

# NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026



# Table of Content

<b><u>01</u></b>	<b>EDITORIAL</b> Aaron Nicoll, Professional Development Assistant	<b><u>31</u></b>	<b>JORDANHILL</b> Confucius Hubs Updates
<b><u>02</u></b>	<b>CISS PROJECTS &amp; EVENTS</b>	<b><u>35</u></b>	<b>MIDLOTHIAN</b> CET Reflection
<b><u>07</u></b>	<b>EAST AYRSHIRE</b> Confucius Hubs Updates	<b><u>37</u></b>	<b>MORAY</b> Confucius Hubs Updates CET Reflection
<b><u>16</u></b>	<b>EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE</b> Confucius Hubs Updates	<b><u>41</u></b>	<b>NORTH AYRSHIRE</b> CET Reflection
<b><u>19</u></b>	<b>EAST RENFREWSHIRE</b> Confucius Hubs Updates CET Reflection	<b><u>43</u></b>	<b>PERTH &amp; KINROSS</b> Confucius Hubs Updates
<b><u>26</u></b>	<b>DUNFERMLINE</b> Confucius Hubs Updates	<b><u>47</u></b>	<b>STIRLING</b> Confucius Hubs Updates
<b><u>28</u></b>	<b>GLASGOW</b> Confucius Hubs Updates	<b><u>49</u></b>	<b>CISS TEAM NEWS</b>

Cover Photo:  
Pupils from Douglas Academy



Please send  
submissions to  
**CISS-INFO@STRATH.AC.UK**



# Editorial

**Aaron Nicoll**

**GTCS Teacher of Mandarin/Professional Development Assistant**

## Welcome to the summer edition of the CISS newsletter

As the days grow longer and the academic year reaches its peak, we find ourselves at a natural point of reflection. In my role as a Professional Development Assistant, I have the privilege of watching our community of educators and learners evolve, and this season feels particularly vibrant. Summer isn't just a break in the calendar; it is a time for renewal, deep learning, and the strengthening of the cultural bridges we work so hard to build.

## Empowering Our Educators

This past term has been a whirlwind of activity. From immersive workshops to collaborative sessions, our focus has remained steadfast: providing our staff and partners with the tools they need to excel. We've seen a remarkable engagement with our professional development activities, proving that the desire to innovate in the classroom knows no off-season.

## A Summer of Discovery: Tianjin 2026

This summer is particularly special as we bid a fond farewell to the staff and pupils (100) heading off on the **2026 CISS Immersion Trip to Tianjin Normal University**. This trip is more than just travel; it is a transformative opportunity to live the language and culture we study so diligently.

Furthermore, I want to extend the very best luck to our dedicated scholars from across the country who are beginning their **year-long scholarship at Tianjin Normal University**. Your courage to step into a new environment for a full year is commendable, and we look forward to hearing how this journey shapes your perspectives.

As you embark on these journeys, remember the Chinese proverb:

**"读万卷书，行万里路"**

*(Dú wàn juǎn shū, xíng wàn lǐ lù)*

**"Reading ten thousand books is not as useful as travelling ten thousand miles."**

May your travels across those "ten thousand miles" bring you insights that no textbook ever could.

## Look Ahead

While our travellers head East, the CISS team is already looking ahead to the upcoming term. We are currently finalising a suite of initiatives designed to support your career progression and pedagogical skills. Whether you are looking to refine your language teaching pedagogy or integrate new digital tools into your curriculum, our upcoming programs are built with your professional growth in mind.

I wish you all a restful, inspiring, and sun-filled summer. To those travelling to Tianjin: safe travels, and we cannot wait to see the photos!

Warm regards,

*Aaron*

## CISS Projects & Events

### Virtual Exchange Teacher Programme

Back for its 12<sup>th</sup> time, CISS' award-winning online Mandarin programme for BGE learners is going from strength to strength, with 30 classes across Scotland taking part in the summer term. The Virtual Exchange Teacher programme connects BGE Mandarin classes from P5-S3 with student teachers from two Chinese Universities to enjoy weekly interactive online Mandarin lessons direct from China. Working in pairs, the student teachers work with Scottish learners and their teachers to deliver a programme of progressive lessons that are lively, engaging, and fully aligned with Curriculum for Excellence. The lessons are delivered at three levels and assume no prior knowledge. Classes can sign up for one block of lessons and continue at the next level later that year, or the next year if they wish. The lessons can be delivered anywhere in the country, meaning it is an equitable way of meeting L3 requirements and supporting language learning where staff may not have the knowledge or confidence to deliver another language themselves.

CISS has strong partnerships with our partners in China, Southwest Jiaotong University in Chengdu and Tianjin Normal University in Tianjin, meaning this is a win-win initiative. Scottish learners and their teachers receive high-quality Mandarin lessons from native speakers who can share cultural insights and real-life examples straight to the comfort of their classroom. Meanwhile, the Chinese students receive valuable teaching practice and the chance to engage in regular, quality professional learning workshops, delivered by CISS's own staff. Students from both universities then have the chance to apply to come to Scotland and teach in person in our schools for a year.

The virtual exchange teacher programme runs from October to December and April to June each year, for 8 weeks, with registration for class teachers taking place from August and February. Keep an eye out for further information by [signing up to the SCILT bulletin](#).

## Eco Learning Partners

CISS flagship Learning for Sustainability project, Eco Learning Partners, has been running since the initial pilot in 2021. In November 2025, it was recognised by the Chinese International Education Foundation as a model case in innovative digital learning at the Chinese Language Global Conference in Beijing. Eco Learning Partners is a partnership with the Tianjin Municipal Education Commission, linking Scottish primary schools with Chinese primary schools in Tianjin, China. It combines learning for sustainability and climate change awareness with Mandarin language learning and gives learners an opportunity to use their language skills and share their learning with their peers across the world via video link.



From April to June 2026, 23 classes across Scotland are taking part in the project, developing their intercultural competencies and building strong relationships with their peers across the world. They are given the chance to put their newly acquired language skills to good use as they communicate with their Chinese partners, sharing what they've learned about climate change and introducing their partners to aspects of Scottish culture, whilst gaining an insight into the daily lives of their Chinese counterparts.

Working with their Chinese exchange teacher and their class teacher, through a variety of inter-disciplinary activities with a Learning for Sustainability theme, Scottish primary pupils are building their skills in communication, presentation, teamwork, problem-solving, creativity and technology. Eco Learning Partners provides a structured framework for classes to use as a basis for their learning, whilst allowing class teachers the flexibility to incorporate activities that best meet the needs of their own individual context. The Eco Learning Partners project covers a range of BGE experiences and outcomes across multiple curricular areas. To find out more, visit the [Eco Learning Partners](#) pages on the CISS website and watch out for registration details coming in the new school year.



# Discovering China

## From Aberdeen to London: Discovering China Student Shines at 'Chinese Bridge' Mandarin Speaking Competition Final

Shima Taleb, one of this year's Discovering China National 5 students, was one of the 10 contestants who reached the final after intense heats in the individual language ability category (Beginner Plus level) this March. In total, over 70 schools and more than 300 students enrolled in this year's competition across both individual and group categories.

The final took place in London on 30th April. At the Beginner Plus level, 10 contestants from schools across the UK delivered impressive presentations. Some introduced Chinese folktales, others talked about their week in a fun and engaging way. Shima, meanwhile, skilfully used various Chinese idioms to explain how we can look after our health. Following the presentation, contestants had to answer two questions from the judges and complete three translation tasks.

Shima's performance was outstanding, showcasing her hard work and growing proficiency in Mandarin. For each category, there were 3 winners. Although she did not win a top-three award, she thoroughly enjoyed the talk-show-like competition. After the event, Shima also had the chance to explore Chinatown in London. It was her first visit there and her first time trying authentic Chinese food. What a day!



Inspired by her childhood friend, who is from Malaysia, Shima has always wanted to learn Mandarin. 'I saw that online Mandarin classes at national qualification levels were available during registration one morning, so I went to see Mr Berhane', she recalled. And this decision opened up many opportunities. In addition to the weekly N5 lessons, Shima also passed HSK level 2 and successfully gained a scholarship place on the Wuhan International Summer Programme through the Aberdeen University Confucius Institute. She is excited about going to China this summer and thrilled at the opportunity to pick up authentic native tones and learn more about vibrant life in China!



**More information about SCILT Discovering China Mandarin Programme can be found on the SCILT website.**

### Mandarin in Grange Academy and Annanhill Primary School

#### 1. Lunch Club

At Grange, pupils have the opportunity to take part in a wide variety of activities during our Lunch Club.



Regular Mahjong games at the Lunch Club



Pupils made festive paper-cutting while enjoying traditional Chinese tea

## 2. Mid-Autumn Festival

During the Mid-Autumn Festival, pupils learned how to make Oreo Mooncakes. The Mooncakes were delicious and everyone had a great fun making them.



Pupils tasting their hand-made mooncakes

### 3. Partner School Project

We kept in close touch with our partner school in China - Tianjin Xinhua High School. We had FaceTime calls with our partner school before their winter holiday and exchange pen pal letters regularly.

#### Pen pal letters

#### Chinese pupils introducing their dumplings



#### Letters from Chinese pen pals



#### Gifts exchanged with our partner school



#### 4. Dumpling Making

The activity of making traditional Chinese dumplings involved pupils from all year groups as well as teachers.



## 5. Chinese New Year senior calligraphy writing/watch GALA

We held a lively celebration for Chinese New Year. Senior students practised calligraphy and watched the Chinese New Year Gala, experiencing strong festive vibes.



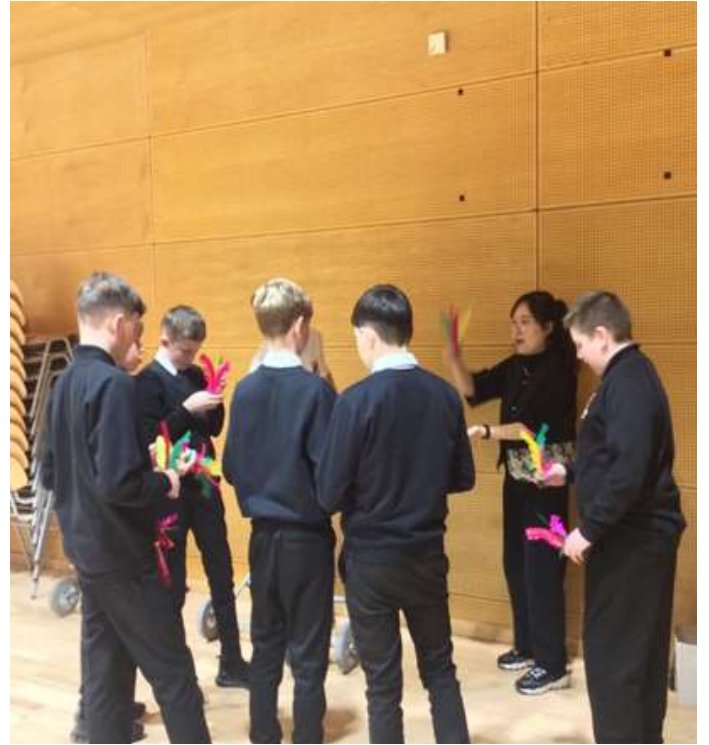
Students wrote couplets and recorded festive greeting videos to share on the school's Instagram



S3 students enjoyed watching the Spring Festival Gala and had fun mimicking the robot acts

## 6. Chinese New Year - Workshops

Pupils took part in a series of fun Chinese New Year workshops, featuring dragon dancing, arrow tossing, shuttlecock kicking, traditional Chinese costume try-on and writing Chinese blessing characters.



## 7. Competitions

S2 and S3 pupils entered the Chinese poem writing and speaking competition with our partner school in China, demonstrating their language skills and love for Chinese culture.

		清	明			
	唐		杜	牧		
清	明	时	节	雨	纷	纷，
路	上	行	人	欲	断	魂。
借	问	酒	家	何	处	有，
牧	童	遥	指	杏	花	村。

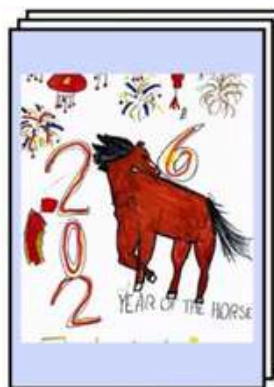
		小	池			
	宋	·	杨	万	里	
泉	眼	无	声	惜	细	流，
树	阴	照	水	爱	晴	柔。
小	荷	才	露	尖	尖	角，
早	有	蜻	蜓	立	上	头。

		山	行			
	唐		杜	牧		
远	上	寒	山	石	径	斜，
白	云	生	处	有	人	家。
停	车	坐	爱	枫	林	晚，
霜	叶	红	于	二	月	花。

		咏	柳			
	唐		贺	知	章	
碧	玉	妆	成	一	树	高，
万	条	垂	下	绿	丝	绦。
不	知	细	叶	谁	裁	出，
二	月	春	风	似	剪	刀。



Pupils held a poster competition for China's National Day and the Year of the Horse, showcasing their remarkable creativity.



## 8. Primary School Chinese Activities

Beyond the secondary school, CETs also ran engaging Chinese activities for pupils at Annanhill Primary School. Students actively participated in the dragon dance, enhancing their knowledge of Chinese New Year customs.



# EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE

## DOUGLAS ACADEMY

### A Year of Vibrant Cultural Immersion at Douglas Academy

It has been an action-packed year at Douglas Academy, where the school community has fully embraced the richness of Chinese culture through hands-on learning and global interaction.

#### Hands-On Traditions at the Chinese Club

Our weekly **Chinese Club** has become a hub for creative exploration. Pupils have delved into traditional crafts, learning the intricate art of tying **Chinese knots** and the elegant techniques for styling hair into traditional buns. During festival periods, the club gathered to enjoy China's famous gala shows, providing a window into modern Chinese celebrations.

A major highlight was our **live link-up** with **Tianjin's No.42 Middle School**. Despite the geographic and time difference, pupils from both countries engaged in a spirited dialogue, eager to make friends and learn about each other's daily lives.



#### Masterclasses and Music

We were honoured to welcome a **senior Chinese guest** who amazed our students with her mastery of **Jianzi** (Chinese shuttlecock). Demonstrating incredible skill by keeping the shuttlecock in the air for 56 consecutive kicks, she inspired our pupils to try the sport themselves. Furthermore, the school was treated to a professional performance on the **Pipa**, an iconic traditional string instrument, which brought sounds of ancient China directly into our classrooms.

## Excellence in Language and Scholarship

Douglas Academy pupils continue to excel in national arenas. Seven of our senior pupils travelled to Edinburgh for the **SCEN Chinese Speech Competition**, where they showcased remarkable proficiency. We are proud to announce that **four pupils earned second prize** and **three pupils earned third prize**.

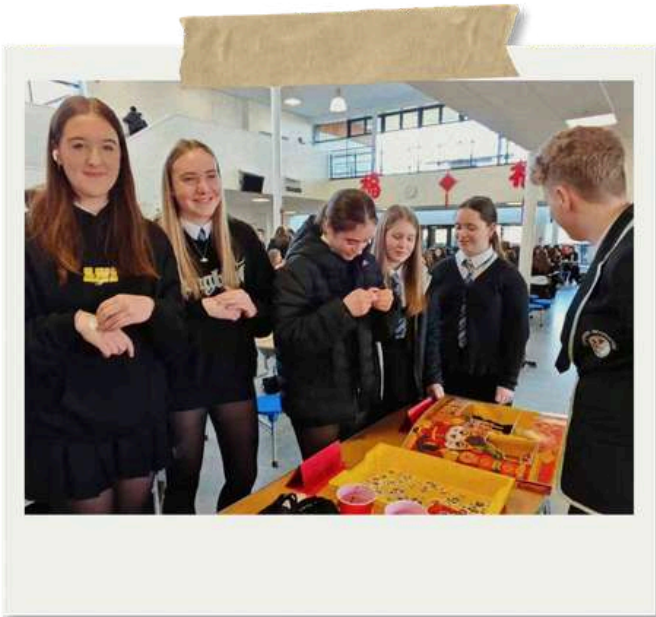
Special recognition goes to **S6 pupil Ruby Attwell**, whose dedication to Mandarin has been truly inspiring. Ruby contributed her calligraphy skills to write all the **福 (fú) "good fortune"** characters for our festival celebrations. Her hard work has culminated in her securing a **CISS Scholarship** to study Mandarin in China for nine months starting in 2026.



## Spring Festival: A Community Immersion

The **Chinese Spring Festival** transformed our social area into a vibrant marketplace of culture. The event featured a traditional **lion dance**, which ignited a sense of joy throughout the school. Pupils explored various stalls offering calligraphy, panda-themed temporary tattoos, and stickers.

In the unique twist on the tradition of **Red Envelopes (Hongbao)**, teachers and staff wrote personalised good wishes for every S1 pupil. This gesture allowed the entire staff to participate in the cultural immersion and spread the festive spirit.



## Family Learning and Master Chefs

Our celebration of the Lunar New Year extended to the **Home Economics department**, where we hosted a **family dumpling-making workshop**. This inter-departmental collaboration brought several families together to become "master chefs" for the day. We were particularly impressed by a mother from **Taiwan**, whose artistic techniques helped the group create beautiful, artfully crafted dumplings.





### Reaching Our Local Clusters

Our outreach program continues to flourish. Accompanied by **two Chinese Exchange Teachers (CETs)**, we visit four local cluster primary schools — **Clober, Craigdu, Milngavie, and Baldernock** — to introduce Mandarin to younger learners. Seeing the happy and curious faces of children as they learn their first Chinese characters and strokes is a highlight of our week. While we didn't take home a trophy in this year's horse-themed poster competition, we were incredibly proud of the creativity shown by all our pupils.

### Looking Forward: Making Global Friends

Douglas Academy is proud to participate in the **Eco Learning Partners (ELP) project**. Everyone is eagerly looking forward to our upcoming live link-up lessons with Chinese primary schools, as we continue our mission to foster global friendships and cross-cultural understanding.



# EAST RENFREWSHIRE

## BUSBY PRIMARY SCHOOL

### CET REFLECTION

#### Enjoyable Teaching Experiences

*Yanchang Chen, Chinese Exchange Teacher in East Renfrewshire*

Looking back on this year of teaching, I feel an immense sense of joy and fulfilment. I spent a rich and joyful Chinese New Year here. On the eve of the festival, I led the children in experiencing Chinese calligraphy. We wrote characters such as "Fu", "Ping'an" and made beautiful paper-cut window decorations.

In the after-school calligraphy club, I guided students in creating ink-blowing artwork on paper vases inspired by traditional Chinese blue and white porcelain patterns. We also made bookmarks with distinctive Chinese characteristics.

I guided the children in practising traditional Chinese calligraphy by writing oracle bone script.



At the school's multicultural celebration party, I wore a red mamianqun. I also prepared a black mamianqun for the children to try on.

During the Open Area skill station sessions with Primary 1, I prepared panda origami and five-pointed stars with Chinese cultural significance.

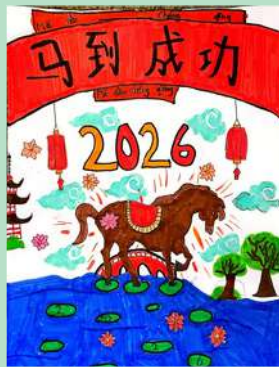
In the Chinese New Year Poster Competition organised by the Confucius Institute, Cosmo, Akshara, and Nehal from Busby Primary School, along with Amelia from Carolside Primary School, received Honourable Mentions.



"I never imagined that my teaching life here would be so joyful."



Cosmo



Akshara



Nehal



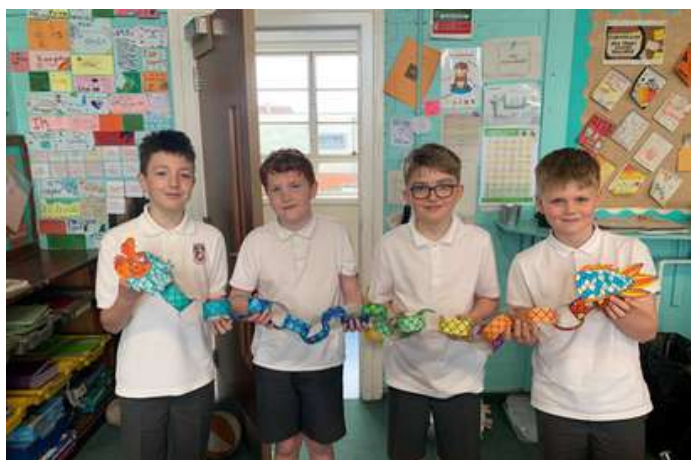
Amelia



I also prepared a special cultural experience focused on the Chinese "dragon". The students coloured and designed their own dragons and worked together in groups to create long dragon models. Some children even created dragons with four heads, which was especially fun.



What was particularly special was that one class teacher displayed the completed dragon creations on a corridor wall in the school. When the children's dragons were placed on the wall, it felt as if their hopes and joy were flying freely in the sky.



# CROSS ARTHURLIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Joyful Mandarin Music Learning at Cross Arthurlie Primary School

In March 2026, Primary 4 Class 1 at Cross Arthurlie Primary School in East Renfrewshire enjoyed a lively and creative cross-curricular Mandarin song workshop, delivered jointly by Gillian, a music teacher from East Renfrewshire, and Xin Song, the school's Mandarin language teacher.



During the engaging lesson, pupils used a range of classroom musical instruments to accompany their singing, as they learned the festive Mandarin song 'Gong Xi Gong Xi'. The children also experienced the playful action song 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes', following the rhythm to point to and name different body parts in Mandarin, making vocabulary learning relaxed and memorable.

Combining lively music with interactive language practice, the collaborative lesson brought Chinese culture to life in a fun and accessible way. It successfully sparked the children's enthusiasm for Mandarin learning, broadened their cultural awareness, and enriched the school's multicultural teaching provision. This joint activity also set a positive example for creative cross-subject collaboration between music and language teaching at the school.



# MEARNS CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

## Chinese Club

Every Wednesday lunchtime, all S1 and S2 pupils have the opportunity to immerse themselves in Chinese language and culture. The club is student-led, allowing pupils to choose activities that interest them most. Popular choices include Chinese arts and crafts, opera mask making, and playing Chinese checkers, among many others!



## SCEN Visit

In January, we were honoured to welcome SCEN Chair Simon Macaulay, SCEN Administrative and Communications Officer Yunshen and guest speakers James Brodie, Willow Bailey and Ana Scougall to Mearns Castle High School. Our S2 pupils really enjoyed their fantastic presentations. Thanks, Yun, for making this happen.

## Chinese New Year Celebration

This term, our Chinese classes have been galloping into celebrations for the Year of the Horse! Pupils have been exploring the significance of this zodiac sign, which symbolises energy, independence, and a spirit of adventure. To mark the occasion, students participated in decorating the classroom and filling in red envelopes for classmates and writing Chinese New Year Cards to parents. It has been a fantastic way for everyone to connect with the festive spirit of the Lunar New Year while developing their language skills.



# ST NINIAN'S HIGH SCHOOL

## St Ninian's Pupils Ring in Chinese New Year with Cultural Celebration

*Music, dance and language learning take centre stage at annual school event*

Pupils at St Ninian's High School celebrated Chinese New Year in style on 10 February 2026, hosting their annual event in the school forum.

The celebration highlighted Chinese culture and language learning through a diverse programme of performances. Students delivered a presentation on the Chinese Zodiac, while others performed traditional and contemporary Chinese music, using a range of instruments, including the violin, flute, clarinet, guitar and viola, alongside vocal performances.



A standout moment of the event was a long silk fan dance performed by members of the school's Mandarin lunchtime club. S1 pupils also spoke about their experiences within the club, which is led by Mrs Zhou, reflecting on its impact on their cultural understanding and language skills.

The audience also heard from a former pupil and Chinese Bridge competition winner, who spoke about the benefits of learning Mandarin and the opportunities it can provide.

Performers from the Glasgow Chinese Recreation Centre contributed to the event with a drum dance and fan dance, later joining an S4 pupil for a Tai Chi Kung Fu fan dance.



Headteacher Mr O'Neil presented awards to winners of the S1 Chinese New Year poster competition, as well as to pupils recognised for their progress in Mandarin.

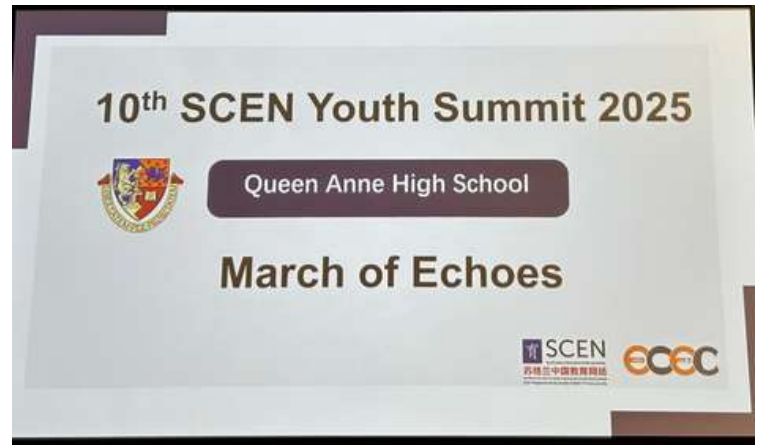
The event concluded with pupils, staff and guests enjoying traditional Chinese food, bringing the celebrations to a fitting close. The occasion not only marked the significance of Chinese New Year as a time of renewal and unity, but also had a positive influence on young people by strengthening cultural understanding, building confidence and encouraging global awareness, while fostering a strong sense of connection and shared enjoyment between the school and the wider Chinese community.



## QUEEN ANNE HIGH SCHOOL

Pupils from Queen Anne High participated in many vibrant Chinese language and cultural activities throughout the 2025-2026 session. Our CET Jingyi Wang helped organise and run many of these events.

In November, we took part in the 10<sup>th</sup> SCEN Youth Summit, attended by our S3 and National 5 Mandarin pupils. Some of the school's senior pupils played March of Echoes, a rousing Chinese drum piece specially written for the occasion by music teacher Laura Harlow.



To celebrate the Year of the Horse 2026, our students took part in a series of meaningful events. They wrote New Year greetings on bookmarks, enjoyed videos about Chinese Spring Festival traditions, and experienced hands-on cooking by making delicious, authentic Chinese dishes. These activities deepened their understanding of Chinese customs and interest in the Chinese language and culture.

On 20 April 2026, we marked the 17th International Chinese Language Day. Students watched informative videos to explore the fascinating origins of Chinese characters, the special solar term of Guyu (Grain Rain), and the growing importance of Chinese as a global language. This event inspired them to appreciate the beauty of Chinese writing and recognise its value in international communication.



Finally, after a break of a few years, we are once again presenting pupils for the HSK. On 16 May, nineteen pupils will sit Level 1, and nine of those pupils will also sit Level 2. Pupils have been working towards the HSK exams as a way of improving their skills in Chinese and to help prepare for the scholarship they are taking up in Tianjin next year. We hope that there will be an ever-growing number of pupils taking advantage of this opportunity to consolidate their Mandarin.



## King's Park Secondary School

### Mandarin at King's Park Secondary School

#### S1 Mandarin - Discovering a New Language and Culture!

This term, our S1 pupils have made a fantastic start to their Mandarin learning journey. They have been exploring not only the language but also the rich and vibrant culture behind it.

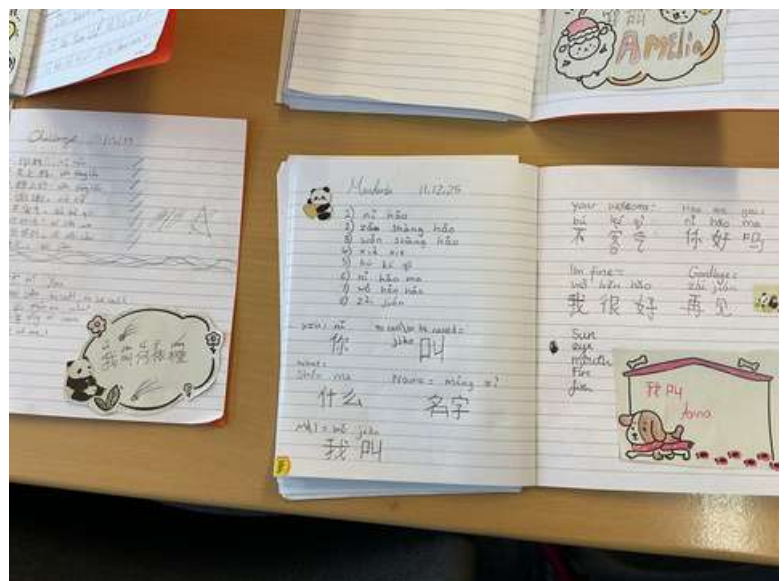
Our pupils have built a strong foundation in basic Mandarin communication. They can now:

- Greet each other confidently using simple phrases
- Count numbers and recognise them in different contexts
- Identify and say a range of colours

Alongside language learning, pupils have taken part in a variety of engaging cultural activities:

- **Chinese New Year:** Pupils learned about how this important festival is celebrated, including traditions, decorations, and the meaning behind them. Pupils also had the exciting opportunity to watch a Peking Opera group from the University of Glasgow.
- **Chinese Zodiac Animals:** We explored the 12 zodiac animals and what they represent. Pupils especially enjoyed finding out which animal they were born under!
- **Kung Fu:** Pupils were introduced to the history and cultural significance of Kung Fu and even had the chance to try out some basic movements.

We are very proud of the enthusiasm and effort shown by all S1 pupils so far.



## S2 Mandarin - Building Skills and Exploring History

Our S2 pupils have continued to make excellent progress in Mandarin, developing their communication skills while deepening their understanding of Chinese culture and history.

This term, pupils have expanded their ability to communicate in Mandarin with greater confidence and detail. They can now:

- Use a wider range of greetings and respond appropriately in conversations
- Talk about their age and birthday using numbers
- Introduce and describe members of their family

As well as language learning, pupils have engaged in exciting cultural and historical topics:

- **Chinese New Year:** Pupils revisited this important festival, learning more about traditions and how celebrations vary across regions.
- **Soldiers' Uniforms Across Dynasties:** Pupils studied the different uniforms worn by soldiers in various Chinese dynasties, exploring how clothing, armour, and design changed over time and what this tells us about history and society.
- **The Great Wall of China:** We investigated the purpose, construction, and historical significance of this world-famous landmark, linking it to China's history of defence and empire.

These topics have helped bring the language to life and given pupils a deeper appreciation of China's rich heritage.

We are very proud of the effort and enthusiasm shown by all S2 pupils.



## Mandarin Lunchtime Club - Creativity, Culture and Fun!

Our Mandarin Lunchtime Club has been a vibrant and exciting space where pupils can explore Chinese language and culture in a relaxed, hands-on environment. It's been fantastic to see so many pupils getting involved and trying something new!

The club has focused on creative and interactive activities that bring Chinese culture to life:

- **Chinese calligraphy:** Pupils have practised the art of beautiful writing, learning how to use brushes and ink to create traditional characters.
- **Chinese opera masks:** Pupils designed and painted colourful masks inspired by Chinese opera, learning about the meanings behind different colours and patterns.



- **Traditional food tasting:** Pupils had the opportunity to try a variety of traditional foods, exploring new flavours and learning about their cultural significance.
- **Using chopsticks:** A fun (and sometimes challenging!) activity where pupils developed their chopstick skills.
- **Mahjong games:** Pupils were introduced to this traditional game, developing strategic thinking while learning about its cultural importance.



It has been wonderful to see the creativity, curiosity, and enthusiasm pupils bring to the club each week.

## Jordanhill School

### Higher Mandarin Learning Experience - Comments by Students



Throughout my whole secondary education, Mandarin has been my favourite experience. From carefully learning how to say “你好” in P7 to discussing my future university plans, it has been such a rewarding journey. The opportunity to experience such an immersive, high-quality Mandarin education has been a privilege.

So, when I was given the chance to take Mandarin at a higher level, I jumped at it immediately. It isn't a walk in the park; it's more like a determined hike... in the rain... with a dictionary - but it is incredibly beneficial. Higher Mandarin requires much more independence, but the results that come from dedication and consistent hard work are honestly amazing. The support from my teacher, Mrs Fortune, was incredible. She constantly pushed me to reach my full potential, and I am so grateful for that encouragement.

Through Higher Mandarin, I developed not only my writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills, but also greater precision and care in everything I produce. There is a noticeable jump in reading from National 5 to Higher - especially the detailed passages and the 10-mark direct translation - but with practice, you genuinely build the skills to tackle it confidently.

For me, the biggest challenge has been the sheer amount of vocabulary you need to learn and actively use in directed writing and speaking. Just as you feel like you have mastered a list, another one comes along.

And of course, speaking comes with the added pressure of getting the tones right - one small change in pitch can completely alter your meaning, which keeps you humble! But that challenge makes the progress even more satisfying. Higher Mandarin has helped me feel more fluent, especially in pronunciation and tone accuracy. My advice is simple: don't give up. It may feel daunting at first, but with effort and belief, you'll even surprise yourself. 谢谢你，再见

*Tess Singh, S5, Jordanhill School*





This year, I chose to study Higher Mandarin, and I must say, I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. During my time studying Mandarin, I have learned a great multitude of things about the Chinese language and culture, not to mention that I have tried many delicious dishes. What I have found to be the most enjoyable part of learning Mandarin this year is speaking the language. I just love the way that the language sounds, and it brings me great satisfaction when I am able to sustain a conversation in Mandarin with my teachers.

Sometimes, I may try to go for full periods, only speaking Mandarin because I just love the language so much! In addition, I feel I have a real knack for Mandarin, and it is my wish to continue my studies and even live and work in China. Studying Higher Mandarin has been useful for me because it has allowed me to improve my level and understanding of the Chinese language, which has brought me even closer to my goal.

Before setting foot into the Higher classroom, I was worried about the challenges that I may encounter, but now I am even more driven to continue my studies because I have just found my experience of Higher Mandarin thus far truly wonderful.

Apart from the language itself. I have loved the Mandarin teachers at Jordanhill, who have both been so lovely and helped me progress with my studies and really developed my Mandarin abilities. With the help of my teachers, I have so far managed to make great achievements while studying Mandarin, and I have their hard work, as well as my own ambitions, to thank for that. So, for anyone interested in Mandarin and Chinese culture, I would strongly recommend studying Higher Mandarin.



*Coll Jackson, S5, Jordanhill School*





The experience of Higher Mandarin was very enjoyable. Throughout the course, I was faced with many challenges that I had to overcome, though overcoming them was not only enjoyable but also helped me develop new skills. The most challenging part of the course was how different Mandarin was from English, where English uses letters to form words, compared to Mandarin using characters.

The structure of sentences between English and Mandarin was also different, which made it extremely difficult when it comes to translation. Even though the language had nothing in common with English, I found it a very enjoyable experience learning it. Learning about how sentences are shaped, how each radical in a character symbolises something, and the pronunciation of each character or phrase was a challenging but fun experience.

I decided to study Mandarin as, in the future, I wish to be able to communicate fluently with people all over Asia, as Mandarin is one of the most used languages in the world. Not only that, but studying Mandarin also opens lots of new career opportunities and experiences, which will hopefully lead me to a more prosperous future. Overall, I found my experience studying Higher Mandarin to be very enjoyable and benefiting skill for my future.

Ryan Wong, S6, Jordanhill School



Students from Jordanhill during their visit to China



## CET REFLECTION

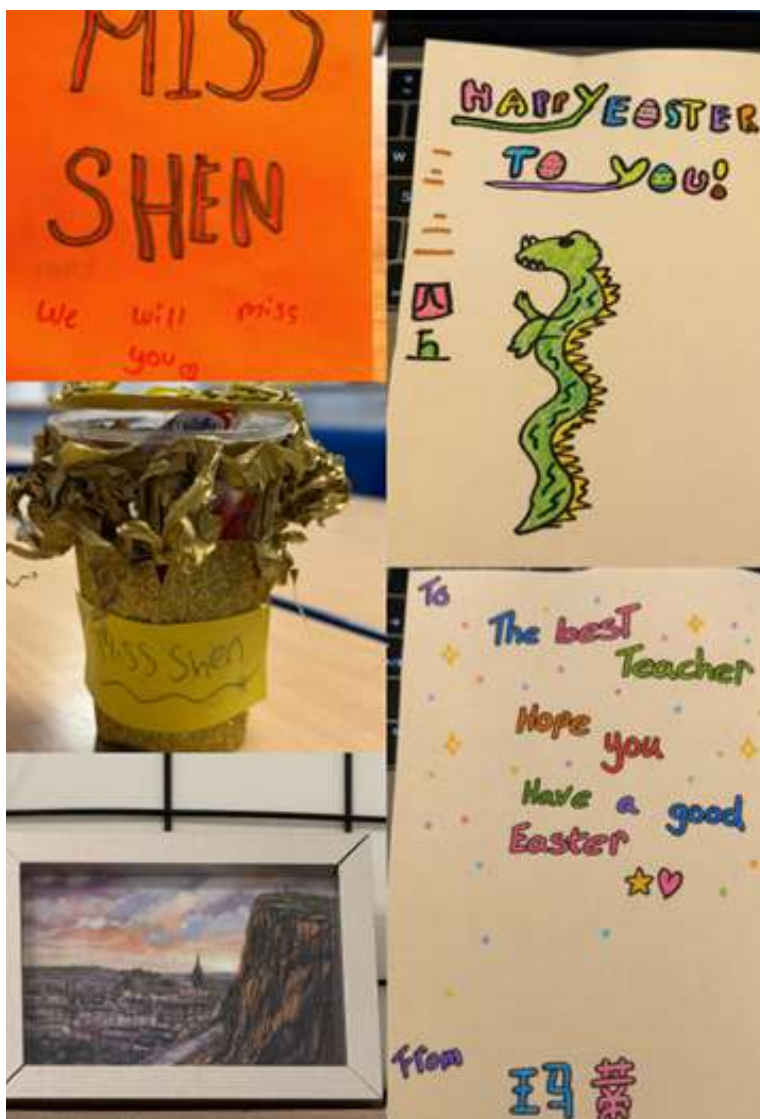
### Small Moments, Lasting Memories: My Mandarin Teaching Journey in Scotland

*Lin Shen, Chinese Exchange Teacher in Midlothian*

When I first arrived in Scotland as a volunteer Mandarin teacher, I felt excited but also very nervous. Before my first lesson, I had practised what I wanted to say many times, but standing in front of the pupils, I forgot much of it because of nerves. In that first lesson, I invited pupils to write down questions they wanted to ask me. Later, when I read them after class, I was touched by how imaginative and heartfelt they were - from questions about China to wonderfully unexpected things children ask. At that moment, I felt this was part of the meaning of coming here: not only to teach, but to build genuine connections.

Throughout the year, I have been supported by a thoughtful mentor who patiently answered my many questions, gave me a Christmas gift - a framed picture of Arthur's Seat - and recommended theatre performances I might enjoy. Pupils, too, have often surprised me with their kindness, making small gifts during festivals and writing thank-you cards at the end of our lessons.

Many joyful classroom memories stay with me. Pupils loved receiving their Mandarin names and writing name cards, proudly introducing themselves to one another. In number lessons, they worked together to build a "number dragon" puzzle, learning through play and collaboration. One especially memorable lesson was paper-cutting the character 春 (spring). Seeing pupils carefully unfold their red paper and discovering the character they had created filled the classroom with excitement and curiosity about Spring Festival traditions.





## CET REFLECTION

### Teaching Life in Northeast Scotland

*Li Ma, Chinese Exchange Teacher in Moray*

In late September 2025, I arrived in Moray, in northeast Scotland. It's a lush, green place with vast meadows and, of course, adorable lambs everywhere. Here, I taught primary and secondary school students.



I felt so lucky to have met them. Besides learning, we made mooncakes together for the Mid-Autumn Festival, dumplings together for the Spring Festival, and even did a thorough classroom cleaning together - these are unforgettable memories. On the day of my departure, the students bought me a bouquet of flowers, and each student wrote me a heartfelt letter. I was truly touched and very sad to part with them.



In secondary school, I met incredible, lovely and sincere students. We learned together about family members, animals, hobbies, and professions. Watching them go from not knowing anything to being able to introduce themselves fluently filled me with joy. Although I often stumbled over my words due to language barriers, my kind students always patiently listened to my halting experience.





At Christmas, I taught them to make greeting cards, and the children learned very diligently. After they finished, they even gave them to me! Because of them, I had a happy Christmas.

In primary school, I met a group of lovely children, and I often found happiness and joy in interacting with them. They were very interested in Chinese, always eagerly raising their hands to answer questions in class, and when reading Chinese, they pronounced every tone with such cute pronunciation.



Every class, they would give me small gifts - some were portraits of me, some were stickers, or some were handmade bracelets. When I saw them during breaks, they would eagerly greet me in the hallway, they were so adorable.



# FORRES ACADEMY

## Hub News

The Moray Hub were delighted to welcome two CETs this session. Ma Li (Stella) and Xu Mengyao (Rita) have been working in a variety of schools across Moray. Schools have been enjoying regular lessons with the CETs, with some schools building on their learning from last session and others learning Mandarin for the first time.

In Forres Academy, our Wider Achievements Mandarin Class had an excellent year with Ma Laoshi! To celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival, we made our own moon cakes after learning all about the legend and holiday. We have been continuing our partnership with Yaohua School in Tianjin. Sadly, this year the timings of our classes mean we cannot do live meet-ups, but we have been sending messages via Padlet and have been exchanging gifts and notes as well as writing and creating Christmas cards for pupils in our partner school. In February, we celebrated Chinese New Year by making some of our own Jiaozi and also by cleaning and decorating our classroom. More recently, Ma Laoshi presented a lesson on Chinese Tea Culture and we took part in a Tea Ceremony.



Our SI classes again took part in a cross-curricular project for Chinese New Year. They learned some language and culture in Modern Languages, learned about traditional instruments and how to play 'Jasmine Flower' in music, and learned about the legend of Mulan in drama. In business studies, they learned about Chinese business etiquette and made their own business cards, and in technical studies, they made their own Chinese chequers games.



In Keith Primary, pupils were also excited to learn about Chinese New Year and were able to go to Elgin to watch a Chinese Dragon Dance, which was part of local celebrations.



# NORTH AYRSHIRE

## CET REFLECTION

### GREENWOOD ACADEMY

*Yingyu Duan, Chinese Exchange Teacher in North Ayrshire*

It has been an absolute privilege to serve as a Mandarin teacher here in North Ayrshire this session, where we have woven Chinese language and culture into the fabric of school life. The highlight was undoubtedly our vibrant Chinese New Year programme, which captured the imagination of the whole school community.

In the weeks leading up to the Year of the Horse, students immersed themselves in traditional calligraphy, carefully practising brush strokes to write classic 福 (fú) characters and compose spring couplets with creative equestrian designs. Our collaboration with the art department proved particularly fruitful, as pupils crafted elegant Chinese lanterns and adorable horse-themed handicrafts. A special postcard project invited every student to design a unique horse-themed greeting; the most striking creations were professionally printed by the school and distributed to pupils, giving them a real sense of pride and ownership.



When New Year's Day arrived, the school entrance was transformed into a riot of colour, draped with pupils' artwork to welcome everyone with an authentic festive atmosphere. I was deeply touched when my wonderful departmental colleagues threw a surprise party for me, after which we gathered for the ever-popular 红包 (hóng bāo) giveaway and an exciting lucky draw that had students cheering with delight.



Cultural crafting has threaded through the entire year. Pupils have enjoyed making panda crafts, Lantern Festival lanterns, Peking opera masks and blow-painted plum blossoms, as well as seasonal projects such as Christmas trees and beautiful mooncake trees for the Mid-Autumn Festival. These shared creative experiences have not only deepened pupils' appreciation of Chinese traditions but have also strengthened the warm, inclusive community we continue to build here in North Ayrshire.



## Kinross High School

### Culture Experiences in Our School Community

Our pupils had the opportunity to try on traditional Chinese costumes in class, and a group of pupils created their own Mulan-inspired film. This creative project celebrates themes of gender equality and builds on their previous film studies.



### Visit to the Burrell Collection

Our S2 Mandarin learners, joined by some S1 pupils, enjoyed a fantastic educational trip to the Burrell Collection, followed by a delicious Chinese hot pot meal. This was a well-deserved reward for their dedication to language learning and their enthusiasm for exploring Chinese culture.



## Paper Quilling.

Inspired by our pupils' quilling workshop in China, families from our cluster primary schools came together for a joyful paper quilling event, celebrating creativity, culture, and community.



## Chinese New Year Celebrations

Our school marked the Chinese New Year with a range of exciting activities.

Some S1 pupils spent time during TSG wrapping fortune cookies, which were then delivered to school staff as a thoughtful way to express gratitude for all their hard work in keeping the school running smoothly.

Our Mandarin learners also proudly performed for guests from the Broke Not Broken charity, showcasing the strength of Tai Chi, the elegance of a handcrafted fan dance, a vibrant Dragon Dance, and an energetic Mandarin rap. The smiles, applause and shared joy made it a truly memorable evening for everyone involved.



On Saturday, we hosted a lively Chinese New Year fair, welcoming over 150 members of the local community. The event began with a pupil-led dragon parade and concluded with a professional live lion dance performance. Visitors enjoyed a wide range of cultural activities, making it a truly festive and successful celebration.



### Better Place to Live Fair

Our CETs hosted a stall at the Better Place to Live fair, where they introduced visitors to the work of the Confucius Institute and shared aspects of Chinese culture. They also promoted our upcoming Dragon Boat Festival event in June, helping to build excitement for another wonderful community celebration.



# STIRLING

## Stirling High School

This year, we were delighted to welcome two new Chinese Exchange Teachers, Ms Wang and Ms Tian. They have supported teaching and learning across a range of levels within the school and our associated primary school, enriching pupils' experiences of Mandarin and Chinese culture.

Students at Stirling High School have demonstrated strong attainment and enthusiasm, with many taking part in competitions and events. Pupils achieved excellent results in the SCEN Speaking Competition, winning several prizes. S3 students also performed a Tai Chi racket (柔力球) routine at a conference. As part of their cultural learning, pupils enjoyed a visit to a local bubble tea shop.



In collaboration with Bannockburn High, students took part in a trip to Edinburgh. They visited the National Museum of Scotland to explore the Chinese exhibition, followed by a Chinese meal. During the visit, pupils completed a treasure hunt, discovering interesting facts about Chinese history and art in an engaging and interactive way.

We are proud to have three alumni currently in China as part of the Tianjin Scholarship programme. We are grateful for the insightful vlogs they shared on the CISS website. Senior students enjoyed learning about their experiences of studying and living in China, and are looking forward to an online exchange with them before they return.

A highlight of the year was our Chinese New Year celebration, which, for the first time, was opened to families and friends. This new format allowed for greater community engagement and was very well received. Activities included a poster competition and exhibition, mug painting, calligraphy, mahjong, origami, and a popular lucky ring toss game. The event was a great success, and we look forward to building on this in the future.



# CISS TEAM NEWS

## WELCOMES

Please join us in welcoming the new member of the CISS team!

### EMILY WONG



Emily joined Scotland's National Centre for Languages in November 2025 as an Administrative Assistant. Prior to joining the SCILT team, Emily joined the University of Strathclyde in December 2023 as a Modern Apprentice for the Department of Social Work and Social Policy (SWSP) and the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ), working towards a SVQ Level 3 qualification in Administration and Business.

Following this, Emily has applied her newly developed skills and knowledge in administration and business to her role at SCILT. She is delighted to be part of the team and looks forward to learning more about all aspects of languages, as well as progressing her career in administration.

Emily is bilingual, but she is currently working on improving her Cantonese, as it has become extremely rusty since her younger years and is also relearning Mandarin.

## GOODBYES

In 2025-26, we said goodbye to our project and events coordinator and professional development assistant. Alice and Chloe were valued members of the CISS team during their time with us, and many of our friends and colleagues had the pleasure of working with them across various projects and events. We wish them both every success and happiness in their new adventures.

### ALICE FREEMAN



### CHLOE HADJIROUSOU



**CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE FOR  
SCOTLAND'S SCHOOLS  
[WWW.STRATH.AC.UK/CISS](http://WWW.STRATH.AC.UK/CISS)**

**FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL  
MEDIA!**

