

meeting	ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE		
date	6 April 2011	agenda item number	6 (a)

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND CULTURAL SERVICES

British Council Connecting Classrooms School Partnership Programme – School and Local Authority Visit to China, 14 to 22 May 2011

Purpose of report

1. To seek approval for one County Council officer to travel outside Europe, enabling them to accompany 7 Nottinghamshire teachers taking part in the British Council Connecting Classrooms Programme for China. The date of the visit takes place between 14 and 22 May 2011, in Jinhua (Zhejiang province), China.

Information and advice

Background

Reasons for attendance

2. The British Council have provided the Local Authority with £1,000 grant funding specifically to support Nottinghamshire schools in establishing joint curriculum projects with their partner school, including a reciprocal visit (schools received separate funding from the British Council for their travel). In order for the teachers to gain the maximum benefit from the visit, it is essential that the officer coordinates the visit and prepares teachers for the China experience. The officer will also be able to visit schools and trouble shoot if necessary, as well as representing Nottinghamshire Local Authority when meeting officials in China, a role which will be expected by the Chinese authorities in Jinhua. The teachers in the group (including some deputy head teachers) have not visited China before and it will be beneficial for the teachers to be accompanied by an officer who has already met the necessary staff and officials during her visit to China last year.

3. Approval is sought for one County Council officer to attend. The officer seeking approval is:

Role at Nottinghamshire County Council	Role in the visit
International Links Coordinator, Children and Young People's Service (0.4FTE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before the visit, to continue to coordinate and facilitate communication between the Nottinghamshire schools, the British Council and Hanban (the Chinese equivalent of the British Council). • Before the visit the officer will hold CPD sessions for the visiting teachers from Nottinghamshire which will serve as an introduction to China and the Chinese education system as well as acquainting them with the practicalities of a visit to China. • To accompany the group of teachers from Nottinghamshire schools and to visit each of the schools in the Chinese cluster to facilitate negotiations and future plans for the cluster. • To attend any meetings organised by the British Council, Hanban and the Jinhua Education Bureau whilst in China. • To facilitate the development of the project within the cluster by meeting with coordinators in the Jinhua schools, helping to plan future partnership work and to prepare for future visits of Chinese teachers (including principals) to Nottinghamshire schools. • To continue to coordinate the project and to oversee and ensure its practical application in Nottinghamshire schools on their return. • To assist the teachers in their action planning with partner schools in China to develop the curriculum themes chosen for the project. • To report to the British Council in both London and Shanghai and Nottinghamshire County Council at the end of the visit.

Background to the project

4. British Council Connecting Classrooms is a global programme run by the British Council that creates partnerships between groups of schools in the UK and in other countries. These partnerships bring an international dimension to young people's learning, to improve their knowledge and understanding of other cultures and prepare them for life and work as global citizens.
5. With a population of over 1.3 billion people and the second largest economy in the world, China has a leading role in the global society of the 21st century. A partnership with China offers Nottinghamshire

schools an exciting opportunity to engage with this very important country to explore the rich Chinese culture and to discover and improve Mandarin language skills.

6. Nottinghamshire established a partnership link with the Chinese city of Jinhua (Zhejiang province) in May 2010. Since the initial contact seminar, The British Council Connecting Classrooms China project has given Nottinghamshire schools:
 - the opportunity to work with partner schools on collaborative curriculum projects, enabling learners to interact across geographical boundaries and enhance their understanding of each other's societies, languages and cultures – so preparing them for life and work in a global society
 - professional development for teachers and school leaders, which builds capacity to integrate an international dimension in the curriculum, support international partnerships and work in a global society
 - eligibility for the International School Award accreditation, which recognises schools' commitment to forming international partnerships and work in an international environment
 - support in the use of ICT tools that develop and sustain partnerships, including a range of online teacher forums.
7. All participating schools are committed to sustaining their links with Chinese partner schools in the future, and to initiating or increasing the teaching of Chinese language and understanding of Chinese culture in their schools. To help schools fulfil this commitment, one of the participating schools, South Wolds Community School and Language College, has offered the services of their Mandarin Chinese teacher to facilitate the early introduction of Mandarin Chinese into the curriculum. Already Mandarin Chinese teaching has begun to feature in every school in the partnership and this was highlighted in very favourable terms in recent press coverage including the Nottingham Post and BBC East Midlands Today.
8. The schools participating in the project represent a wide variety of locations throughout the county and have differing levels of international experience. For some schools this is their first international partnership. It was important in the selection process that our cluster was sufficiently varied.

Travel and accommodation requirements

9. All travel arrangements will be made by the lead school on behalf of the group and therefore Members Services will not be required to book any foreign travel. Details of the cost for the officer will be provided to Members Services. UK travel may be required, depending on local

travel arrangements for participants. Accommodation will be arranged by the hosts in China. Costs are estimated as follows:

Description	Amount	To be met from
Return Flight to Hangzhou (nearest airport to Jinhua)	£600	British Council Grant
Visa for China	£90	British Council Grant
UK Travel	£50	British Council Grant
Single Trip Insurance	£20	British Council Grant
Accommodation	£200	British Council Grant

The total estimated cost to Nottinghamshire County Council is nil. Any costs over and above the British Council Grant of £1,000 will be met by the officer.

10. The officer will not be claiming any other subsistence or travel costs for this visit from Nottinghamshire County Council.

Post Visit Reports

11. In line with the Council's Travel and Accommodation Policy, a post visit report will be taken to the Administration Committee at the earliest opportunity. A separate report will be taken to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, outlining individual school progress reports following the visit.

Statutory and policy implications

12. This report is necessary to ensure compliance with the Council's Travel and Accommodation policy and current arrangements for approving attendance at conferences, seminars and events.

RECOMMENDATION

13. That approval is given for the County Council officer to lead the group of teachers visiting their partner schools in China, which will involve travel outside Europe between 14 and 22 May 2010.

ANTHONY MAY

Corporate Director, Children, Families and Cultural Services

Legal Services' comments (LM/16.03.11)

14. The Administration Committee has delegated authority under the Scheme of Delegation to approve officer travel outside the UK and can therefore approve the recommendations in the report.

Finance comments of the Service Director – Finance (NDR)

15. The financial implications are set out in the report.

Background papers available for public inspection

Background information on the Connecting Classrooms Programme

Electoral division(s) affected

Nottinghamshire

M19C2766