

# Sister School Visit November 2018

## Jiangsu International Forum for School Principals

The 14<sup>th</sup> Jiangsu International Forum for School Principals was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> November in Nantong, China. The officers, principals and other educational organisation representatives from the US, UK, Australia and eight other countries as well as principals from one hundred and eighty primary and secondary schools in Jiangsu attended this conference. During the forum, presenters from around the world highlighted successful practice from UK, Finland, Ireland and Victoria who focused on system reform and our current state strategies. It has been a privilege to attend this special event. Prior to the conference, I was fortunate enough to be offered an opportunity to visit our sister school, Changzhou Miduqiao Primary School, for two days.



## Welcome Ceremony

On the 5<sup>th</sup> November, our sister school held a whole-school assembly to formally extend their welcome to Ms Laura Desai, a primary school principal from the US, and myself. The principal, Mr. Wu and the assistant principal, Ms Qian, hosted this assembly.



On behalf of the whole school, four Year Six students presented gifts of Chinese calligraphy and paintings created by their students to Ms Desai and myself.



It was my great pleasure to present the certificates for the writing competition winners for their sister school reflections. These students shared what they learned from the visit to McKinnon Primary School in Term 3 and how they value the sister school partnership between the two schools.



## School Tour

After the whole-school assembly, Ms Desai and I were invited to attend a school tour conducted by the students. The students introduced the history, famous alumni and modern school facilities to us using perfect English!



I was deeply impressed by the rich school history and vibrant school culture. Additionally, I was so proud of the confidence demonstrated by our sister school students throughout the study tour presentation.



Haotian Wu (stayed with Cameron Wilson **FE** and Oliver Wilson **4B** during our sister school visit this year) was one of the student guides and shared with me what he had learnt from the visit to our school and how he loves McKinnon.



On the following day, I visited other campuses of our sister school and had a charming conversation with the Year 3 students.





## Classroom Visit

I observed a visual art class in the digital classroom. That lesson was about ink painting and the teacher talked about the different painting styles between the Eastern and Western cultures. I was also lucky enough to have the chance to experience art activities with the students. The similarities between teaching and learning were abundant. Teachers showed great passion and pride in the work they were doing with their young learners.



After the visual art lesson, I observed a Year 4 English lesson, accompanied by the assistant principal, Ms Qian. The English Teacher, Ms Zheng, exhibited innovative practice in the selection and organisation of content, using think, pair, share and other cooperative grouping strategies to engage students.



## Learning Chinese Culture through the Arts

On the 5<sup>th</sup> November, Ms Desai and I visited the Longcheng Art Exhibition, accompanied by the English teacher, Mr Chen. I was amazed at the Chinese painting and calligraphy displayed in the museum.



After the visit to the art exhibition, we were invited to experience the teahouse. Drinking tea plays a vital role in Chinese culture. Over tea, Mr Chen shared more Chinese history and interesting culture with us.



We followed this with a trip to Hongmei Park in Changzhou to gain a better understanding of local history.



## Promoting the International Mindedness

On the 5<sup>th</sup> November, Mr Wu, Ms Qian, Ms Desai and I had a discussion focused on our beliefs about education. It was apparent that both schools are committed to developing the whole child, understanding that wellbeing and achievement go hand in hand. We exchanged ideas on teaching and learning practices and developing systems for effective schools.



In closing, we signed an agreement to strengthen our sister school relationship and we exchanged gifts. We all agree that the modern teaching and learning emphasis is on intercultural understanding. To support all of our students to become global citizens we will continue our work together building intercultural understanding in order to contribute to a peaceful and productive world where cultures and people are valued!

