

Homewood School & Sixth Form Centre

Case-Study – Homewood School & Sixth Form Centre

Background:

Homewood School & Sixth Form Centre is a large wide ability 11 – 19 school in Kent. The school has a long tradition of offering a broad curriculum, a commitment to active approaches to learning and a willingness to embrace innovation. The school has a good uptake for languages, having offered French, German and Spanish for many years. Chinese was introduced formally into the curriculum in 2013. Prior to that, from 2004, the school had hosted teachers from link schools in China who provided short courses in Chinese for Year 9 students. Since 2013, the number of students studying the language has grown from 20 to 60 and we have invested in the provision of a dedicated teaching space for Chinese within the MFL department.

Rationale:

Our rationale for introducing Chinese into the curriculum in a more formal way was three-fold. Firstly, the students who had been studying the subject informally had enjoyed their learning experience and we wanted to build further on this success. Secondly, we wished to increase the choice for MFL subjects with a view to building further the numbers studying MFL to GCSE and beyond. Thirdly, we wanted to make a strategic response to the growing economic and political influence of China in the modern world so that our students were as well equipped as possible to take their place as adults in a global society.

Partnerships:

In 2004, Homewood School had entered into partnerships with two schools in China (in Chongqing and previously in Kunming). They had been providing teachers from China to the school for some years to teach small groups of students in Year 9+ to GCSE level. I joined the school as Principal in 2010, keen to encourage the development of Chinese in the school. I took part in a Headteacher visit to China organized by the UCL IOE Confucius Institute and this established our link with the UCL IOE CI. We employed our first British trained teacher of Chinese in 2013.

Staffing:

From 2004, the school hosted two Chinese assistants from our partner schools in China. In 2013, a British trained teacher of Chinese was employed. She has a second specialism in French. In 2015, a Hanban teacher joined the department.

Curriculum:

Chinese is offered in termly taster lessons in Years 7 & 8. We hold a Chinese immersion day in Year 8 Autumn term (prior to options choices). We currently have three classes of GCSE Chinese in Years 9 – 11, approximately 60 students in total. We plan to introduce Chinese in 6th form (pre U?). With the appointment

of our Hanban teacher this year, we have additional flexibility to set up clubs in local primaries, begin a weekly lesson for Years 3 & 4 after-school at Homewood & to provide Chinese for specialist days at primary schools.

Outcomes:

Homewood School was awarded UCL IOE Confucius Classroom status in 2014. We now have at least one class in each year group from 9 to 11. Opportunities for primary Chinese are growing. We have expanded the size of the Chinese teaching area in the department to accommodate break-out groups. We have established biennial trips to China with Hanban and have developed a good working relationship with another UCL IOE Confucius Classroom nearby (Benenden School). Through our teaching programme, assemblies and immersion days, all students at Homewood have an awareness of China as a global superpower and know something of the Chinese culture.

We have a number of future developments in mind:

- Possible introduction of Chinese lessons to KS3 next year
- Increasing community/primary links
- Consideration of expansion into KS5 to follow on from GCSE teaching

S J Lees

Principal

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