
The Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools: a Scottish Government funded programme bringing Chinese language and culture to Scotland's schools

The Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools (CISS) is part of the school of education at the University of Strathclyde and sits within the government funded Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT). Its senior leadership team is comprised only of British nationals and its director and deputy director are principal and senior teaching fellows of the school of education with years of experience of leading languages in the Scottish education system in schools, local authorities and at a national and international level. Both of them hold current registrations with the GTCS.

CISS facilitates a large network of Confucius Classrooms comprising 22 of Scotland's local authorities. CISS regularly meets with regional groups of those leading the Confucius programme within local authorities to listen to any concerns and share strategies and ideas. Additionally, we conduct regular quality support visits to individual Confucius hubs to work with our local authority and school partners to effect continuous improvement of the programme.

CISS is organised and runs differently from any other Confucius Institute in the world in that it is jointly funded by Scottish Government. Government decided to put the programme into the hands of SCILT given our expertise in leading and supporting languages across Scotland, our positive relationship with practitioners and other national agencies, and our proven track record of delivering high quality professional learning for teachers. SCILT is, therefore, a trusted agency who undertakes due diligence, and who is well placed to design a programme that benefits schools and local authorities so they can deliver Mandarin as part of the curriculum in line with CfE and Scotland's languages policy. The SCILT/CISS leadership team is subject to scrutiny from Scottish Government and has regular quarterly meetings that offer the leadership support and challenge. In addition, the team reports every quarter to its advisory group. This group is comprised of representatives of SCILT/CISS stakeholders – all British nationals – with interests in Scottish education and the promotion of language skills. It is chaired by an associate principal of the University of Strathclyde and includes colleagues from HMI, business, academia, ADES, schools, etc. This group provides a further level of scrutiny on the CISS strategic plan and additional support to the leadership team. The SCILT/CISS strategic plans are published on the SCILT website, as is the annual report. All minutes of meetings are available on request.

CISS is partnered with Tianjin Municipal Education Commission (TMEC) which is the education authority responsible for the schools in the city of Tianjin. CISS aims to develop a bridge between Scotland's schools, teachers, and learners to their counterparts in Tianjin, thus encouraging them to learn about each other and develop international competencies, including language skills. As part of this, a group of Chinese Exchange Teachers are welcomed to Scotland each year.

SCILT's main mission is to support excellence in language teaching, primarily by empowering teachers with professional learning. Far from this simply being a means of bringing teachers in from China to teach in our schools, the CISS view is that this is a symbiotic professional learning opportunity for teachers in both countries. All CISS teachers are either experienced languages teachers from the partner schools in Tianjin or are the equivalent of newly qualified teachers of Chinese as a Foreign Language from teacher education universities either in Tianjin, or from another of our partners at Southwest Jiao Tong University in Chengdu. In order to support them to deliver good lessons within CfE, all CISS teachers take part in a highly developed programme of professional learning that includes monthly professional learning workshops and professional discussions. In terms of access to IT, to make the professional learning programme as accessible and transparent as possible, this is delivered online via GLOW.

All of the teachers have been given standards to which they are expected to adhere that have been developed in conversation with the General Teaching Council Scotland. They are based on the standards for initial registration, provide a framework for reflective practice, and have social justice at their core. The teachers discuss the professional standards with their appointed mentor teacher in school and are asked to submit a monthly reflective journal to CISS. This journal captures their thinking around policy, theory, and practice and forms the basis of their professional learning journal. This programme is led by two development officers at CISS who are both GTCS registered (one in secondary and one in primary education) and experienced in leading languages at school, local authority, and national levels. Support is also given by CISS development officers to the school mentor teachers as they

develop their coaching and mentoring skills and encouragement is given to these colleagues so they can apply for professional recognition with the GTCS. Additionally, all CISS teachers work from a framework that has been developed by a CISS steering group, led by our officers and comprising GTCS teachers of Mandarin. This framework empowers the teachers to develop their lessons in line with the standards and expectations of CfE and gives them access to a range of materials that fit the Scottish curriculum. They do not follow any standardised syllabus or textbook given to them from China as this would not be an effective approach in Scotland's schools.

All CISS teachers are also subject to a code of conduct, that details how they should behave both professionally and personally and outlines the importance of value driven conduct and ethical behaviour. It includes the importance of keeping political and religious opinions private and not persuading children and young people to any particular point of view. The teachers are aware that infringement of the code of conduct can result in the immediate termination of their contract and the retraction of their visa.

The cohorts of CISS teachers have included teachers from China's ethnic minorities. Some of our teachers are members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) but the majority are not. All CISS Chinese exchange teachers are subject to schools' quality improvement processes and their lessons are observed by their mentor teachers, school leadership teams, and by CISS colleagues who conduct support visits to every teacher. Should there be an issue around the quality of the learning and teaching taking place, CISS will work closely with the school and the local authority to find mutually acceptable solutions. CISS has never in 11 years of running the programme had any issue with a teacher attempting to proselytise for the CCP or persuade children and young people to take the view of Chinese Government.

The staff at CISS do not subscribe to the views of the Chinese Government and do not promote the values of any political system, party or belief. The mission of CISS is simply to support language learning, intercultural awareness, and global citizenship in Scotland's schools. There is no attempt by any of our Chinese funders and partners to influence our curriculum, interfere with our learning and teaching approaches, and there is absolutely no attempt to restrict our academic freedom. Any attempt to do so, would not be tolerated by any of the CISS staff.



Depute Director of SCILT and CISS



Director of SCILT and CISS