assurance and her studying, and achieving, in Mandarin.

Both schools have found Mandarin to be a great 'leveller' – in a positive sense. At Millbrook the current Year 5 class consists of 22 Boys and 8 Girls. The low achiever boys vie for leadership of the group and have behavioural support needs. However, it is these same boys who display great focus and enjoyment of learning in Mandarin lessons, as well as showing real ability. Even when engaged in necessary 'drilling' of language the boys remain focussed and keen to learn – often turning it into a good-humoured competition between them. At Eirias the rotation of the project-based learning lessons provides all pupils in Year 7 with the opportunity to take part in learning Mandarin over an 8-week cycle. When the Mandarin cycle is introduced in the 3rd and 4th rotation over the academic year, this is a way of maintaining the overall momentum of starting afresh in Year 7. From observing lessons, it is clear to see the pupils relish the excitement of beginning something that is new to the majority of them with

interaction and engagement in lessons being very high. This then serves as a springboard, maintaining their enthusiasm for the subject which they can choose to continue with in Year 8 and beyond.

There are a few pupils in each group who will have had previous experience of Mandarin lessons in their feeder primary school and who enjoy demonstrating language they have retained.

This case study shows that the impact of pupil's study and success in Mandarin had a wider effect on their improved behaviour, cultivated a stronger positive interaction with both other pupils and adults, increased focus in other lessons and, additionally, increased respect from their peers.

Mandarin firstly captures pupils' imaginations as an 'exotic' language, captures their curiosity through the reading of characters, captures their enjoyment of a challenge and captures their enjoyment of learning, regardless of their overall educational needs and struggles. In Mandarin lessons, everyone starts from the same point.





PROGRESSION FOR POST-16 STUDENTS OF MANDARIN.

HOW CAN THEY KEEP THE
LANGUAGE GOING FOR
FUTURE USE?

PENNY LYNCH

Argoed High is a secondary school of around 650 pupils, located in Mynydd Isa, just outside Mold, catering for pupils in Y7-11. Post-GCSE students attend various 6th forms including Mold Alun School, Deeside Hub and Yale, Wrexham. A' level Mandarin is not an option at any of the sixth forms in the county.

In 2009, Argoed High School started to offer an after-school Mandarin club as enrichment to interested More Able and Talented (MAT) students in Year 10. Subsequently in 2012, it was offered to Year 7, (again after school) and a group of around 6 pupils started to attend regularly.

By the time these pupils reached Year 9 in 2014, the school had decided to put Mandarin on the main curriculum for a few pupils as an alternative to French, and the after-school cohort all decided to take the subject formally.

Three of these students went on to take GCSE in 2016, along with 3 pupils from another school, who attended as part of the Flintshire Consortium. The course was successful, with 100% of pupils gaining A*-C grades in their GCSE.

The pupils were all given the opportunity to take part in the first Cardiff Confucius Institute Spring Camp in Xiamen, China in March 2016.

One of the boys was so enthused by his experience in Xiamen, that he decided he would like to go back to study in China at some point in the future. But as there is no provision for post-GCSE Mandarin in the county, it was a challenge to work out how he could achieve this. By researching entry requirements for various universities, it became clear that A'level Mandarin is not a pre-requisite for securing a university place to study Chinese and most courses are still offered ab-initio, with the assumption that Mandarin is not available at many state schools.

Entry requirements vary between universities, with some looking for at least one language at A'level (Cambridge, Durham), whilst other highly regarded courses (e.g. Leeds) will consider any combination of A levels providing the candidate can convince them of their interest in and commitment to studying Chinese.

Our pupil in question, was taking a combination of Spanish, Maths and Physics, so he could meet the language A'level requirement.

His GCSE and visits to China (2 by this time) enabled him to demonstrate his obvious interest in the country, and this gave him lots to talk about in his personal statement. Now he needed to find a way to demonstrate his commitment to learning the language. Parental support was very important as the only way to continue his language learning was to organise his own lessons through a private tutor.

After looking at the options and the time available to the pupil, it was decided that he should study for the HSK Level 3 spending 45 minute/week with the tutor, plus extra home study. The HSK was a good option, because it is the Gold Standard for Chinese university admission.

Many British universities now have links with universities in China where funding is available for courses of varying lengths in China according to HSK levels achieved. The HSK is quite different from the GCSE. The language used is much more colloquial (reading and listening), but a lot less writing is required.

The pupil received several offers, including Chinese and Business at Sheffield, and Modern Chinese at Cardiff.

He eventually took the place at Cardiff, and later in 2019, will go to China for two years as part of his course, thereby fulfilling his dream of going back to study in China.

The university was impressed by the pupil's commitment to studying Chinese and when he started in Cardiff, he was immediately placed in the advanced group, with the aim of passing his HSK 4 during his first year.

For students who wish to continue learning Mandarin with other subjects at universities, there are many options for combined study or subsidiary courses. For example, Liverpool University has strong links with universities in Shanghai, offering science undergraduates the opportunity to spend 6 months in China as part of their course.

In Flintshire, a Year 13 pupil from Mold Alun School, taking French and German A' levels, but no formal qualification in Mandarin, has received 5 offers for Chinese from top universities including Cambridge, because she has been able to prove her aptitude for language learning along with her interest and commitment to Chinese.

Another Mold Alun student, who studied Mandarin after school from Year 9, and passed the GCSE short course in 2018, is now looking at studying Law with Chinese.

There are many opportunities to continue studying Chinese post-school and entry requirements can be very flexible.

It is important for schools and parents to understand that by enabling pupils to experience Mandarin and Chinese culture at any level, including lunch club, we could be sowing seeds that can flourish in universities in the future.

Three of these students went on to take GCSE in 2016, along with 3 pupils from another school, who attended as part of the Flintshire Consortium. The course was successful, with 100% of pupils gaining A*-C grades in their GCSE.

PROMOTING CHINESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

NIA WILLIAMS & KAY O'HANLON

The relatively new Successful Futures Curriculum, which was formed following the Donaldson report, has led to the introduction of Project-based Learning in many schools. Project-based Learning (PBL) was introduced in Ysgol Aberconwy in September 2015 in Year 7 only and was initially an extra subject in addition to the usual traditional subjects.

Since then PBL has replaced many of those traditional subjects and is now taught for nine hours a week in year 7. Pupils complete a total of five projects through the course of the year. Teams of teachers deliver a project in an 8-week block to one class. At the end of the 8 weeks, classes rotate and move onto a new project, whilst teachers remain in the same teams and deliver the same project to a new class. The China project was introduced in 2018 alongside the other four projects which are: Forest, Puppets, Festivals & Robots.

According to the Successful Futures Curriculum in Wales, its purposes should be that children and young people develop as:

- Informed citizens ready to be citizens of Wales and the World
- Ambitious, capable learners ready to learn throughout their lives
- Enterprising, creative contributors ready to play a full part in life and work
- Healthy, confident individuals ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

There are also four cross-curriculum responsibilities in PBL and students are required to show evidence of us their use of the following skills:

- Thinking skills – Plan & design. Decide how to do certain tasks, finding solutions.
- Numeracy skills – Recording and interpreting data and the presentation of findings with graphs.

- Literacy – Improve writing skills. Develop independent persuasive and informative writing.
- Digital competency – Development of word processing and presentation of ideas using ICT. Use software packages such as Word and OneNote

The purpose of introducing the China project was:

- (1)** to better utilise the Confucius classroom as an existing resource, given that historically it had been difficult to incorporate Mandarin into the Curriculum since it was used predominantly as an extra-curricular resource.
- (2)** to promote Mandarin as an important global language in the face of decline of more traditional MFLs and an emerging key world business language
- (3)** to sustain interest in students by encouraging them to discover more about the Chinese culture (and learn the language in a cultural and communicative context)
- (4)** to take advantage of the skills and expertise of teachers who, combined have 6 areas of Learning and experience:
 - Expressive Arts,
 - Health & well-being,
 - Humanities,
 - Languages, Literacy & Communication
 - Maths & Numeracy
 - Science & Technology

Challenges

Since the introduction of PBL in Ysgol Aberconwy, trial and error have caused this subject to evolve into something very different to what it was originally. This is even true of the new China project despite the fact that it has only been on the Curriculum for approximately nine months. The following problems have been highlighted:

1. Teachers are being selected because they are available to teach at specific times, and not because of their area of expertise.
2. It is not a requirement to ensure elements of traditional subjects are taught, therefore parents may be reluctant to support the teaching of PBL considering these subjects are still being taught in neighbouring schools.
3. Specific staff have been selected to lead each project, therefore each of the five projects has a Manager. Managers have been trained in 'successful futures' but the remaining staff have not. Time restrictions have meant that Managers have not had the opportunity to share their knowledge with the other members of their team. In many cases, team members are unaware of the benefits of PBL, and more importantly have not been given enough time to plan projects with their team.
4. PBL refocuses education on the student, not the curriculum. It contrasts with paper-based, rote memorisation, or teacher-led instruction. Instead, it poses questions, problems or scenarios. Within the PBL framework, students pursue solutions to nontrivial problems by asking and refining questions, debating ideas, making prediction, designing plans and/or experiments, collecting data, drawing conclusions, communicating their ideas and findings to others, asking new questions, and creating artifacts. However, PBL lessons to date have proven that many students have struggled to adapt to this style of learning. When given the freedom to plan their own lessons using the above ethos, some have instead opted to do very little and to allow more independent thinkers to suggest ideas, to organise and to propose solutions. When given the opportunity to work in teams regularly, many have struggled to communicate and/or cooperate with others.

ALN students in particular have struggled to adapt, and have become more productive when they have been given specific tasks by teachers.

5. Teaching teams can include as many as 7 teachers, making communication a challenge. Often, teachers are uncertain of the progress made during the previous PBL lesson and find this daunting in terms of their ability to guide and advise pupils effectively. Some teachers teach one lesson only of PBL, and do not invest their time and effort in ensuring lessons are successful in a subject that does not necessarily make the most of their skills and expertise.
6. When communication is limited between staff, the chances of duplicating an activity or task is more likely, which increases the chances of students losing interest and enthusiasm.
7. Without training and expertise in PBL, teachers have found it very difficult to find a balance between giving students the freedom to plan progress at their own pace, whilst at the same time ensuring students cover all 4 cross-curriculum skills. Particularly since they are working in groups and are encouraged to take on different roles according to their individual strengths within the group.
8. Pupils are not assessed in line with the other subjects, making it difficult for parents to establish how their child is performing in PBL.
9. End of year Reports and Interim reports are done by 1 member of the teaching team only. Circumstances and time restrictions would not allow all members of the team to compose the reports together.

Solutions

The China project has been adapted at the end of each unit. Despite the onus being on students to plan their own project and to make progress accordingly, the focus has been shifted for each group. The first 2 groups were given scope to focus on any aspect of China, whether it be one theme or several themes. The 3rd group focused on Chinese New year. The 4th and 5th groups were asked to plan, organise and prepare for a pop-up Chinese restaurant and invite teachers to be their



customers. The latter focus has been the most successful by far in terms of enthusiasm, enjoyment, initiative, willingness to cooperate, and participation.

The following steps were taken and have proven to produce a more productive classroom of students:

Teaching teams were divided into smaller groups i.e. pairs, and planning was adapted accordingly. This was done for the purpose of more effective communication thus making it easier to guide students.

We prioritised fun over skills requirements.

We realised a simple authentic relatable objective was necessary, one which is also exciting and pupil friendly.

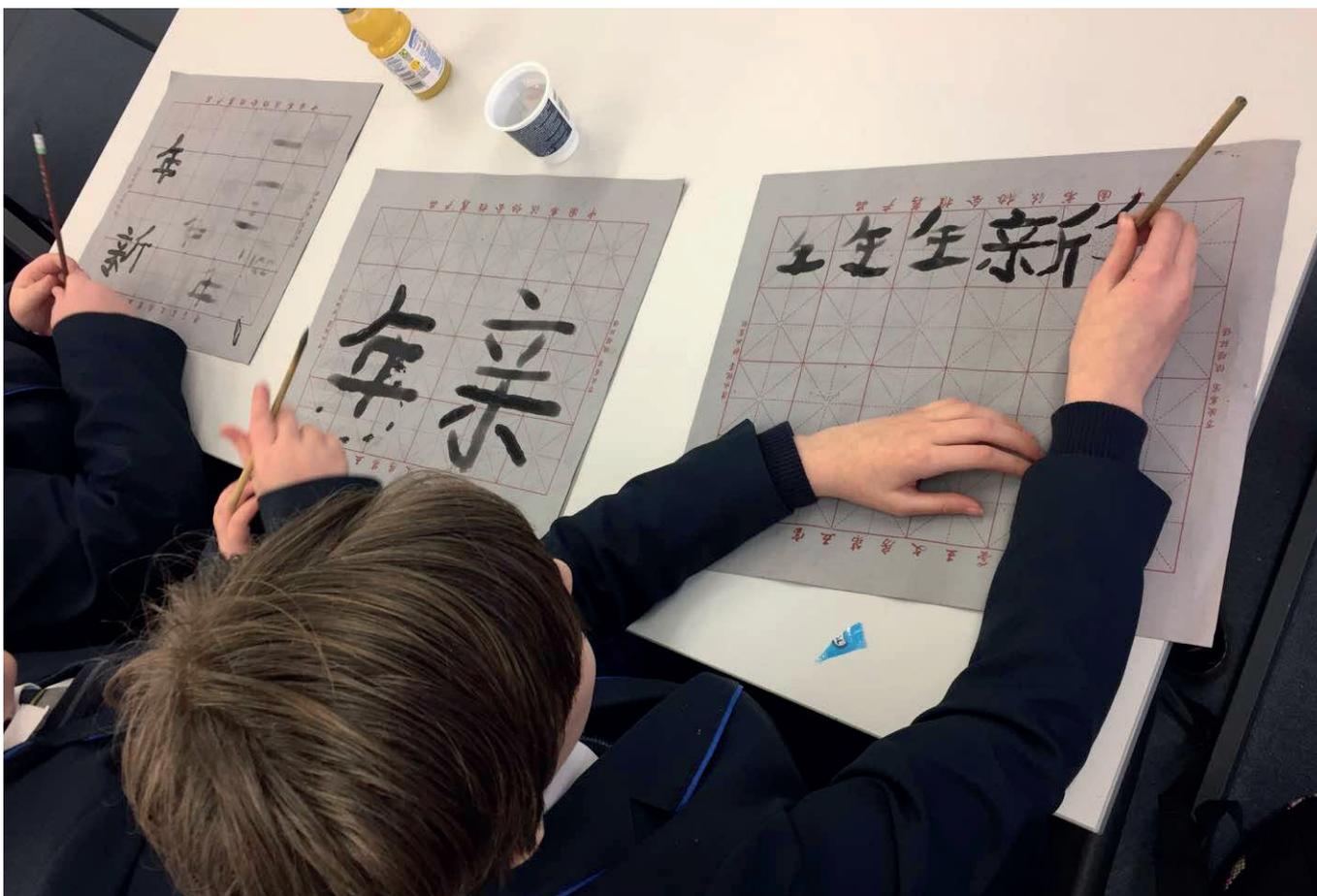
Some teacher-led lessons are necessary (a) to relieve the pressure of having to constantly think what to do next (b) to motivate and guide them to more effective progress in the following lessons.

Positive feedback for whole class is effective in motivating them for the next lesson

We identified pupils who were making the least progress and who struggled to work independently and collaboratively. Teachers made a conscious effort not to criticise but instead to assign them specific tasks to make them feel they are indispensable. This generally boosted morale and kept them motivated.

Steps needed to ensure PBL China is successful at Ysgol Aberconwy in the future

- More frequent staff meetings with specific agenda but not in addition to current allocation of meetings.
- Learning plans for teaching teams so that they are aware of pupil goals.
- Implementation of occasional teacher-led lessons with an emphasis on following this up with students demonstrating what they have learnt and putting this to good use.
- Positive attitudes both from teachers and students
- A clear objective whereby everyone involved understands exactly what he or she is aiming to achieve or produce. The more authentic the end result, the better.
- Seek clarification on how use of skills is measured – If pupils are consistently engaged in the project, if they are participating and making steady progress, does it matter if all skills are not covered by all individuals?
- Staffing needs to be planned more effectively. Arrange timetable so that staff are utilised according to their area of expertise.
- Each Member of staff should be given one element of the project on which to focus; for example, one teacher could be responsible for Mandarin, another teacher could focus on geography in China.
- We should consider focusing on 1 project only, have one common aim for this project, which all pupils must achieve by the end of year 7, and each teacher of PBL could be assigned one element of the project. For example, if the project were 'China' or even something more specific such as 'Chinese restaurant', one PBL teacher could focus their lessons on introductory language, another PBL teacher could teach history and traditions in China, another could focus on cookery skills, another on business (how to make a small profit to donate to local charities) etc.
- PBL Teaching should be measured in the same way as other schools in the same catchment area, to ensure consistency, high standards, and a clear understanding for parents of how their child is performing.



MANDARIN QUALIFICATIONS AT YSGOL GYFUN CWM RHYMNI

LISA WILLIAMS

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymini is the only Welsh medium comprehensive school situated in the borough of Caerphilly. All subjects, apart from English and Mandarin are taught through the medium of Welsh. The school caters for 1600 pupils from the ages of 11-18 on two separate sites 7 miles apart.

The school has been teaching Mandarin since 2011. The first four years were taught by British Council Chinese Language Assistants who were at the school from October to June each year and it was during this time that the WJEC QCF Entry Level Mandarin oral qualification was offered as an optional extra for Year 12 students. The qualification consisted of two role plays communicating personal information in Chinese and ordering food in a café.

In 2015 the school became a Confucius Classroom, and with the support and stability of Hanban tutors (who work in school between September and July), it was decided to offer additional qualifications to pupils. The main challenge was to make sure that enough time was allocated on the already over-loaded timetable, whilst ensuring sufficient study for examination subjects. No free periods were available, so despite promoting an inclusive Mandarin programme at KS3 (where all pupils have the chance to learn basic language skills every few weeks as part of their MFL lessons) it was felt that more lesson time was needed for the More Able and Talented (MAT) pupils who would be studying for Mandarin examinations at either YCT or HSK Level. These MAT classes could cope with maintaining their high level in French in 1 hour a week whilst using the other curriculum hour for Mandarin – as a consequence, Mandarin is now on the timetable.

Gaining an additional qualification so early on in their secondary career has positively impacted pupils' motivation to study Mandarin, enabling them to see their potential and the possibility of moving on to further levels of HSK or YCT qualifications later on.

In Year 8, the two MAT classes study for YCT 1 and in Year 9, they study for YCT 2. HSK 1, 2 and 3 are offered as additional qualifications for Years 10-13 as a lunchtime club. Although originally introducing HSK 1 to these year groups, and despite some good results, it was felt that the YCT was more suitable for learners under 14 years of age.

In 2017-2018 the pass rate was 97% for YCT 1 and 100% for HSK1. All learners were awarded certificates and gain a qualification that is recognised in China. Pupils are made aware of the further educational opportunities available to them if they achieve HSK 3 by the time they reach Level 4, with funded scholarships for between 6-12 months at a Chinese university as part of their degree (in STEM and single/joint honours language based courses) and quite a few learners see this as their goal.

When asked about the advantages of studying Mandarin qualifications, Year 9 pupils gave a range of answers:

"Being a country with one of the biggest economies in the world, the language opens many doors in the future".

"China is the most populated country in the world so having the ability to communicate with them is incredible".

"I enjoy learning a new language which is very interesting, and most schools don't get the opportunity".

"I would be bilingual and that is something very useful".

Since 2015, around 300 pupils have gained an accredited Mandarin qualification and Cwm Rhymini is now looking to



enrol other KS3 pupils for either the Language Pathways Mandarin oral qualification, or the AQA FCSE Entry level. The original goal of offering Mandarin GCSE is however, under review; the nature of the new GCSE specification is such that Cwm Rhymini feel that it is not attainable in only 2 hours of weekly curriculum time. The fact that the Mandarin GCSE is also taken by native Chinese speaking pupils adds to the schools' reason for not choosing his option.

To help with the sustainability of Mandarin within Ysgol Cwm Rhymini, staff at the school have also been busy up-skilling with six members of the MFL department attending Mandarin Immersion courses run by the Cardiff Confucius Institute, in order to be able to support the teaching of Mandarin. The Head of MFL has herself acquired HSK 1 and is keen to further her studies.

Ysgol Cwm Rhymini recognises the funding of these qualifications by Hanban and the Welsh Government. Without their continued support, Confucius Classrooms would not be in a position to offer these qualifications in the current economic climate. As a result

of learning Mandarin and gaining qualifications, a group of Year 10/11 pupils attended the 2019 China Camp visit in Xiamen and Shanghai, allowing them the opportunity to further their studies and converse with native Chinese speakers.

Gaining an additional qualification so early on in their secondary career has positively impacted pupils' motivation to study Mandarin, enabling them to see their potential and the possibility of moving on to further levels of HSK or YCT qualifications later on.