

Working with other organisations

Leeds Community Mandarin Chinese School

National Excellence Awards Winner 2008

Background

The Leeds Community Mandarin Chinese School (LCMCS) is a tripartite initiative between the Yorkshire Chinese Community, Education Leeds (the Local Authority) and Prince Henry's Grammar school Specialist Language College, Otley.

The supplementary school draws students aged 5 to 16 from Leeds and the surrounding area and specialises in teaching Chinese Mandarin Language, and various creative cultural activities including Chinese Art and essay writing. It works in partnership with Prince Henry's to provide the language learning and facilitation of language exams, and is supported by Education Leeds in terms of provision of premises.

The supplementary school is established as a voluntary youth organisation, and as such encourages and supports young people to understand various aspects of Chinese culture, to develop their emotional stability and to stimulate their talents, self-esteem and confidence.

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The collaboration was established because the supplementary school was looking for larger premises and at the same time Education Leeds was seeking a Chinese community organisation for collaborative working. The LA brokered the partnership with Prince Henry's because it is a languages specialist school. Education Leeds supports the partnership in terms of provision of premises: the school is delivered on a Saturday for two hours from the Little London Community Primary School and the authority covers these costs, while Prince Henry's provides financial support by employing and providing the salaries for six tutors along with teacher training and professional advice. This commitment is given irrespective of the fact that the two schools have only a few pupils in common. The working relationship is very positive, close, and effective with the deputy headteacher of Prince Henry's representing their interest. It is formalised via an agreed constitution, which lays out each partner's responsibilities within the partnership. The arrangement suits all three since the mainstream school arranges exchange visits with schools in China each year, and staff at the supplementary school is able to provide advice and guidance. Since the establishment of the partnership in 2000, this supplementary school has grown dramatically from just 12 students to a current roll of 118 with an additional 40 on a waiting list.

The financial support and training opportunities provided by the LA and mainstream school are seen as strengths of the partnership; as are good communication, a close positive working relationship and the provision of cultural activities developed in partnership with Prince Henry's. A well-established system of governance managed by volunteering parents, experienced and enthusiastic teaching staff, and close integration with the local community are also seen as strengths of the school. Good

leadership, routine management and parental involvement are the keys to the success. The tripartite partnership keeps the school running smoothly.

The success of the school is reflected in its public examination results. Since 2001, 31 students have sat GCSE Chinese, and 30 students achieved A*s; in 2007, all of the eleven students sat GCSE Mandarin achieved A*, among which 2 of them are in the national top 10. The school would like to deliver A level Mandarin Chinese, but are limited by the need to use extra rooms and recruit more teaching. A better-negotiated agreement and additional financial assistance would benefit future development.

Top Tips

- Get everyone involved in the school management
- Elect a small group to conduct the daily management.

Further details

The LCMCS has a useful website which provides viewers with a wealth of information about specific and current information, including showcasing students work.

<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/cssa/Chinese%20School/ChineseSchool.htm>

For more details see the case study on our partner site Our Languages

http://www.cilt.org.uk/commlangs/our_langs/partnerships/partnerships.htm