

A real education in the real China

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AIMS:

- To understand the benefits of a school trip to China and potential opportunities for teachers and students alike.
- To understand the process from start to finish in organising a trip
- To identify how to design a viable trip that fits into both the school-wide and Chinese curriculum, and which engages pupils.
- To identify how to connect with a Chinese partner school and maintain an effective relationship.

Why is a school trip important?

In groups, make a list of the reasons why a school trip should be organised – what benefits are there for both students and teachers alike?

On a separate sheet make a list of the reasons which could threaten a trip being approved or organised.

Why is a school trip important?

Benefits to students:

- Bringing culture to life for students
- Real life opportunities to use and practise their language
- Make cross-curricular links between subjects
- Increase students' cultural awareness and understanding
- Increase students' independence and personal skills
- Improve students' confidence and love of the language
- Develop positive relationships with students
- Opportunity for the trip of a lifetime for many teachers who have not been to China before

Why is a school trip important?

Threats to a trip being organised:

- Price – too expensive
- Not enough buy-in from Senior Leadership
- Not enough students studying Chinese to make it worthwhile
- Not enough support from students
- Students too nervous about staying with Chinese families
- Students/parents too nervous about travelling so far
- Worry about safety of students in China (time difference/students being contactable/food/language/preconceptions about China)
- Bureaucracy (admin/risk assessments/health and safety)
- Responsibility

Different school situations

Stage of Chinese teaching?

- Chinese club
- Beginning stages of Chinese on curriculum
- Chinese fully developed on curriculum

When organising a trip to China, you must decide how to mitigate the threats and how to build a sustainable and successful trip for students. Things to think about:

- Early promotion (from Year 7)
- High profile of Chinese in school through cultural events etc.
- If limited students – combine with another department to create cross-curricular trip:
 - Geography
 - History
 - Economics
 - Science

School exchange? Residential trip? Bit of both?

- Know your students and the aims of the trip
 - If language is an important element, you need to plan well advance (2 years) to find partner school and build relationship and agreement.
 - If students won't commit to a homestay, residential trip may be more suitable.

Organising a China Trip – from beginning to end

In your envelope are a number of general tasks which must be completed when organising a school trip to China. In groups:

1. Sort the tasks into the relevant three stages during which you think they should be completed:
 - INITIAL PLANNING STAGE (18-24 months prior to trip)
 - SECONDARY PLANNING STAGE (12-14 months prior to trip)
 - FINAL ORGANISATION STAGE (3 months and less)

EXT: Can you sort the tasks into a chronological order of completion?

Organising a China Trip INITIAL PLANNING STAGE

- Research travel companies and school tour groups.
- Seek advice and recommendations from other schools with experience of school trips and exchanges with China.
- Discuss idea with other relevant department if wanting to do a cross-curricular trip.
- Gain idea of approximate price per student and length of standard trip with approximate group number.
- Seek informal student feedback on interest in participating in trip.
- Discuss idea with the SLT responsible for International Dimension/Overseas Trips to check viability of trip based on research and decide on type of trip and approximate price - residential trip/ exchange trip/ part residential/part exchange trip.
- Determine approximate dates/time period (including whether trip will run during a school holiday) and approximate group number and year group(s) of students with SLT, including number of teachers on trip.
- Inform Trips Officer and complete any necessary paperwork needed at this stage.
- **Obtain Headteacher and Governing Body approval and make any necessary changes.**
- If seeking exchange partner school, contact British Council, CI IOE, specific companies looking to pair schools together and complete pre-check visit by teachers and SLT/Headteacher. Agree terms of partnership (dates, numbers of students, aims of partnership exchange) and sign partnership agreement.

Organising a China Trip SECONDARY PLANNING STAGE

- Negotiate dates and total numbers of students with partner school and then with member of staff responsible for School Diary.
- Get quotes from different tour companies and choose a tour company to use which is both cost effective for students but also suits school requirements the best.
- **Approximately 12 months prior to dates of trip, agree itinerary with chosen tour company and total price per student including accommodation, transport, transfers, activities, food and drink, and free teacher places.**
- **Complete risk assessment and risk assessment action plan.**
- Discuss deadlines (deposits, payments) and agree overall cost per student (to include contingency) with Business Manager and Trips Officer.
- Identify home base contact (usually HoD).
- Complete planning sheet for educational visits (or equivalent planning sheet issued by trips officer).
- Draft initial information letter to parents/students with deadline for deposit and documentation to be submitted, including information on methods of payment (cheques or online system) and ensure letter is authorised if required. Remind parents in letter that visa is needed at own cost, and passport must have 6 months remaining validity from the date of entering China.
- Promote trip to students through lessons, assemblies, school website, Twitter etc and give out letter.
- Check on uptake of students, particularly as deadline for deposits draws near and chase students/send reminder.
- Agree staff participating on trip (minimum 1 teacher : 10 students), ensuring both genders are included if mixed group of students, and request cover. Identify if First Aid/Epipen Training for participating staff will be required and arrange as necessary with First Aid Officer (at least one teacher on trip to be fully trained).
- Upon deadline, check on numbers and whether visit is viable. Update tour company (and partner school) on final numbers.
- Trips Officer to send forms to parents for completion (Code of Conduct, copy of passport, information sheet (detailing whether family can host Chinese student on return leg of exchange), parental consent forms, medical information sheet).

Organising a China Trip FINAL ORGANISATION STAGE

- Diarise and inform parents of China Trip Information Evening (to be held approximately 5 weeks before trip).
- Chase outstanding payments and documentation from students.
- Send over all names, dates of birth and passport numbers to airline/company organising flights.
- Two months prior to the trip, request supporting documentation needed for visa application (official invitation letter with detailed names of visiting students and itinerary) from partner school or tour company.
- Six to eight weeks before the trip, send families information on applying for the students' visa, along with supporting evidence, and request a copy of the visa to be sent to school once received.
- Students complete personal information sheet (interests, allergies etc) to send to partner school to help with matching host families.
- Request details of exchange pairings including contact details from partner school and ensure written confirmation is received from the Headteacher of partner school confirming overseas host families/homes are considered suitable to host students.
- Finalise itinerary with tour company and partner school.
- Complete online submission of visit to Outdoor Education Unit of local authority for approval in conjunction with Trips Officer.
- **Hold information evening with parents and students to discuss behavioural expectations, go through itinerary, ensure all visas have been received, provide contact details of host families, give out telephone tree and answer parents' questions. Instruct students to contact exchange partners to introduce themselves.**
- Compile student handbook/workbook with key phrases/words and activities to complete while in China.
- Request money to be exchanged into renminbi from Finance Officer and ensure school mobile phone works in China.
- Buy cultural presents to give to partner school in China.
- **Ensure you have all documentation, including copies of passports, medical information and medicine, contact details of each student.**
- **Visually check all students have passports before leaving school in coach.**

Organising a China Trip – key aspects

- Headteacher/Governor approval and support
- Make friends with the Trips Officer at your school!!!
- Local Authority approval (Trips Officer should be responsible for this but you will need to approve online forms)
- Awareness of pupil premium students and support available
- Code of conduct and parental consent (school wide version for overseas trips)
- Healthcare plans and medication information
- Promotion = success – early and varied (Twitter, YouTube video, website, newsletter, displays, assemblies)

How to design a viable, sustainable and engaging trip

- How can we design a school trip that achieves all these goals?

Benefits to students:

- Bringing culture to life for students
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How to design a viable, sustainable and engaging trip

- **How can we design a school trip that achieves all these goals?**

These photos all showcase different **locations, activities** and **experiences**.

Go back to the lists you created at the very start- which places and activities will best enable you to reach these goals?

In groups- pick which ones would fit best into your top 3 aims for a school trip to China.

EXTRA: Do any of these photos make you think of another aim for a trip to China?

How to design a viable, sustainable and engaging trip

- **How can we design a school trip that achieves all these goals?**
- **Is it possible?** How can you fit all these goals into your trip? Try and come up with an itinerary that includes everything you want to ensure you reach your aims...
- **Discuss with Alex, after the session- The Dragon Trip have a stand at the exhibition**

How to build a successful partner exchange programme – DGS example

- 2009 – Headteacher visit to China set up by British Council – matched with suitable school in Shanghai
- 2009 – further pre-visit by teachers to discuss finer details
- 2010 – Initial pre-visit by teachers with small group of students and memorandum of understanding agreed and signed (included details of objectives and activities of both sides of the exchange, and expectations of schools). At this initial stage, trip was cross-curricular with Geography department and had cross-curricular objectives
- 2011 – Visit by Shixi High School to DGS (bi-annual trip)
- 2011 – 2014 – Trip developed and increased in numbers – now solely a language based trip
- Combine 5 days in Shanghai with exchange partners, 3 days in Beijing staying at a hostel

How to build a partner exchange programme

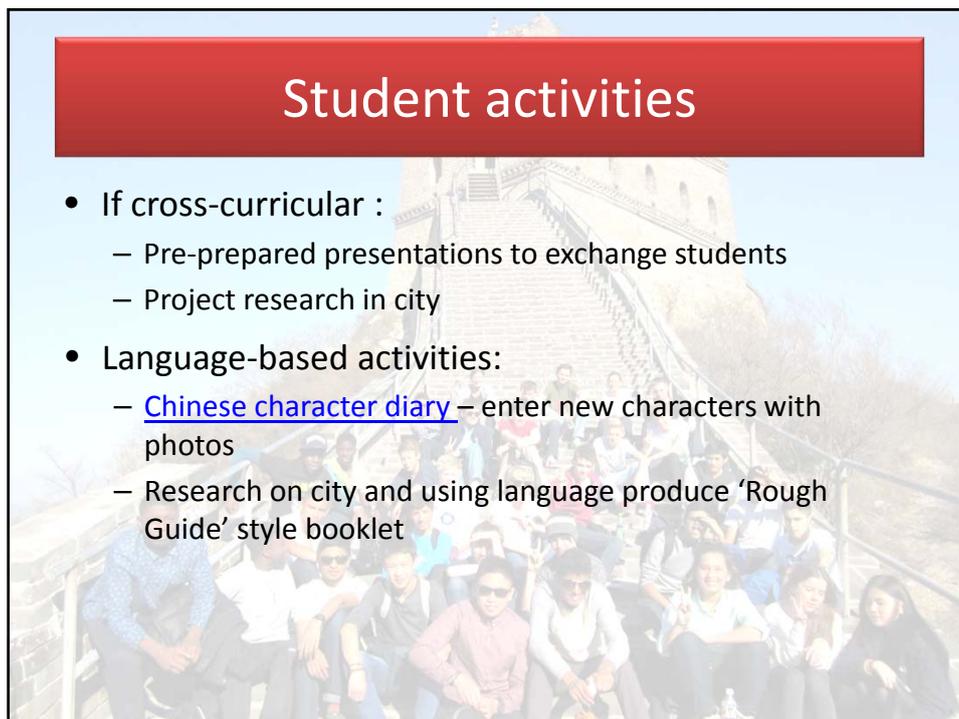
Things to consider:

- Headteacher buy-in and pre-visit
- Agreed objectives (joint curriculum project and aims – nothing controversial)
- Suitable dates and number of students for both legs agreed
- Make an agreed plan in writing signed by both schools (memorandum of understanding).
- Awareness of cultural differences (no risk assessments in China, last minute communication)
- Look after head teacher when in UK – need respect.
- Gifts are VERY important when visiting China but also small gifts when they visit UK.
- Prepare a written programme for visit to UK
- Prepare an invitation letter to aid ease of VISA acquisition.
- Be flexible!!

What could go wrong?

Prepare for the unexpected:

- Make sure you have mobile phone numbers of students
- Make sure students have the number of the school mobile
- Make sure the school mobile works in China and has credit
- Check students' passports before and throughout the trip
- Limit free time to go off on their own when in your company, particularly if near shops where alcohol can be bought
- Re-iterate code of conduct and behavioural expectations at parents meeting
- Triple check students know where and when meeting points are
- Use a tour group who will help you in case of emergency



Student activities

- If cross-curricular :
 - Pre-prepared presentations to exchange students
 - Project research in city
- Language-based activities:
 - [Chinese character diary](#) – enter new characters with photos
 - Research on city and using language produce ‘Rough Guide’ style booklet

Chinese character diary

<p><u>Character</u></p> <p style="font-size: 2em; color: red; text-align: center;">好</p>	<p><u>Day & Date:</u></p> <p style="color: red;">十月二十三日</p> <p><u>Place Seen:</u></p> <p style="color: red;">上海, 人民广场</p> <p><u>Photograph no:</u></p> <p style="color: red;">二十二</p>
<p><u>Character</u></p>	<p><u>Day & Date:</u></p> <p><u>Place Seen:</u></p> <p><u>Photograph no:</u></p>

Student feedback

Sum up your experience of the trip for future students in 40 characters:

“The trip to China is a must-do; it is beneficial, culturally engaging and enjoyable!” Brihadeesh Murali

“It’s worth if for the language, and more for the food!” Eddie Jonas

“The greatest trip/holiday I have ever experienced and would make the trip compulsory if possible!” Matthew Orme

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