

On April 28, WenLin Chinese School turned four years old!

We started 4 years ago with just 2 teachers and 7 students – to today with a team of 15 dedicated, well qualified and professional teaching staff – teaching over 150 students, from children to adults of all ages.

Despite schools being closed and all of us still going through this unfortunate COVID-19 lock down time, we found a way to continue providing quality Mandarin lessons through “virtual classrooms”. thus ensuring our students learning online didn't come to a halt.

We provided free videos (which can be watched unlimited times) for the younger siblings of our students, thus freeing up the parents to accompanying the older siblings during their on-line classes on Saturdays. We divided some classes (under 7 years old) into smaller group size (5 children per group) and made each class shorter so that younger children get more attention from their teacher and enjoy their learning better in virtual classrooms.

Based on the analysis of Zoom classroom teaching conducted towards the end of last term, we have improved the online teaching experience through new apps such as Kahoot, Quizlet, Classdojo, etc. which have so far proved extremely popular with students and helped enrich their interactive learning experience in our virtual classrooms.

We decided to keep writing exercises limited to the supervised class time so as not to give parents an extra workload when supervising their children mandarin homework at home. In the same fashion, teachers arranged for the easier listening and reading exercises to be assigned as after class homework.

To encourage our younger students' independence and self-discipline development, WenLin launched the “design your own holiday timetable” competition, thus encouraging children to write their own activity planner and motivate them to adhere to it. All children did a great job and showed off with pride their timetable to their headteacher: what impressed me the most is that they also thoroughly enjoyed following their own planner! Well done!

My children did their own timetable too. We practiced Mandarin daily together, and we also did sports, art projects and even some cooking! I am very pleased that my children were happy to help with house chores too. I feel this lock down time is a great opportunity for our children to learn self-management, independence and the value of helping around the home.

At WenLin we do appreciate that our teachers are often parents too, and as such they spend great part of their day taking care of their own children before preparing for their weekly teaching for our school. As founder of WenLin I sincerely want to ensure that our outstanding teachers are rewarded for their hard work and long hours they put in, and fully enjoy the satisfaction of working for our school.

To finish on a high note, I would like to share some good news: on April 14th, WenLin Chinese School achieved the Ofsted registration certificate and became the first Mandarin language school that is Ofsted registered in the UK. Among other things, this means that all safety measures at WenLin Chinese School comply with the standards set by the Department of Education. It also means that our parents can now use childcare vouchers to pay for their children's language lessons, something that should bring great benefits to our students' families. At WenLin, we are devoted to bringing quality teaching and wider benefits to our community.

We look forward to meeting in person when the school will be allowed to reopen normally. In the meantime, stay safe and healthy.

Thanks to you all for your continued support.