

# Immersion Programme



# Foreword

你好! Thank you for opening this information leaflet - the first step towards understanding our Chinese Immersion Programme, and what it can do for your young child.

For decades, educators and practitioners have been seeking to unlock the power of immersive dual language acquisition to promote academic success. With new research demonstrating the benefits of this powerful and effective instructional approach, an increasing number of schools worldwide have successfully applied the three pillars of dual language education - **bilingualism and biliteracy, academic achievement**, and **cross-cultural understanding**.

In the Island, we observed that although schools provide a wide range of languages, it can be challenging to provide an immersive learning environment which allows students to acquire a foreign language to the same/similar degree of proficiency as their first language from an early age. We are determined to pioneer the initiative, and this Immersion Programme is the result.

This leaflet will give you an overview of ThinkChinese, the Immersion Programme, and the benefit your child will reap from participating in it. We hope you will find it informative and your child's bilingual journey can start from here.

- Team TC

# Who are we?

ThinkChinese (醒客国际) has taught the Chinese language on the Island for 6 years. Established in early 2016, our services also include business services (consultancy, translation and WeChat marketing) and travel to China.

Our services are premised on bridging the cultures in both the education and business worlds. Each week, we deliver dozens of lessons to individuals in schools around the Island and from our office. Apart from the Immersion Programme, our courses also include **YCT** (Youth Chinese Thriver) for primary school, **HSK** for secondary school and adults, **GCSE, A Level** and **Business Chinese**.



While upholding an exceptional teaching standard, we also take pride in staying on top of the latest linguistic research and class practice. We are honoured to be an expert and explorer that fronts the Chinese language education in the Island and the UK. Our mission in education is to **unlock greater interest and generate the best learning outcomes through a dedicated, creative and tailor-made approach.**

# Course overview

The Immersion Programme (IP) is specifically designed for children of 3-5 years old. By immersing young children in the Chinese language environment in class and in a home-setting, your child will acquire the Chinese language naturally. In class, the immersion is achieved through instructions, activities, drama, songs and games.

During the 2 hours class time each week, your child will engage in three 30-minute lessons, with 15 minutes playtime between each. Class content is based on five major themes including arts, science, society, health and daily communication. With a strong focus on daily communication, the other four themes rotate each week. The immersive environment is provided throughout, as we believe learning and playing should be intertwined at an early age.

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***Researchers have consistently reported that the higher the quality of implementation of the dual language education model, the stronger the results of dual language over English-only instruction for English learners (National Academies, 2017). “***

***”It is also important to note that English learners who participate in a mix of different language programmes demonstrate the lowest outcomes of all (Menken, Kleyn, & Chae, 2012). Thus, a consistent, sustained programme of dual language education is crucial.***



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# Why choose an IP for your young child?



There are several key reasons that parents should consider a Chinese-English Immersion programme.

Bilingual students generally demonstrate academic gains. Research shows that students in dual-language immersion programmes typically develop strong academic skills in addition to becoming proficient in both languages. They also typically experience academic achievement at or above their single-language peers. Students develop cultural literacy as well as enhanced cognitive skills.

Research covering more than 40 years of language immersion instruction shows that children receive a variety of cognitive benefits such as mental flexibility, non-verbal problem-solving abilities, and enhanced critical thinking skills. They also benefit from the ability to communicate with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

# Q&A

## **Q: When does the Programme start, and what about the lesson days?**

The Programme starts in September. We offer two complimentary settle-in sessions in the two weeks ahead of the start date (2 hours in total). This will help your child become familiar with our teachers, environment, and their little pals. The weekly lesson tends to be on Saturday, however if this is an internal provision arranged by a school, lessons are more likely to be on weekdays.

## **Q: What is the background of the course teacher?**

All of ThinkChinese's teachers hold master's degrees related to linguistics. They all have language teaching experience in China and the UK prior to joining us, and some teachers even have work experience in other countries. The course leader has 6 years experience in bilingual teaching gained from Beijing No. 1 Kindergarten, following which she obtained her MA Degree in TCSOL (Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages) from Nottingham University. Apart from DBS certificates, which all our teachers possess, the course leader also holds First Aid and Child Protection certificates.

## **Q: My child is very young and may lack concentration because of this. Is it too early to start learning at the age of 3? What if the child can't sit tight for two hours?**

Generally speaking, the earlier a child is immersed in another language, the more benefit they will reap. Speaking another language is very natural for young children and the two languages (English and Chinese) can prompt the acquisition of each other.

We take the view that the boundaries between learning and playing in early childhood do not need to be clearly defined. The lesson design is premised on this. Our teachers are experienced with integrating teaching and entertainment. For students, playing is learning, and learning in an entertaining and relaxing environment generates great outcomes.



# Q&A

**Q: Will your teachers look after each child, and also satisfy their needs, for instance: going to the toilet, drinking water between sessions, etc.?**

Our teachers are very experienced in early childhood education. Our classrooms are also well equipped for toddlers to learn. We have specific desks, chairs, whiteboards and clothes hangers for 3-5 year olds. The bathroom has a toilet ladder and a step ladder (for washing hands) to support young children gain independence. In addition, the maximum capacity of this course is 8 children per cohort. For cohorts exceeding 5 children, two teachers will be looking after the class at any given time.



**Q: How to promote learning in a family setting, if neither parent speaks Chinese?**

At the beginning of each course, a shared folder will be created, which all parents will be granted access to. Our teachers update this folder after each lesson with fresh content including teaching material, homework and suggested home-learning resources. These materials usually come in the form of PowerPoint (for parents' benefit), songs, animations, scanned books, recordings, writing sheets, social activities, etc.

With the guidance of the PowerPoint, which our teachers use in class, parents will gain a good understanding of what's been covered each week. The format of the suggested home-learning resources are carefully selected to allow parents to build home immersion time amongst their busy schedules. We'd love to see you involved in your child's study, but the progress shall not be dependent on your language ability.

**Q: How do you measure the outcomes of learning?**

We provide a formal report for each child every year. This report includes a progress overview, four skills breakdown, strength and do more. We also speak with parents every week during drop-off/pick-up whenever possible. If you would like to know how your child is doing through a more private conversation, please just let us know, and we will arrange time to discuss it with you.

# ThinkChinese



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