What lessons have we learned from the Mandarin Excellence Programme?
Katharine Carruthers, UCL Institute of Education
The Mandarin Excellence Programme (MEP) independent evaluation is now publicly available on the MEP webpages

https://ci.ioe.ac.uk/mep-independent-evaluation/
MEP began in 2016. Initially a four year programme with funding of £10 million. Since evaluation in 2020 the programme has been extended.

MEP responds to the growing importance of Mandarin as a global language.

It is open to all state secondary schools in England with an Ofsted rating of ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’
Aims & Targets

To have at least 5,000 students on track to fluency in Mandarin by 2020 in schools in diverse geographical locations.

At present there are almost 7,000 pupils participating in MEP in more than 70 state schools.
The DfE intended MEP to be;

- A school-led Programme, translating centralised guidance and support into local practice
- An opportunity for schools with strong existing Mandarin Chinese delivery to act as Hubs to support schools new to Mandarin teaching
- Complementary to wider initiatives to boost the supply of Mandarin teachers in England
School Delivery Model

4 hours face to face teaching
4 hours self study
Intensive language learning
End of Year Tests
Key Findings from the Independent Evaluation

- More than 5,000 pupils had enrolled on the programme by 2020.
- Pupils sitting annual Mandarin ‘Hurdle Tests’ at the end of each school year are achieving excellent results.
- The first cohort of MEP pupils who joined the programme in September 2016 are on track to obtain strong GCSE results.
- Teachers continue to believe that their students show increased and accelerated learning and a much broader language and cultural knowledge base relative to non-MEP learners.
• On average 95% of students participating in the programme have been retained from one year to the next.
• Many teachers and school leaders talk positively about the impact of MEP on students’ self-esteem and the development of a sense of pride and obligation among participants.
• There are several schools which have embraced MEP successfully while serving communities which are relatively deprived.
“In our area of social deprivation, the MEP offers life-changing opportunities.”
Headteacher/School leader

“It offers a new and interesting curriculum alongside the already established one. Parents are genuinely interested in what this offers their children.”
Headteacher/School leader

“This programme has revolutionised the way our students learn languages and given our students the most amazing enrichment opportunities which has brought this language to life in many different contexts.”
Headteacher/School leader
Factors for success

• Intensive learning boosts contact hours and gives continuous language exposure.
• Year 8 Intensive Study in China has a strong motivational impact and embeds learning.
• CLEC teachers from China have contributed to Mandarin language learning in the schools/hubs where they are in post.
• Teacher supply and staff turnover – many schools rely on one Mandarin teacher.
• Financial support has been crucial for schools in delivering MEP.
Challenges & Lessons Learned

- Timetabling and teaching capacity remains the major challenge to sustaining an intensive learning programme.
- Hub and Spoke support should be focused where it is needed / most wanted.
- Schools benefit from sharing experiences for student recruitment.
- Pathways to KS5 - Teachers have concerns over existing Mandarin A-Level and the withdrawal of Cambridge Pre-U.
- Technology should be used to enhance accessibility to teacher training and for online resources.
你好！我是Emery。我喜欢运动，我最喜欢打网球也喜欢打乒乓球和骑车。我不喜欢踢足球。星期一和星期三我打网球，星期五我打乒乓球，星期六骑车。

Hello! My name is Emery. I like sports. I really like playing tennis, also like playing ping pong and cycling. I don't like playing football. Monday and Wednesday I play tennis. Friday I play ping pong. Saturday I cycle.

你好！我是Robyn。我喜欢运动，我最喜欢踢足球也喜欢游泳和跑步。我不喜欢打乒乓球。星期三和星期四我踢足球。

Hello! My name is Robyn. I like sports. I really like playing football, also like go swimming and go running. I don't like playing ping pong. Wednesday and Thursday I play football. Saturday I go swimming.

你好！我是Jaylah。我喜欢运动，我最喜欢打篮球也喜欢跑步和骑车。我不喜欢游泳。星期四和星期六我打篮球，星期日跑车，星期二骑车。

Hello! My name is Jaylah. I like sports. I really like playing basketball. Also like go running and cycling. I don't like swimming. Thursday and Saturday I play basketball. Sunday I go running.

Nika, Year 7
Creative writing

I am a bird. My name is Tian Tian. I am four years old. My birthday is on the fifth of May. My mother and father love me, and I love them. My sister and I have a happy family. I like playing with my sister. We like to fly together. I also like to eat seeds. I am a happy bird.

Farha Shameen Farha, Year 7
你好！我是莉莉安娜，我今年8岁。我每天早上7点半起床，洗漱后，我爸爸会帮我准备早餐。我早上有作业，包括语文、数学和英语。我喜欢画画和听音乐。晚上，我和妈妈一起看电视剧。我有很多朋友，我们一起做作业，一起玩。我最喜欢的颜色是蓝色，我最喜欢的食物是巧克力。我希望你能和我一起分享你的生活。
名字 ARYAN GILL
宇航员

描述：
请让我自我介绍一下，我叫 Aryan Gill。我十四岁，我也长得很高个子一般。我的朋友们觉得虽然我有时候生气，但我有一个很有礼貌又有帮助的我。我总是努力地学习，因此我显然应该是宇航员。这也是为什么你们要给我这份工作！比起生物学和化学，我更喜欢物理课。因为，他们没有物理课重要。因此，我认为物理学是最好的科学。我认识的人一直说，“我太认真了”，可是，我觉得这真好。我通常都可靠，我也很有动力。我每天都说，“虽然多大的困难，我能克服”！

爱好和兴趣：
我有很多爱好和兴趣，因为我喜欢做很多事情。由于斯诺克比踢足球来得有趣多了，所以我最喜欢的运动是斯诺克。我对待物理书有兴趣，特别是量子物理学和宇宙学。在我空余时间，我喜欢一边听古典音乐一边做武术。做武术是我最喜欢的活动，但是，我常常没有时间，因为我有很多作业。因为我爸爸是飞行员，所以我十年想了当宇航员。我要和外星人一起见面！
我的世界之旅

Lanzarote

兰萨罗特岛是西班牙的一座火山岛，兰萨罗特岛很热。每天都是晴天。我的朋友和家人骑骆驼，骆驼很可爱。我们爬了火山。我最喜欢火山，因为它很酷。

Pula

普拉

去年我和我的家人去了克罗地亚的普拉。在普拉我吃了许多鱼。我喜欢吃鱼，因为我觉得鱼又好吃又新鲜。我们去了海滩。海滩很漂亮而且很安静。那里的人很友善。

Chengdu

成都

两年前我和我的同学去了中国的成都。我觉得成都不仅漂亮而且很活泼。成都有很多能显示我和我的同学参观了成都大熊猫研究基地在成都，我们吃了很多饭。我们吃了面条、火锅和奶茶。

Paris

巴黎

我去了巴黎。巴黎是法国的首都！我看到艾菲尔铁塔。我参观了卢浮宫。我喜欢绘画。我最喜欢的假期是迪士尼乐园。因为那是神奇的。

Luka, Kingsford Community School, Year 10
黑人民权也是命

大家好！今天，我将写一些非常严肃的事情。

种族主义。在最近的新闻中，我们了解到另一个黑人在美国警察杀害。

不但这种情况不仅发生在美国，而且发生英。警察将男子的膝盖放在男子的脖子上，持续了八分四十六秒。在这段时间内，该男子尖叫了十六次。在我过去的六年中，美国警察现已杀死了两千多名黑人。

一方面，这场悲剧带来了一些好处，在美国伦敦和全世界的每个州的抗议活动中，不仅是黑人，而且是所有种族。这场反种族主义的斗争我们需要正义和平等。

BLM

我无法呼吸。

Akin, Year 10
Schools that are interested in joining the programme, starting in September 2021 should visit https://ci.ioe.ac.uk/mandarin-excellence-programme/join/

For more information about MEP please email us at mandarinexcellence@ucl.ac.uk

Or follow us on Twitter @UCL_IOE_CI