

CASE STUDY

LEO ACADEMY TRUST



TRUE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

True Education Partnerships (TEP) are the most trusted provider of immersive educational student exchanges between the UK and China.

Our Government-backed Sister School Partnership programme creates bilaterally beneficial links between UK and Chinese schools. The programme consists of immersive student exchanges, pedagogy exchanges, participation in joint projects and curriculum enrichment. This is an opportunity for schools to help students develop skills that allow them to succeed in education, work and society.



ABOUT LEO ACADEMY TRUST

Leo Academy Trust is a multi-academy trust formed in 2015, serving over 3500 students and 400 staff from across the London Borough of Sutton.

It has developed a close network of seven primary schools that facilitate a thriving learning environment. All schools are members of the Challenge Partners Network of Excellence and the Belleville Teaching School Alliance and show a strong commitment to supporting one another in improving outcomes for students.

Learning, Excellence and Opportunity are at the heart of the trust's mission and values. In 2019, all schools within Leo Academy Trust achieved an Ofsted rating of either 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.





HANGZHOU SISTER SCHOOLS

There are four schools within Leo Academy Trust that have established Sister School partnerships with schools in Hangzhou.

Brookfield Primary School		Hangzhou Cuiyuan No.1 Primary School
Cheam Common Junior Academy		Cuiyuan No.2 Primary School
Cheam Fields Academy		Wen Xin Primary School
Cheam Park Farm Academy		Xiao He Primary School

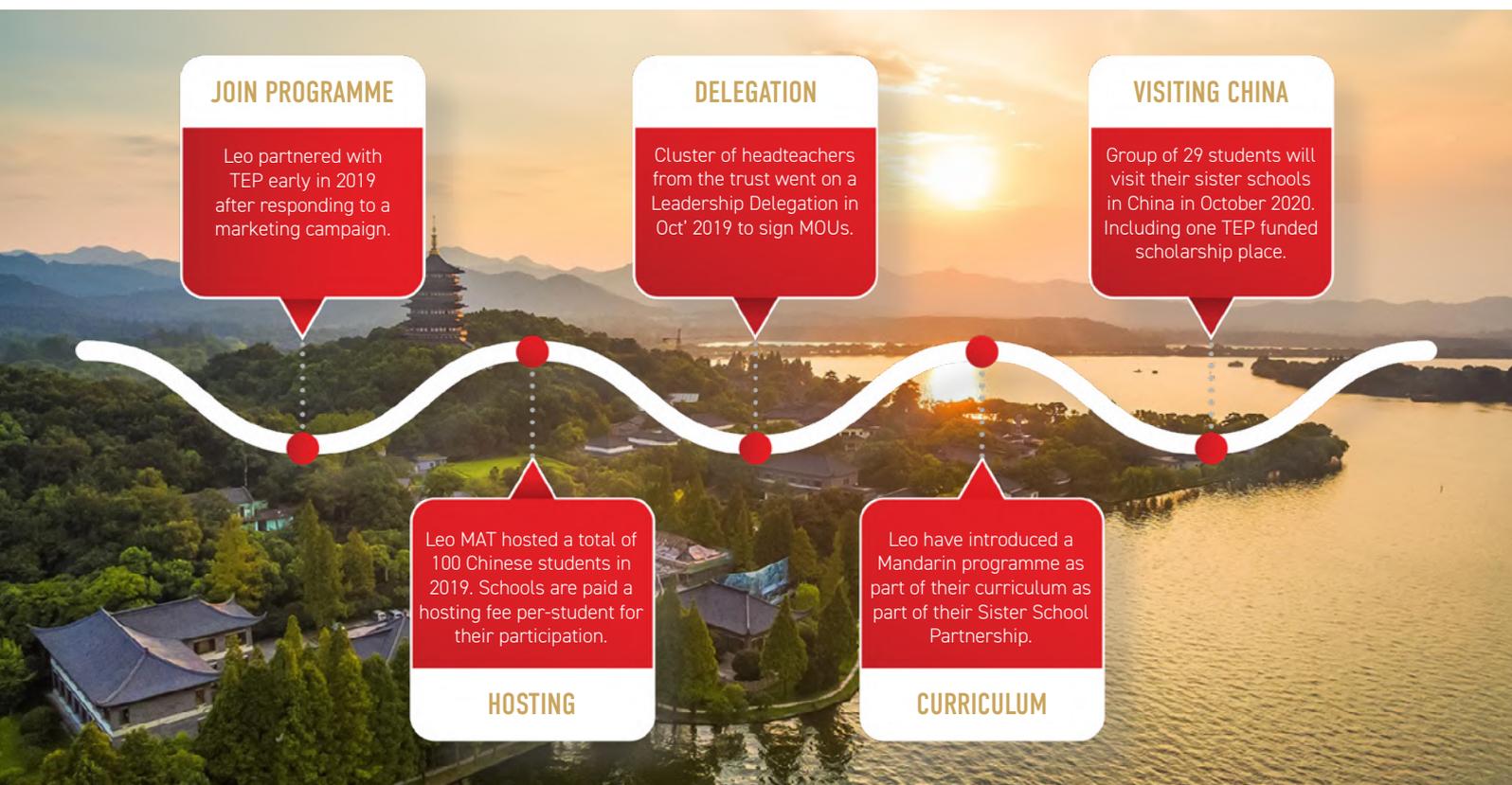
Leo Academy Trust are also partnered with Shenglan Experimental Primary School and Boachuta Shenhua Experimental School.

PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY WITH HANGZHOU

After partnering with TEP in the summer of 2019, Leo Academy Trust hosted 30 Chinese students from Hangzhou at Cheam Fields Primary Academy and Cheam Park Farm Academy. Following their successful hosting project, a group of headteachers participated in a winter Leadership Delegation to China. During the trip, the Leo leaders established Sister School Partnerships with six Hangzhou primary schools by signing MOUs, signifying the formal initiation of their alliance.



Since the partnerships were formed, the schools have been enjoying regular communications with their sister schools. In October 2020, Leo Academy Trust students are looking forward to a life-changing visit to see their Chinese friends. As part of TEP's inclusivity funding initiative, we were able to award one free scholarship place to a lucky student who had excelled in Leo's Mandarin classes.



 **£250,000**
ESTIMATED LOCAL
ECONOMIC IMPACT

Our programmes operate with local suppliers, stimulating growth in local businesses. TEP operations team book all accommodation, travel, dining and tourist activities.

 **72%**
CONSIDER RETURNING TO
THE LOCAL AREA

Chinese exchange students demonstrated a desire to return to the region for a holiday or higher education studies. A region's profile is raised in China bringing future inward investments and economic impact.

 **80**
LEO STUDENTS STUDYING
MANDARIN

A group of 80 students across the trust attend weekly Mandarin lessons.

"It has created a real buzz around our school. We have developed a programme of Chinese cultural activities for our whole school to enjoy."

Helen Shaw
Principal of Cheam Fields Primary Academy

SISTER SCHOOLS WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- ★ Strengthen curriculum, quality of teaching and outcomes, becoming more appealing for student enrolment
- ★ CPD opportunity for teachers to benchmark against other schools and grow awareness of international pedagogies
- ★ Meet expectations of the Ofsted framework, including improving learners' personal development
- ★ Allow students to learn about other cultural backgrounds, developing empathy, maturity and respect
- ★ Offer all students life-changing, transformative experiences outside of the classroom



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The personal development and enrichment of students is an integral part of the Sister School Partnership programme. Our TRUE principles of 'Trust, Respect, Understanding and Equilibrium' are deeply rooted in all of our activities. The programme teaches valuable life skills such as resilience, confidence, independence, responsibility, respect and diversity appreciation.

Spending time with children from other cultures increases cultural awareness among both UK and Chinese students. Many teachers reported afterwards that seeing the children make bonds, grow in confidence and make new friends was a huge highlight.

"Having a Sister School in China has inspired us to enjoy a year of special activities at school. For example, we are celebrating Chinese New Year by holding a special dragon dance workshop for my year group. I love learning all about China and can't wait to go there later this year." - Jayden, Y5 Pupil.

 *I have seen our children's enthusiasm and confidence flourish as they learn a new, unfamiliar language.*

Sophie Gunner
Principal of Cheam Common Junior Academy



TRUE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS BROUGHT LEARNING TO LIFE THROUGH OUR SISTER SCHOOLS...

Philip Hedger
CEO of Leo Academy Trust

HOSTING EXPERIENCE

In 2019, 100 students and several accompanying teachers from Hangzhou Primary Schools visited Leo Academy schools to spend time experiencing life at a UK school. The experience was highly rewarding and bilaterally beneficial for both countries' students and staff. Hosting adds an extra layer of inclusivity to the programme, as students who are not travelling to China in 2020 get a taste of cultural exchange activities.

The visiting students were greeted with a formal welcome ceremony which featured a speech from Philip Hedger, CEO of Leo Academy Trust. Following a campus tour, Chinese students were fully immersed into numerous core-curriculum classes to experience life as a British pupil. During the visit, the group were also invited to take part in several extra-curricular activities and explored local tourist spots with their buddies at Nonsuch Park, the Cheam Trail and Whitehall.

To complete the hosting experience, school-to-school gifts were exchanged at a Closing Ceremony. Teary-eyed goodbyes ensued between students as they bid farewell...until next time.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Global programmes have a profound impact on students and staff alike. They are proven to have a positive effect on pupil awareness, attitudes and response. Significant outcomes are almost immediately noticeable in exchange students and hosting participants; ensuing results on the wider school community are observed once the principles and values promoted by the programme are embedded in whole-school policy.

Philip Hedger, CEO of Leo Academy Trust: "Our Sister School Partnerships with schools in Hangzhou are now an integral part of our curriculum at LEO Academy Trust. Children learn Mandarin and study Chinese culture and civilisation from Year 4. True Education Partnerships have brought learning to life through our work with our sister schools..."

Teachers within the Leo Academy Trust benefited greatly from their Leadership Delegation visit to China. The trip enabled them to exchange educational practices to bring insights with them back to the classroom.



Brookfield and Cheam Park Farm have been awarded 'GOOD' and 'OUTSTANDING' Ofsted ratings.

"There is a strong commitment from trustees that disadvantaged pupils take part in things that they would otherwise not experience...developing their confidence and engagement"

-Brookfield Primary Ofsted Report