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IOE – FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIETY



IOE CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER



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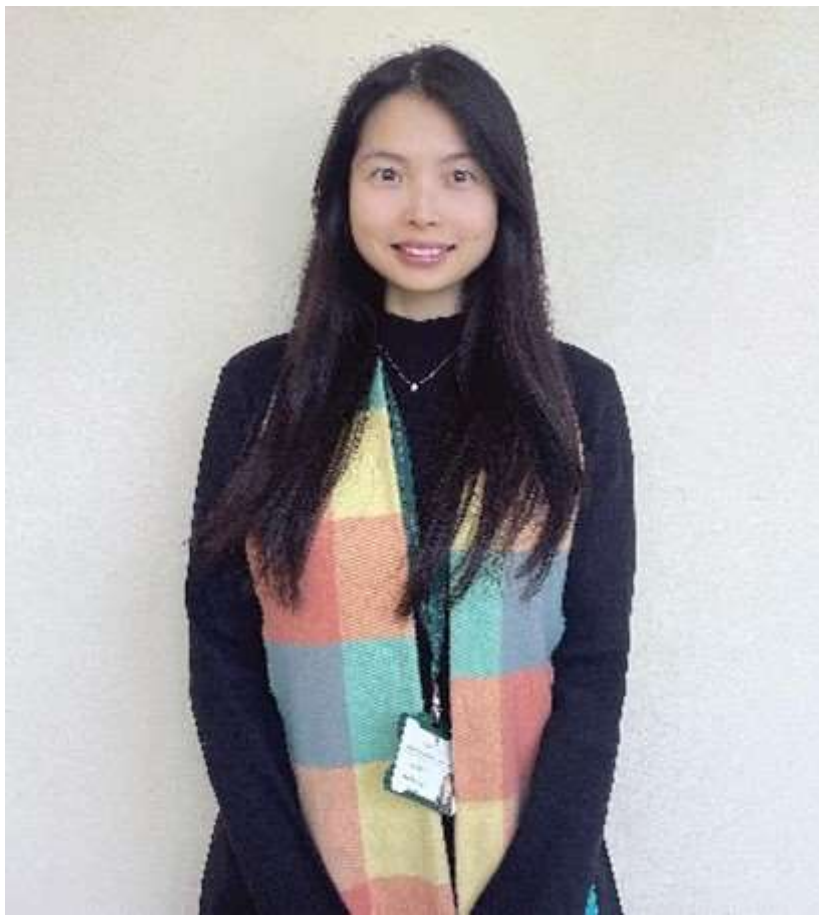


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SPOTLIGHT:



Jane Woo is Head of Mandarin and Confucius Classroom Manager at Christ's College Finchley. She trained to become a teacher at UCL IOE and recently completed an MSc in Educational Assessment at the University of Oxford. She is part of the UCL IOE Confucius Institute Subject Expert Microprogramme team and recently co-authored a book chapter on Intercultural sensitivity in young people: Perspectives from diverse Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) learners in an English secondary school classroom.

Is there one achievement at your school so far this year which you'd like to highlight?

Working really well with my team of Mandarin teachers and our CLEC teacher — empowering them to grow and collaborate in unity (or at least trying to!). It's been really rewarding to see us support each other more and more. I also really appreciate the continued support from Christ's College Finchley — they've backed the development of our Mandarin programme in many meaningful ways.

What is one method you use to engage students which you'd like to share with other teaching professionals?

I genuinely care about my students and believe in their potential — and I let my actions follow that belief. Sometimes that means being very strict with them, sometimes it means lowering my usual expectations just a little to help them gain small wins. Other times, it's about gently pulling them back when their ego needs checking. But the core is always the

same: I care, and they feel it.

What has been your proudest achievement in your current role at school?

Helping to establish Mandarin as a proper curricular subject at Christ's College Finchley — and extending that reach to our local feeder schools. We've had many students whose siblings join because their older brother or sister loved the subject. Teaching multiple sets of siblings over the years has been really special. And more and more students are wanting to go further with Mandarin, which says a lot.

How has being part of Confucius Classrooms helped your confidence professionally?

It's given me access to a great network where we exchange teaching ideas and share resources. I've also felt really supported by Zhu Laoshi, Deputy Director at UCL IOE Confucius Institute for Schools — she's always ready to support us and offer guidance whenever we need it. Being part of this wider community has made me feel more confident and less alone in my work.

Chinese Food Festival - Millfield School:



Millfield School have been running an annual Chinese Food Festival since the 2018 academic year.

The Chinese Food Festival – the most popular and eagerly anticipated annual event among students – was held as part of the Chinese New Year celebrations. The three-day festival attracted hundreds of participants, including students from the Chinese course, international students from China, prep school pupils, young children from local Mandarin clubs, and staff members across the schools.

Attendees enjoyed sampling and learning to make authentic Chinese dishes and drinks, such as dumplings, bao buns, egg-fried rice, and traditional Chinese tea. The event left a lasting impression on students' school experience and sparked a passion for food that reaches far beyond the classroom.

Chinese Cooking – Anglo European School

At Anglo European School, the Upper Sixth Mandarin students were treated to a final cooking lesson by their teacher, Mr. Arden. In this they learnt how to steam and shallow fry a range of Chinese foods including dumplings called 'jiaozi', steamed buns called 'baozi', and Shanghai-specialty soup dumplings named 'xiaolongbao'.



C-pop singing competition – Dartford Grammar School



Students from KS3 to KS5 took part in Dartford Grammar School's inaugural C-pop singing competition. The songs covered included 《对面的女孩看过来》, 《刀剑如梦》, 《想念你想我》, Jasmine Flower and Manual of Youth, but the winning submission was a cover of My Sunshine (the OST for the TV drama 何以笙箫默). The winning submission featured the Year 8 singer in an original music video.

Chinese Rap Music Workshop and KS3 Assembly - Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys

To celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival 2025, Simon Langton Grammar School invited a team of the UCRS (UCL Chinese Rap Society 中文说唱社) to share their stories and music. They delivered a workshop and performed to the whole KS3 assembly. The students have experienced a totally new style of Chinese music and enjoyed it very much. The leader of the team Leslie Cai, who is a year 3 Education Studies student at IOE, UCL expressed that they were pleased to have this opportunity to connect using music with students in such an open and creative way.



China trip - Torquay Boys Grammar School

In May, Miss Ho and Mrs Allen lead the first TBGS trip to China since the pandemic. Twenty students from Years 10 and 12 visited China for 9 days.

They experienced the ancient and modern in Beijing, Xi'an and Shanghai. Along the way students learned how to use chopsticks, barter in the markets, and use their Chinese in everyday interactions.



Lancaster University Modern Languages Competition – Anglo European School

The School of Global Affairs and Lancaster University has run a successful and well-received Modern Languages Schools Essay Prize since 2014 and collaborated annually with Anglo European School.

Lower Sixth and Deputy Head Student, Grace was selected as the winner of the Lancaster University Modern Languages Prize 2025. At the prize giving, Dr Derek Hird, Head of the School of Global Affairs shared how he was impressed with the commitment of the finalists to language learning and encouraged them to continue carrying the torch for languages and cultures. Mrs Gee the Headteacher and Mrs Latimer the head of MFL at Anglo European School were pleased to spend time with Grace to hear about her essay which explored the importance of multilingualism for the future. Grace framed her essay around the question, "Imagine if all of humanity could only speak one language - their own mother tongue. What would the world be like?" drawing on examples of AI's influence and Singapore's languages policy. Judges were impressed with Grace's essay and provided positive feedback.

Mandarin Club – The Queen’s School



Each week, local primary school children take part in engaging Mandarin lessons at The Queen’s School as part of a vibrant language enrichment programme. These sessions have become a much-anticipated part of the children’s learning, offering them the chance to explore a new language in a fun and supportive environment.

In recent weeks, the children have been learning how to say body parts and facial features in Mandarin, using interactive classroom activities to build their vocabulary.

CLEC teacher’s reflection

As we approach the end of the academic year, we take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you and farewell to our dedicated CLEC teachers. Their contributions to schools across the country have been truly invaluable. One such teacher is Zhao Qian 赵芊, based in Leicestershire, who has shared her reflections on two enriching years of teaching and living in the UK as a CLEC teacher:

IOE CI support

On 23rd September 2023, with great excitement, I arrived in the UK, a country I had long dreamed of visiting. Since being selected as a volunteer, the UCL IOE Confucius Institute have provided us with comprehensive online and offline training, helping us quickly adapt to life and work in the UK. The camaraderie among fellow volunteer teachers has been incredible—whether it was navigating visa applications for the China Trip or sharing tips on resizing photos for online forms, the group chats buzzed with support. Though scattered across different locations, we always felt connected, as if we were right beside each other!



With fellow CLEC volunteers

Working at the host school

One of my proudest achievements was coordinating our school's first-ever participation in the "Chinese Bridge" competition. I received the thrilling news that our student advanced to the finals! My mentor called me the "pioneer" of this initiative at our school, and my story will forever be featured in the Chinese language display cabinet.

Beyond this, my daily interactions with students have been deeply rewarding. I admire their critical thinking—they question authority when something seems unreasonable—and their ability to move past conflicts, actively greeting me with smiles even I gave them a consequence just now.

In my second year, my Spanish roommate and I bonded over surprising cultural parallels—like how the phrase “speak of the devil” appears in Chinese (说曹操, 曹操到) and Spanish (hablando del rey de Roma).



The language department of Beauchamp College (host school)

Living in the UK

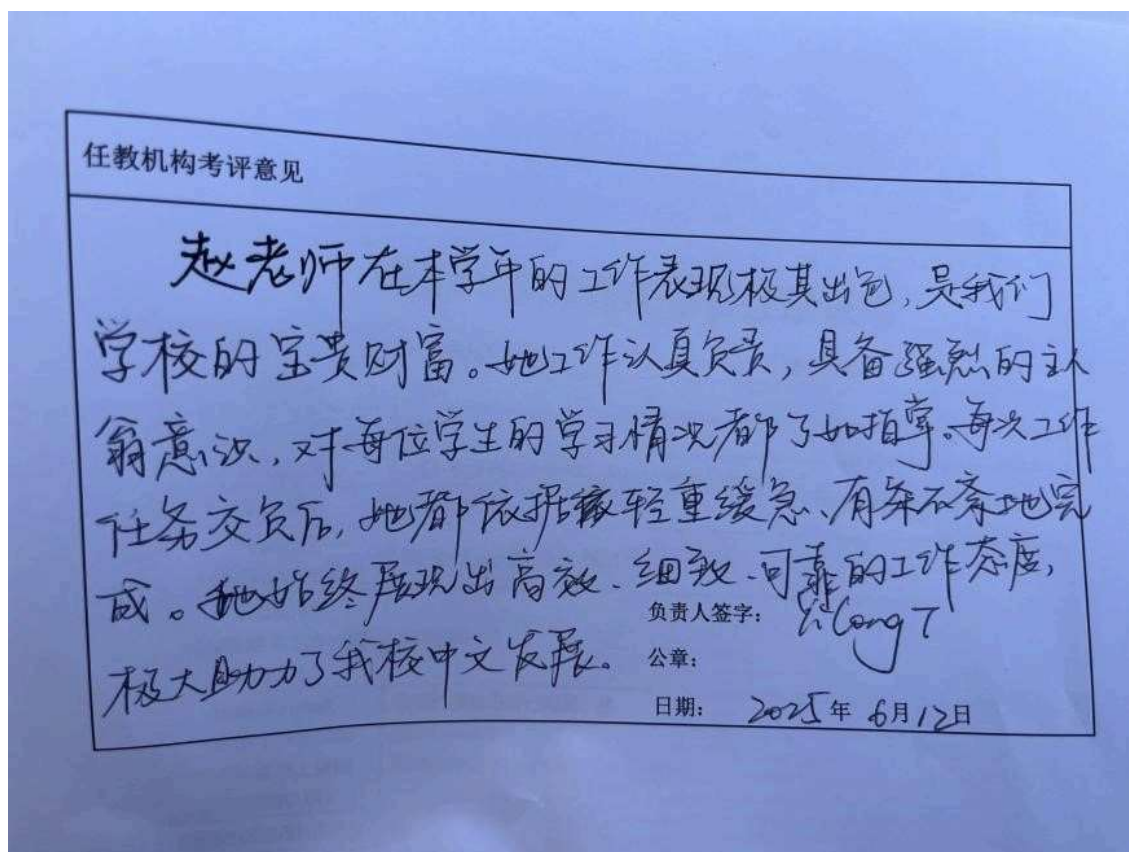
If my first year was about adaptation, my second year became a journey of proactive growth. I volunteered as a safety instructor for Year 5 students at a local charity. At first, shadowing seasoned trainers while clutching my script was daunting, but with their patient guidance—rehearsing with me until I could solo—I eventually found my footing. The sense of accomplishment was immense.



In summary

Ernest Hemingway once wrote, "If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you."

I would add: Live in the UK, and its quiet grace and enduring resilience will leave an indelible mark on you.



Mentor's comments on performance

We are deeply grateful for the passion, professionalism, and cultural insight our CLEC teachers bring to their work, and we wish them all the very best in their next chapters - Xiaoming Zhu

Katharine Carruthers' retirement



Katharine Carruthers OBE, Director of the Centre for Chinese Language Education will be retiring at the end of July 2025. Katharine has played a leading role in promoting and developing the study of Chinese in schools in England for more than two decades. She worked as a teacher and examiner of Chinese, she is the series editor of the Jin Bu and Edexcel GCSE textbooks and wrote the specification for the Cambridge Pre-U Mandarin Chinese

qualification. She also taught on the IOE's PGCE Languages course and on the MA in Intercultural Communication. She has been the IOE CI Director for 20 years and has been the Strategic Director for the Mandarin Excellence Programme since 2016. As Global Strategic Academic Advisor (China), Katharine also played an important strategic role as a catalyst for UCL's global engagement in the region. Her services to education were recognised in 2018 when she received an OBE in the New Year Honours list.

The IOE Centre for Chinese Language Education team would like to thank Katharine for her leadership and for being a wonderful colleague. We wish her all the best for the future. The good news is that she shall remain in an honorary advisory role for CCLE, the details of which will be confirmed soon.

Thank you Katharine! Enjoy your retirement!

We wish you all a relaxing summer break!

**DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO
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