

Excellence Awards 2015

About the Excellence Awards

A great many unsung heroes contribute to the study of Chinese and about China in schools. The Excellence Awards recognise and celebrate these people for their efforts and talents. They are specifically for those involved in the subject discipline of Chinese language learning or in supporting the study of China across the curriculum.

Nomination process

The awards are made annually following a nomination process. All teachers are eligible to nominate any colleagues they feel have shown exceptional support and teaching of Chinese and the study of China across the curriculum. Nominations are submitted online and must include a detailed citation that demonstrates how the nominee meets the criteria. The award winners are then chosen by a panel of judges.

Congratulations to all the 2015 Excellence Award winners.

2015 Excellence Award winners

Kate Howarth – 2015 Excellence Award winner

A teacher of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) for over 35 years, Kate has been Head of Languages and International School Co-ordinator at Finham Park School in Coventry for the past 10 years. As Confucius Classroom Co-ordinator she has embraced the new challenges presented by the arrival of Mandarin at Finham Park and developed a successful curriculum model which draws on the strengths of both specialist and non-specialist teachers. Kate teaches French, German, Spanish and helps to deliver a beginners' enrichment module in Mandarin, as well as being a supportive Head of Department and mentoring newly qualified teachers (NQTs).



On three successive occasions Kate has earned International School status for Finham Park. Kate is an outstanding professional who leads by example in her department to ensure that it is an inclusive, hardworking, productive and harmonious faculty. Kate prides herself on ensuring that Mandarin teaching is an inclusive and integral part of the MFL department, adopting a sustainable approach for the delivery of Mandarin across all year groups to build on and grow for the future, achieving our first GCSE successes in 2014. In addition to supporting NQT Mandarin teachers, Kate has effectively supported and nurtured her fledgling Hanban teachers into confident, accomplished practitioners who make a success of their roles at the school and their time in the UK.

Kate writes and presents regular reports to the Coventry 2020 committee chaired by Lady Doris Butterworth sharing the work of Mandarin teaching across Coventry & Warwickshire. Kate is retiring from teaching this summer and this award is a fitting tribute and acknowledgement of her contribution to the work of the Confucius Classroom.

Lily Chen – 2015 Excellence Award winner

Lily has been teaching Mandarin Chinese for the past ten years at Our Lady's Convent High School (OLC) in Hackney. OLC was one of the first schools in London to teach Mandarin on timetable and as a result of Lily's passion and dedication, Chinese became a GCSE subject in 2007 and an A level subject in 2009. GCSE Chinese results have always been the best among all subjects at OLC. Lily is not only fully committed to student's learning in the classroom, but also goes out of her way trying to help students achieve their full potential. Her students have won HSBC/British Council Mandarin Speaking Competitions in both individual and group categories.



Lily's hard work as Confucius Classroom Manager since 2008 has enabled OLC to build strong links with local primary and secondary schools. This has resulted in two local secondary schools setting up Mandarin teaching on curriculum.

To date, Lily has mentored 11 PGCE student teachers, all of whom are now teaching Mandarin in schools across the UK. She is also a regular workshop presenter at this conference.

Simone Haughey – 2015 Excellence Award winner

Simone teaches Mandarin Chinese at Robin Hood Primary Academy in Birmingham. She started learning Mandarin and initiated the academy's Chinese teaching programme six years ago. She is now a national expert in fun and engaging to teach Chinese in the primary curriculum.



Simone is well known online for her innovative ideas to encourage students' independent language learning and uses various strategies to combine the learning of language and culture. Her fabulous Chinese choir has 35 Year 3 and 4 members who charm and impress audiences everywhere they perform. Through Simone's active involvement with the local Chinese community, Simone led the choir to perform at the Birmingham Chinese New Year and Mid-Autumn festival celebrations.

In addition to teaching students, Simone has inspired and encouraged fellow staff at her school to learn Chinese. So far two colleagues have taken up Chinese evening classes at the local language centre as a direct result of Simone's enthusiasm and hard work.

Wang Dongwei – 2015 Excellence Award winner

Dongwei has taught Chinese at Lambeth Academy as a Hanban teacher since October 2013. She also teaches in three neighbouring ('spoke') schools. She contributes a lot to the Chinese teaching department at the Academy, and has gained popularity through her hard work and dedication among teachers and students.



Ms Wang has volunteered her own time above and beyond the call of duty to coach individual GCSE students. This has achieved good results with very positive feedback from the students' regular teachers.

Yuhai (Hyke) Huang – 2015 Excellence Award winner

Hyke is the Tri-borough Alternative Provision (TBAP) multi-academy trust's first Chinese Language Assistant, courtesy of the British Council and Hanban. He has been teaching Mandarin and taichi with fan to secondary and primary learners across Hammersmith & Fulham, Westminster and Haringey boroughs. Vulnerable young learners have benefited from Hyke's teaching providing an unforgettable experience of learning languages. Often these students are no longer in mainstream education owing to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Hyke has engaged these student and they are now positively engaged in learning Mandarin and taichi.



Hyke's patience and resilience in a very demanding environment are remarkable and appreciated by all who work with him. He has attracted learners to some of the riches of a very unfamiliar culture and has become an asset to the Therapeutic Services team where his interventions have helped calm down learners who are being mentored for anger management. Hyke is always eager to get involved and has been running breakfast taichi clubs as well as lunchtime clubs for both learners and staff.

Hyke is an outstanding, reflective and proactive practitioner, whose calm and confident manner has endeared him to all those who work with him.