

Parent Handbook

2019-2020

Recognise International Academy



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Welcome

Dear Parents

The staff of Recognise International Academy would like to extend a warm welcome to you and your child.

We aim to provide a happy, safe and caring school where children are made to feel they belong. We aim for the children to achieve their full academic potential, to become enthusiastic learners, confident individuals and to develop into responsible and caring international citizens.

We recognise the importance of a good relationship between the child's home and school. We will endeavour to work closely with you as parents and to provide opportunities for you to be involved with your child's education.

Many activities are organised throughout the school year when parents have the opportunity to meet with and work with us. We look forward to meeting with you on such occasions.

This booklet has been written in order to give you the basic information you require as your child comes to Recognise International Academy. We hope that that it gives you a flavour of our school and that it provides you with the information that you need. However, should you wish further clarification or have particular questions which relate to your child or circumstances, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We hope that your child will be very happy during his or her stay with us, and you can be assured of our best attention to your child's needs at all times.

Yours sincerely,

David Blakemore (Principal)

1. THE SCHOOL

1.1 School Information

SCHOOL NAME: Recognise International Academy (RIA)

ADDRESS: 4 and 6, Bi Yu Lu, Bi Tao Yuan Villas
Tai Zi Road,
Shekou,
Shenzhen,
China.
Post Code: 518067

TELEPHONE NO: 755 2669 3040

FAX NO: 755 2669 1570

E-MAIL: School Manager: office.recognise@gmail.com

Principal: principal.recognise@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.recogniseacademy.com

FACEBOOK: Recognise International Academy

1.2 Structure of School

Recognise International Academy is arranged into classes covering the age-range of Year 1 to Year 11 (ages 5-16). Some of these classes may be mixed-age. We maintain small class sizes, usually of 9 or 10 students. Our total enrolment capacity is 76 students.

We offer a structured curriculum, based on the National Curriculum of England, which has been adapted to meet our international context, our small-scale approach and our commitment to individualised learning.

Additionally, we offer individual and small group schooling for students with specific extra needs under the name of **Cognition**.

1.3 School Vision & Aims

RIA wishes to offer a high quality academic and holistic education, on a small scale, with cooperative spirit at its heart. We wish to teach a range of intellectual, creative and practical subjects that will stimulate body and mind and that will embed in students a rich satisfaction in the process of learning. We wish for students to realise their own potential and that of others. We wish for them to lead an enriching life for themselves, those closely around them, and for society and the environment on all scales.

To meet these ends, we believe that:

- A school should be on a scale small enough to facilitate genuine relationships between students, teachers and parents.
- A school should offer an education that is a practical, creative and that actively involves the learner.
- A school should facilitate each student's highest academic achievement.
- A school should be inclusive, and be able to successfully accommodate children from a wide range of backgrounds and with a wide range of needs.
- A school should serve to create well-being in all parts of its community, including children, parents, teachers, staff, families and of course, directors.
- A school should contribute to and benefit from, local society and community.
- A school should encourage individual expression, combined with due consideration for needs of the community.
- A school should create future opportunities for individuals.
- A school should emphasise the importance of flexible, creative thinking; of open communication and of an open mind.
- A school should value practical skills, as well as intellectual and academic skills, especially those concerned with care of the environment
- A school should give students the skills to critically evaluate situations and to form opinions based on carefully considered evidence

Aims

To provide a safe, secure, stimulating and happy environment where all who learn, work or visit feel welcome and valued.

To encourage our children to become successful independent learners, developing literacy, numeracy and communication skills and to achieve high standards in all areas of the curriculum.

To encourage our children to be confident individuals, and to foster a 'can-do' attitude in all that they do, developing resilience and positive self-esteem.

To give our children a variety of authentic, learning opportunities within the school and wider environment; to encourage choice, independent thinking and personal responsibility for learning, and to prepare them to be effective contributors for the challenges of adult life.

To provide opportunities for our children to discover their world and that of others; to develop understanding and respect of different cultural, religious, social and environmental issues, and to prepare them to be responsible international citizens.

To provide a structured curriculum and learning programme relevant to the needs of the individual child.

To develop meaningful partnerships among children, staff, parents and the wider community in order to provide the best support for every child.

To ensure all staff are equipped, supported and motivated to teach our children to the highest standards.

1.4 Staff

Principal:

Mr David Blakemore

Student Coordinator:

Ms Kate Rowan



Class Teachers:*

Ms Niamh Russell

Ms Stephanie Beresford

Ms Sarah Webster

Mr Rob Harris

Ms Jane Leckie

Mr Philip Forrester

Mr Will Dove

Ms Vangie Ricasata

Teaching Assistants: *

Mr Jamie McMahon

Ms Nelie Mangino

Specialist and Visiting Teachers: *

Chinese Lessons: Ms Amy, Ms Cici, Ms Coco, Ms Chan El

PE and Art: Ms Valeria Wilson, Ms Masha, Mr Jim Shoes

Administrative Support: *

School Manager: Mrs Sherry Lee Assistant: Ms Teresa

Finance Officer : Ms Jessica Zing

Caretaker and Guard: Mr Yuan,

Campus Support: Ms Ah Zhao, Ms Ah Fu

School Directors: Mr Ian Taylor ; Ms Kate Rowan

1.5 School Hours



Monday to Friday

Children arrive between 8.30 am and 8.45 am

Morning lessons: 8.50 am - 11.50 am (15 minute break approx 10.15)

Lunch break: 11.50 am - 12.40 pm

Afternoon lessons: 12.40pm - 3.45 pm (15 min break approx 2.15)

Children can be collected at 3.45 pm*

** on days when After School Activities run, pick-up is 4.45pm for those who attend (see calendar)*

1.6 Drop-Off and Pick-Up



Children must be brought to and collected from the school by a responsible adult (a person aged 16 and over).

If a person other than the usual adult is collecting your child at the end of the day, please inform our school office. This includes if you are asking other parents to collect your child.

In the morning, our guard, Mr Yuan, will register the children as they arrive and Ms Ai Zhou and Ms Ai Fu will greet them. Prior to 8.30, staff appreciate the time to prepare so if you arrive early, the children may stay outside with your supervision.

If an emergency situation arises, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can make alternative arrangements with you.

Students aged 12 + are allowed to travel to and from home on their own but we ask for your written permission before allowing this.

1.7 Term Dates and Holidays



Our school year is divided into 3 terms, each lasting 60 school days. Below is a summary of our term dates and holidays for 2019 -20.

Term 1	August 22 rd - November 21 st
	Holiday Dates To Be Announced Soon !
Term 2	November 22 rd - March 13 th
	Holiday Dates To Be Announced Soon !
Term 3	March 14 th - June 12 th
	Holiday Dates To Be Announced Soon !

Two excursions are organised each year by Recognise. These are not mandatory trips, but many students gain educational benefit from them. If your child does not participate in these excursions, they will maintain a normal class schedule.

A full year Holiday Calendar can be found at the back of this handbook. A full year Events Calendar will be supplied at the start of the school year.

1.8 Attendance

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. They are also responsible for ensuring the safety of their children on their journeys to and from school.

Regular and punctual attendance is linked closely to achievement. We wish to work with parents to ensure that children can reach their full potential. The school maintains an accurate record of the attendance and absence of each child. Parents are requested to

assist in this process by keeping the school informed if their child is to be absent for any reason.

It is important to note that if a child does not arrive at school and there is no reasonable explanation provided for his/her absence then members of staff will be required to ascertain the whereabouts and safety of the individual child. If a student is still absent 30 minutes after school starts, the school will contact parents and / or emergency contacts in order to establish the causes for absence.

Therefore, in order to avoid causing unnecessary concern for staff and parents, the importance of good communication between home and school cannot be over-emphasised. Parents are asked to assist school staff in the manner detailed below:

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness, please telephone the School Manager (Sherry) between 8:00 and 9:00 on the first day of their absence.

A signed and dated note via your child's sibling or friend would also be acceptable.

When you contact the school, it would be helpful if an indication could be given as to the child's expected length of absence.

Planned Absence

Parents are not encouraged to arrange family holidays during term time, but we realise this is occasionally unavoidable. In such cases, parents are asked to provide the Principal with the dates of the child's absence.

Except in cases of emergency, we would ask for appointments for children to attend the dentist or doctor to be made outside of the school day.

1.9 Contact Details



Parents are asked to ensure that telephone contact numbers - home, work and emergency contact(s) are kept up-to-date and are numbers at which a response can be obtained in all normal circumstances. At the start of each school session, parents will be asked to provide contact details including at least one emergency contact number. It is important that parents inform the school if these contact details change during the course of the year.

1.10 Emergency Closures



If it is necessary to close the school in an emergency, and without having given prior notice to parents, then the safety of the children will be of prime importance. No child will be sent home if there is no one at home. These children will remain in school, supervised until the normal closing time. If transport is not available, then members of staff will supervise children returning home.

Typhoons are our most likely cause of emergency closure. We follow the Hong Kong standard of closing the school if a Typhoon Level 8 Warning is imminent. Parents can find up-to-date weather information on the Hong Kong Observatory website.
www.hongkongobservatory.com.

Chinese Rain / Storm Warnings: Some schools close when a Red Rain Warning is issued by China. Generally, we do not close when this happens because this recommended warning is aimed at transportation - school buses are not supposed to run at these times. We do not have school buses so, if possible, we will remain open. We will make a judgement according to circumstances and contact you as indicated if closure is necessary.

1.11 Information in Emergencies



We make every effort to maintain a full educational service, but on some occasions circumstances arise which lead to disruption. Schools may be affected by, for example, severe weather or power failures. In such cases we shall do all we can to let you know about the details of closure or re-opening. We shall keep you in touch by using emails, phone calls, WeChat, texting, and by posting details on our website

1.12 Obtaining Information about your Child



We encourage a close relationship between parents and staff. Regular conversations with your child's class teacher will keep you informed about their progress and all other educational issues. We formally report to parents each term, stating levels of achievement, our assessment of rate of progress and degree of effort. We provide extensive comments regarding targets and achievements in two of these reports. At the start of the year we will also provide a 'benchmark' report that states academic levels at this point and will outline targets for the year. For our Term 2 report, we will issue academic levels in the report and we will also invite you to school to discuss your child's progress with their teacher. Where appropriate, we will also conduct suitable diagnostic testing for specific areas of ability and learning. Parents will be informed about such testing and the outcomes. We do not hold formal parent evenings as in many big schools, but parents can ask for appointments with teachers at 3.45 pm on any Monday, Wednesday or Thursday. We would hope to meet you at least twice a year. Student work is held in a file by the class teacher for your reference and perusal.

1.13 Visits for Prospective Parents

Visits to Recognise and appointments with the Principal can be arranged through contacting our School Manager at office.recognise@gmail.com

1.14 Part-time Schooling

We know that some parents like to home-school their children part-time and have them attend regular classes part-time. We are happy to discuss arrangements such as this.

This is only an option if there are available spaces in the classroom and / or if the arrangements will not be to the detriment of the full-time students.

1.15 Extra Tuition / Individual Tuition for Non-enrolled Students

We offer extra tuition services for non-enrolled students through **Cognition**. Parents can contact Ms Kate Rowan at recogniseacademy@gmail.com to discuss details.

1.16 School Buildings

Recognise is housed in two, connected two-storey villas in Shekou, Shenzhen. The grounds of these villas have been combined to provide a playground, garden areas and terrace and balcony areas. These terraces and balconies connect to classrooms and act as extensions to them. We have a library and resource area and a multi-purpose room that gives us an indoor community dining area and study room. We make use of local facilities for activities such as PE and swimming.

1.17 Complaints and Concerns

We very much value the input from parents regarding how to improve. We take concerns and complaints very seriously and will always aim to improve situations by working in partnership with you. We regularly review our procedures and provision. Depending on the issue or concern you wish to draw to our attention, you may speak to the class teacher, the School Manager or the Principal as you deem appropriate.

1.18 Enrolment and Fees

To apply for enrolment, please contact our School Manager office.recognise@gmail.com for an application pack. We usually accept students at the beginning of each term but will consider mid-term enrolments depending on circumstances. If there is no space currently available for your child at Recognise, your name and date of application will be registered on the waiting list. If a seat opens, Recognise will contact parents on a first-come, first-serve basis.

After Recognise has contacted you, if you wish to hold the seat for your child's entry, a one-time-registration fee of 6,500rmb is required. If that fee is not paid within 72 hours of Recognise contacting you, the school will assume you do not want the seat and contact the next person on the waiting list.

1.19 Tuition Fees 2017-2018

New students to Recognise pay a one-time registration fee of 6,500 RMB. Payment of this fee will secure your place at Recognise.

Annual Tuition: 141,000 RMB

(payable by term: 3 terms @ 47,000 RMB)

Term payments are due by: August 1st, 2019 (Autumn Term)

November 22nd, 2019 (Spring Term)

March 14th, 2020 (Summer Term)

Partial Term

In the event of a student leaving before the end of a term, the partial term fee is as follows:

Three weeks enrolment or less	30% of the term fee
More than three weeks, up to six weeks	60% of the term fee
More than six weeks, up to nine weeks	80% of the term fee
More than nine weeks	100% of the term fee

A term at Recognise equals 12 school weeks; 60 school days.

Excursion Fees

Please note the following item is an *optional additional expense* to student annual fees:

If you would like to incorporate excursion fees into your child's tuition fees, this is possible. We will usually know the approximate costs of the year's excursions in advance and we can discuss with you how to spread these costs. This year, we hope to have one overseas excursion and one China-based excursion.

Returning Students

Parents who have the intention of keeping their child's seat for the following school year, can secure it with a deposit. This fee is non-refundable if the student does not return in the following school year. If the student does return, this money will count towards the first term tuition fees. Recognise will accept student deposits for the following school year starting in January 15th of the same school year.

Priority seats will be given to returning Recognise students until April 1st. If no deposit or confirmation has been received by this time, Recognise will assume your student is not returning and will fill classroom seats with students from our waiting lists. We will contact all parents during the final term to remind them of this policy and to discuss their intentions and needs for the following academic year.

Absence

There is no reduction of school fees for absenteeism for any reason, including home-leave holidays.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 School Excursions

Twice a year, Recognise offers travel excursions. These trips are designed to be both fun and adventurous as well as being an opportunity to apply the science-based and environmental knowledge that students have acquired 'in the field'. They are always memorable events. Our Autumn excursion is usually overseas and in the past we have had wonderful experiences in Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia and elsewhere. Our Spring excursions are usually China based, offering the opportunity for students to see the extensive world of China outside the cities. Our trips always try to incorporate authentic experiences with local organisations and to offer community service opportunities. We also make sure that the trip is organised to give students of all ages the chance to explore and enjoy the tremendous diversity that Asia has to offer. Travel with Recognise is not just a holiday but also a learning experience that we hope fosters a fascination with the people and places of our planet.



2.2 School Uniform

We do not have a formal school uniform for normal school days although the school colours are green and black and many children like to wear these colours when they can.

We do however, request that if we are taking children out of school for trips or events, that they wear their green Recognise T shirts. This is for identification reasons. We give each student one green Recognise T-shirt per year and one PE shirt. Parents can purchase extras of these if they wish.



We also ask that children come to school sensibly dressed in clothing that will be comfortable for them throughout the day and

in clothing that is unlikely to cause harm to anyone or anything (no stilettos please!). Dangling jewellery is strongly discouraged.

2.3 PE Kit

Each child needs shorts, gym shoes and T-shirt. For the younger children, it is generally best to keep an extra set of clothes in school. Teachers will inform parents of the particular days when PE takes place. Older students should take responsibility for bringing the correct PE clothing. We may at times, ask them to bring specialised equipment.



2.4 Equipment

Stationery and day-to-day equipment is supplied by the school although many children like to organise their own school bags and bring favourite pencil cases, sets of colouring pens and so forth. This is acceptable within reason.

For younger children, we ask parents to clearly label as many of the child's things as possible.

2.5 Lost Property

Lost clothing and property can be reclaimed from the Lost and Found. Children should check immediately with class teachers when a loss occurs. Any valuables that are found left in school are kept safely in the school office until they are claimed or until we can identify the owner.

2.6 School Meals

Children have the option of purchasing a school lunch or bringing their own meal to school. Our school meals are provided by a high-quality, local European restaurant (La Maison) and the menu has been approved by a professional dietician. We wish to ensure that we are providing the correct nutritious values for the children and we will closely



monitor the quality (and taste!) of our meals. If you choose to send a packed lunch instead, we ask you to also consider the health and nutrition value of this food. We do not allow soda type drinks on site and students are not allowed to order take-away meals for lunch-time delivery. We provide fresh fruit and eggs for snacks in the morning and purified and chilled water is always available. School meals cost 30 RMB per day, paid termly.

We will endeavour to cater for students who require diets as a result of a medical condition (a medically prescribed diet, diabetes, food allergy or intolerance). Details should be provided as part of the enrolment process, and the issue will be discussed with relevant staff members and caterers before confirming a strategy. The menu works on a three week rotation. An example of our three-weekly menu is at the back of this booklet.

2.7 Supervision of Playground

Adult supervision is provided in the playgrounds at break-times and lunch-time but not after or before school.

2.8 Transport

We do not provide transport to and from school at this time. Parents are asked to make their own arrangements for drop-off and collection. In an extreme situation, we are willing to arrange taxis and/ or use the school car to accompany children home. Many parents live close by and share transportation duties with each other. We like to encourage our young people and their families to walk or cycle to school, thus getting some of their daily exercise.

2.9 Medical and Health Care

On enrolment, parents should indicate to the Principal if their child has any particular medical requirements and if any special arrangements have to be made if the child is required to be taken home.

If a child becomes ill or has an accident at school, then the school office will make contact with the parent and make arrangements. If we are unable to make contact with the parent, we will try to get in touch with other listed contacts in an emergency. An emergency contact form will ask you for the necessary information.

If we are unable to contact anyone, then the child will remain in school. However, in the case of a serious accident, transport will be provided to take the child to receive treatment as we see fit.

Medicines supplied by parents are kept in a safe place and are administered by a designated person in agreement with parents. Many of our staff have first aid training.

We would ask you to regularly inspect your child's hair to ensure that there is no trace of head lice.

Please contact us if you should have any problems or queries regarding health or hygiene matters. It is extremely important that the school is aware of any medical problems or allergies your child may have.

2.10 Specialist Help

At Recognise, we like to involve our parents in their child's education as much as possible. We invite parents to share their expertise to enhance learning. People involved with agencies such as the police, fire brigade and ambulance services are some example of those who have given small workshops to the children.

For younger children, we endeavour to provide parents with a topic overview at the beginning of every term and throughout the year. If you have any particular speciality e.g. local knowledge or craft that you would like to share with the children, please contact the school as we would love to have your help.

2.11 School Rules

We have just 3 school rules. These are; 'Take care of yourself and others. Take care with your schoolwork. Take care of your environment'. We find that just about all behaviour, positive and negative, can be related to these rules and can be explained in these terms. 'Running, whilst holding a latest art creation within school' could for example, be framed as a breach of all 3 rules.

We find that asking a child if, in this case, they are taking care of themselves and their schoolwork etc, is a much happier and more productive method than commanding, 'Stop running!'. The children learn to reflect on what they've done and then self-regulate their own behaviour.

Good deeds can likewise be praised in these terms. As I'm sure you know, positive re-enforcement is by far the most effective way of building long-term positive outcomes.

This '3-rule' approach allows us to be consistent yet flexible and it helps us deal with events on their merits. Parents are involved if significant or persistent negative behaviour occurs, as indeed they are, when significant positive behaviour is shown.

We find that, at Recognise, student behavior is generally excellent, and we see young people mature and progress very quickly in these respects.

2.12 Parent Support Association

We do not have a formal Parent Support Association (PSA) at present but our parents often collaborate to organise fund-raising events and special activities to support the children. Any suggestions are welcomed and we will do our best to help with viable ideas.

2.13 Student Council

We like the students to feel that they have a part to play in running their school and we genuinely like to listen to their ideas. We provide opportunities for students to share their thoughts with the whole school and each other under the umbrella term of 'Student Council'.

2.14 iPads

All Recognise students are given a Recognise iPad for their educational use. There is a school policy regarding how, where and when it should be used and how it should be maintained. We ask parents to sign a document to accept the terms and conditions of our iPad policy upon enrolment.

3. Curriculum and Assessment

The following information will explain the structure and scope of our curriculum and our approach to teaching and learning. A curriculum map (what is taught and when) is available upon request and a curriculum overview document is posted on our website. Please feel free to contact the Principal with any particular academic questions you may have.

3.1 Ages 5 - 14 (Years 1-9)

For ages 5-14, we base our curriculum content on the skills and knowledge as outlined by the National Curriculum of England and Wales (UKNC 2014). We use this content because we believe it offers structured and challenging progression in all the key subject areas. Also, it has standardised outcomes and assessment levels that are recognised and have equivalencies world-wide. It is a tested and credible curriculum that is used in many international schools and within the UK. We have taken the best bits of this curriculum, adapted some parts of it, thrown in some additions of our own and then arranged it all to meet the needs of our students, our international context and our small-scale approach.

We also use this curriculum because it is, for the larger part, skills-based. This means that learning focuses on mastering how to do things - solving maths problems, conducting science experiments, writing and appreciating stories, creating works of art or music - rather than the rote learning of facts. Of course, much 'pure knowledge' is also incorporated, but when it comes to valuing a child's ability, the assessment criteria is not, for example, 'a student can name five famous poets' , instead it is, 'a student can appreciate different ways that a poet uses words and can use these techniques in their own work.' We believe that the largely skills-based structure and content of the UK NC supports our goals of teaching students 'how' to learn rather than 'what' to learn, and we feel that increasingly, in our modern world of technology and mass information, this is the much more appropriate approach.

3.2 Age 14 and Up (Years 10 +)

Recognise students have progressed to many and varied situations. In Higher Education, we have had students progress to take the IB Diploma, American and Canadian High School Diplomas and also UK 'A' levels. We have had graduates enrol in California State University, Shenzhen University, Hong Kong University and most recently, in New York University. We have also had students take vocational routes; some examples being a commercial diver, a physiotherapist and, we've just heard, we now have an ex-Recognise student who is a monk!

At present, RIA is educating students up to the age of 16 years old, but it is at the age of 14 where it becomes important to have an indication of where a student's educational future or career aspirations may lie. This is because it is at this point in their education, that different routes can be taken.

Most of our students undertake subject courses that lead to achieving a range of Cambridge International GCSEs. These are formally examined, internationally recognised qualifications, usually taken at 16 (sometimes earlier). IGCSEs are academically challenging and can provide entrance to UK 'A' Level courses or the IB Diploma, or most other post-16 educational courses. They are subject specific qualifications, and students will often take up to 8 or 9 of them (five passes is usually regarded as a minimum number for progression).

Alternatively, at this age, a student may prefer to work towards a High School Diploma from the USA or Canada. This involves completing subject credits and accumulating scores that contribute to the Diploma. Typically, this is a four-year programme - the first two years of credits could be completed at Recognise. This route might be more appropriate for those students specifically wishing to study in North America or who are aiming for a particular college course or career route. It is not impossible for students to embark on both the High School Diploma and IGCSE programmes simultaneously.

Within reason, we can also consider other routes as it is usually only a matter of specific subject emphasis and assessment method that are the key differences. We work with parents, students and teachers to arrive at the best choices for the individual involved.

3.3 Students with Additional Needs

At Recognise, we believe that every child is special and that each has a unique set of needs. Our goal is to see all of our students functioning effectively with others in a standard classroom environment and playing a full role in school life. Nevertheless, some students require extra assistance and specific support - whether this be with particular academic, social-emotional or physical requirements or with issues relating to past personal circumstances.

Recognise offers targeted support for students with such needs and is able to provide individualised assistance and programmes for children who might otherwise be alienated within or excluded from a mainstream context. We have already had great success with young people with a range of issues, and we partner with experts and parents to provide a comprehensive analysis of a child's needs and a realistic pathway forwards.

We have also found that with some children who have exhibited mild behavioural problems in other schools, that once they attend Recognise, they feel secure and valued in our small environment, and display no such behavioural traits at all.

Recognise is happy to discuss with any parent, whether their child is enrolled with us or not, any concerns of this nature that they might have.

3.4 The Progression of Subject Matter

Whilst our curriculum identifies areas of learning for all the subjects at all the ages, the method of presentation changes according to age. At the younger ages, subject material is integrated into the school day and will often be approached in

terms of a themed topic. As the children get older, they increasingly have lessons in particular subject areas. With the oldest age groups, all subjects have specific times in which they are studied and students begin to elect particular areas of study in which to specialise.

3.5 Assessment

Assessment is an on-going, complex and subtle process and should not be reduced to ticking boxes or calculating percentages. Because of our small classes and the close knowledge our teachers have of their students, we do not need to conduct the endless written tests that 'big' schools do. Our teachers closely observe the children's work and will know at what level they are working. They will have regular conversations with parents and let parents know and see in which areas their child is excelling or struggling. We carefully monitor each child in each area and 'step-in' to give extra, individualised support where necessary. It is well known that direct, immediate, on-going conversations between students and teachers as to how to improve, is by far the most useful form of assessment dialogue and communication method. Our small classes are designed to facilitate this, and we see excellent progress because of it.

We do however, also understand the need for a concrete appraisal of a child's skills for the purposes of transition to other schools and so that you, the parents, have a clear indication of your child's progress and ability in relation to 'the norm'.

To this end, we use the UK National Curriculum system of levels that range from 1-8. These 8 levels are subdivided into 3 - giving a total of 24 possible progression points as children move upwards in ability. These levels are internationally recognised and are 'formative' in nature. This means that each level represents a set of skills that can be described to you in real terms. For example, if we assess a child as having reached a particular level in mathematics, then this level will clearly tell you what a child can and cannot do and will indicate the next areas for progression.

This assessment system is well-understood by many parents and other schools world-wide, including in the USA.

The National Curriculum levels we supply can also be 'normalised'. This means that we can say that, should a child be working at for example, Level 6 in Mathematics at the age of 11, that this is an exceptional level for a person of this age. Likewise, we can say that a Level 3 in an area of literacy at age 13 is somewhat below an expected level for this age group.

The chart overleaf will show you how this level system works.

3.6 Subject Content

Regarding subject content, our curriculum closely mirrors the UK NC (2014) in the key areas of Maths, English and Science. These programmes are structured, challenging, and appropriately broad. Subjects are sub-divided into topic and skills areas and this helps us with organising our mixed-age group teaching programme (see below). Subjects such as History or Geography or others might be altered to meet our international setting. The UK NC content for History for example is very 'empire-centric' and inappropriate for us. We change it to provide a broader view. Likewise, in Geography, we look at world environmental issues rather than for example, 'Pollution in The Thames'. In Literature, we try to look at a whole range of authors from around the globe, from different cultures and from different times. PE, Art, Music and Technology also feature heavily in the curriculum, and we very much value for our children, the practical, creative and physical aspects offered in these areas. Chinese language is offered to all students at their level. In all our subject areas, we value and emphasise active learning strategies (see lesson structures) and with our small classes, we feel able to stretch, engage and support children of all abilities with such an approach.

3.7 Mixed-age classes

In any classroom, in any school, the class will have within it a range of ability. It will have children with different learning styles, with varied personalities and with differing levels of maturity. Our school is no different in this respect but we are different in the way we set about catering for this diversity. At Recognise, we think that age is not the prime factor in determining what a child should and can learn. We believe that each child should be taught according to their unique situation, and we try to structure our school to best allow this to happen. To this end, we place a child in the class that we feel is most beneficial for their development rather than considering solely their age. Classes are therefore often comprised of a mix of ages.

In discussion with parents, we place pupils based on a number of factors. This includes their academic ability, their social and personal maturity, their previous school experiences and any specific learning needs they may have.

Due to the small nature of the school and the free interaction of all classes with one another, pupils generally do not mind what class they are in, as long as their class is appropriate to their abilities.

Within the classroom, to ensure that all pupils are receiving an optimal level of education, the school uses a number of approaches:

Inclusive discussions: Most lessons begin with whole-class discussion; the teacher is able to ensure that all pupils are involved and engaged.

Small group activities: The teacher carefully chooses the members of each group when undertaking class activities to ensure that each pupil is engaged at an appropriate level.

Ability appropriate levels of work: Our 'learning ladders' for each subject and topic area are well-organised and they allow the teacher to teach the same study area to the whole class whilst picking and choosing an appropriate level of task difficulty for individual students.

Individual activities & tuition: Due to the small numbers in each class, throughout the school day and most lessons, the teacher is able to sit down with each child and personally help them with their work.

Assessments: By consistently observing and monitoring students, the teacher is able to identify the appropriate level of work and provide the extra support each pupil needs.

Appropriate levels of homework: All students are given age and ability appropriate homework. Older students and students of advanced ability are given homework that ensures they always feel sufficiently stretched. All students are encouraged to believe that they can succeed and will consistently progress academically.

Role models & mentors: The mix of ages in each class helps learning; older students are encouraged to help and mentor younger students, giving them a strong sense of responsibility as well as helping them to embed their own knowledge. For the younger pupil they have the benefit of older role models to look up to and learn from. We try to ensure that each child experiences the benefits of being both an older and younger member of a class.

3.8 Teaching Methods

As you have probably noticed from above, we avoid the 'lecture-style' lessons in which all students are given the same information and then the same tasks to complete. We also do not engage in 'busy work' - the sort of 'work' that's prime purpose is to keep children quiet and give teachers a rest. Instead, we endeavour to make each lesson a time when students actively engage with the subject matter, where they independently and collaboratively research knowledge and develop skills and where they reflect on how they can improve. To this end, throughout most of the school, we base our lessons on the following lesson structure.

Introduction

- **Review** the last topic area and relate to the current topic.
- **Discuss and explore** the new topic as a class.

- **Practical application** - discuss how the topic is applied in everyday life.
- **Make Connections** - discuss and explore connections between the new topic and other topic areas and subjects.

Main Activity (involving two or more of the following)

- **Drama or experimentation**- students enact an area of the topic or conduct relevant practical experiments
- **Group Work** - small groups are set an area to explore.
- **Individual tasks** - students receive individual targets and tasks
- **Technology** - students use media, technology, computer programmes and websites where appropriate.
- **Reinforcement** - tasks are completed, skills practised or information recorded

Conclusion

- **Concluding discussion**, recapping the main points.
- **Short quiz** to test new knowledge
- **Setting of homework** when appropriate

3.9 Reporting to Parents

We formally report to parents each term, supplying UK NC levels and formative (narrative) comments for each subject area. Comments about effort and progress will be supplied in two of these reports. We also issue 'benchmark' reports at the start of the first term so that we can track progress made during the year. We do not hold formal Parent Evenings but parents can make appointments to see teachers and to discuss their child's progress on any Monday, Wednesday or Thursday at 3.45pm.

3.10 Transition to and from other schools

Our formal reports will be useful information for you to supply to any future school. We will also give you the child's work folder and, if you wish, write letters of introduction and recommendation.

We have had children transition to different types of school all around the world and we will help you with any specific requirements that a school or country may have.

Children arriving from other schools will initially be placed in a class based on the information supplied to us. They will be closely observed during the first week(s) and if a change of class seems appropriate, we will discuss the matter with you first.

3.11 Extra-Curricular Activities / After School Activities (ASAs)

Extra-curricular visits, outdoor learning activities and further learning opportunities are a regular feature of our school life and they enhance the children's learning experiences. Visits to museums, exhibitions, trips to the park, swimming classes, ice-skating are just some examples.

Twice a year we also have school shows; often plays or music or dancing or combinations thereof. These are always enormous fun and are great opportunities for the children (and parents) to get further involved with the performing arts. In addition, we place much emphasis on Art experiences, and technology also features highly in the work we do.

There are also optional whole-school social events for the children, including a sleepover, a Bingo and movie night, a school 'dance party', a couple of themed weeks, as well as the usual events like Halloween, Chinese New Year and more.

We also offer sessions of After School Activities (ASAs) - activities that are fun and formative and take place from 3.45 - 4.45pm. At present, we offer two six-week blocks of ASAs in the course of the year, occurring on both Tuesdays and Thursdays. Children can choose from a range of things to do - last year we had activities such as cooking, art, model building, juggling, golf, ukulele, chess, spy-school, 3D printing, gardening and many, many more. Parents are welcome to join the staff in offering ASAs.

Whilst we are a small school, we think that we offer a big range of extra activities for the children, and we are always open to suggestions for more.

3.12 Chinese Lessons

Our student intake is international and varied, with children from a wide range of language and geographical backgrounds. We also have some children with mixed expatriate / Chinese parentage. Most of our international families welcome the opportunity for their children to learn Chinese, and for those families who have Chinese as one of their home languages, a continuing development of one of their home languages is very important to them. To this end, we offer Chinese for four days a week during the regular school day. Most of the children partake in these lessons but for the few that don't, we offer them extra learning in other areas. The lessons are 45 minutes long. Generally, we will group those that have Chinese as one of their home languages together, and the teacher will establish suitable vocabulary and other learning targets according to the individual and in agreement with parents. Expatriate learners will also be placed in small groups and have the option of working towards particular qualifications / levels where appropriate. With small class numbers, and with the opportunity to negotiate the amount of Chinese learning that parents / children feel is appropriate for them, we think that four lessons a week is plenty; the children will cover a lot of material in this time.

3.13 Well-being and HOM

Well-being is our name for what is often called PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education). It involves a wide range of topics that relate to growing up, being with others and managing and looking after yourself. This is a mandatory subject area in the UK and in other countries (although it's often entitled something else). HOM stands for 'Habits of the Mind'. This sounds a bit jingoistic but what it involves is a set of activities and language that helps us reinforce positive attitudes towards learning and life. It helps

young people see the value of, for example, 'persistence' and 'co-operation'. We teach such values explicitly through set activities and we also use the language of HOM to encourage the children in their other school work and interactions.

HOM and Well-being are integrated together and are taught in two sessions in the week. Student Council activities are also a part of this strand of the curriculum.

3.14 PE Lessons

We use outside facilities for PE. We like to give the children a good range of sporting opportunities and we use local coaches as well as regular staff to deliver our programme. In addition to the usual range of team and individual sports, for our older children in particular, we try to offer more broadening and specialist skills opportunities. In the past, these have included activities such as archery, yoga, squash, fencing, rock-climbing, dancing, bowling, horse-riding, ice-skating and many more.

Swimming is offered at least once a year for all students; we feel very strongly that increased water safety and ability is a prime responsibility for us all for our children.

If parents have a particular sporting interest or talent that they would like to offer the children as part of their PE curriculum, we welcome such involvement. PE is broken down into 6, 6 week blocks.

