

Harlow schools play key role in Chinese cultural development

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) Confucius Institute has recently created seven more Confucius Classrooms, taking the total to twelve and providing more students with the opportunity to study the Chinese language and learn about the culture. SSAT Confucius Classrooms are centres of excellence in teaching Mandarin Chinese and are chosen for their commitment and capacity to develop networks and support other schools in offering the subject. One of these new Confucius classrooms is based in our county. The Essex Confucius Classroom comprises Harlow schools [Burnt Mill Performing Arts College](#); Passmores School and Technology College Stewards School along with The Anglo European School, Ingatestone.

The Essex Confucius classroom will work alongside the newly opened Jiangsu centre based at Harlow student centre to promote Chinese culture and language across the county. China will continue to become an increasingly important player on the world stage culturally, economically and politically; a fact which cannot be ignored. The consortium of Essex schools that have engaged in this project hope that their work will raise awareness of this and promote greater cross-cultural understanding.

Stephen Chamberlain, chair of The Harlow Education Consortium and Headteacher of one of the partner schools, Burnt Mill Performing Arts College, said:

“Attaining Confucius classroom status is a great honour which cements our role as a town which truly embraces a global outlook on education. All three Harlow schools are looking forward to furthering our relationship with The Anglo-European school in ensuring The Essex Confucius classroom is one that the people of our county can be proud of.

Burnt Mill, Passmores and Stewards have all forged close links with Chinese schools in recent years and the creation of the classroom is a natural progression for all the hard work put in by students, parents and staff. We feel that Confucius Classroom status highlights both the impact our work has already made and the future contributions that the SSAT recognises we can make.

Our future plans include continuing to foster the already strong links with Chinese schools, further student exchanges, increased Mandarin teaching across our own schools using new and existing resources and reaching out to local partners in the county to encourage engagement with exciting language and cultural projects. We hope that over the next few years we can get close to the DCSF's aim of making Mandarin an entitlement language on the curriculum for all students early in the next decade.”