



Queen Mary's Grammar School

Headmaster: T J Swain, M A

03 October 2016

To Parents of Pupils in Y7

The Mandarin Excellence Programme

Dear Parents

The month of September has flown by! I trust that your son is beginning to feel at home in the QM Community and that he is enjoying all aspects of his learning - both in the classroom and outside.

I am writing now to let you know more details about a wonderful opportunity for your son.

As you know, Queen Mary's is one of the first schools in England to be selected to participate in the Mandarin Excellence Programme - a new intensive language programme funded by the Department for Education. There are more details about the programme in the leaflet which accompanies this letter and I invite you to read it carefully.

We now need to begin the process of deciding which pupils will take part in the programme. It is both an exciting opportunity, the chance of a lifetime to do something very special *and* a very significant challenge, a long-term commitment that needs careful consideration.

The opportunities are indeed wonderful. Your son will have the chance to:

- Participate in a national programme where he will meet and work with some of the best students from across the UK
- Become proficient in a language which really matters to the future prosperity of the UK economy. (This will be an invaluable addition to his CV)
- Visit China. (The programme includes a subsidised trip to the Far East, where your son will advance his language learning and taste first hand a remarkable culture and country)

The commitment is similarly significant:

- Your son will be signing up for four years. The programme runs from now until 2020
- There will be the equivalent of 8 hours of study of various sorts per week

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I recognise that it is the 8 hours of study that may seem too much. So, let's be clear. This is how we propose it will work in Y7. Each week, there will be:

- Two lessons ('hours') of Mandarin in the normal timetable
- Two hours of taught lessons outside the normal day. This might be in 'lessons' taught before school and in assembly time; in a lunch-time club; or in an extra session after 4pm
- Two hours of individual work online. Your son will be able to access special resources prepared for the programme from home on his computer.
- The equivalent of two hours in immersion weekends at Farchynys and a week organised in the holidays, probably with other pupils from across the region.

This is an exciting possibility, but it needs careful thought.

We plan to proceed in this way. It will be free choice for families, but it will also be a guided choice. We need to be sure that those who opt in to the scheme are serious about it and capable of meeting its challenges.

So, we invite you to think it through over the next two weeks and then come to a decision by Monday 17th October.

Those who decide that they want to join the scheme will then start the extra-curricular provision and on-line work. This will continue until Christmas.

We will then choose the final cohort of participants, depending on their aptitude, their attendance at the extra sessions and the commitment they have shown to the online work.

So, in two weeks' time, we will invite you to make the following choice:

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| 1. | We have considered the matter carefully and have decided that the MEP is not for us. |
| 2. | We would like to join the MEP on a trial for half a term while we come to a final decision |
| 3. | We are already sure that we would like to be considered for acceptance on the programme between now and 2020 |

We will send you a reply slip to fill in at the end of next week. In the meantime, read the leaflet carefully, look at information on line and if, after that, you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at the school.

Yours sincerely



Timothy Swain
Headmaster