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## School in China

Kid Reporter visits grade school near Shanghai

By [Andrew Liang](#) |



Kids keep their winter coats on inside the classroom at The Qiushi Affiliated Primary School of Zhejiang University. The school is in Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang province, about 45 minutes by high-speed train from Shanghai in the heart of China. The school isn't heated, and the inside is almost as cold as outdoors.

In many ways, schools in China are much like schools in America. The campuses are much smaller and the number of students per teacher much higher, but the schools have playgrounds with basketball courts as well as track and field. But they are also surrounded by steel fences with a security gate.

More than 1,300 students ages 6 to 12 from grades 1 to 6 attend Qiushi. They have 81 teachers, who travel from classroom to classroom to teach their subjects.



## 2.1a Reading 1: "School in China"

"We have five classrooms per grade, and there are about 45 students in a classroom," Guomin Zhu, Vice General Principal, told this reporter on a recent visit to the school. The students stay in the same classrooms for different subjects. Starting from the third grade, each subject is taught by a teacher who only specializes in that subject.

School hours are from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Students have 10 minute breaks in between 40 minute classes. During one break, students perform eye exercises based on ancient Chinese acupuncture therapy to prevent nearsightedness.

At noontime, the students eat lunch, which is prepared by school kitchen staff and delivered to their classrooms.

The class subjects are Math, Science, Chinese Language, English, Music, PE, Technology, Crafts, Ethics, and Social Studies. Guomin explains that there are also a variety of interest-based clubs.

"We have an award-winning Chorus Club, Chinese Folk Music Orchestra, Dancing Club, Chinese Calligraphy and Painting Club, Soccer team, Basketball team, and a Ping Pong club," she said.

She also pointed out that every student is encouraged to have many interests. The school auditorium is dedicated to sharing students' artwork.

Do Chinese schools generally give much homework? Sixth grade student Yinan says no.

"I can complete it in about one hour," he said. "After that, I do work from extracurricular activities."

Extracurricular activities for many students include weekend classes. Zheping, another sixth grader, listed his weekend classes.

"I have Olympic Math class, writing class, English, Chinese chess, and badminton," he said.

The majority of kids have Olympic Math and English as extracurricular weekend classes.

The Chinese hold learning and education to the highest regard. Bingyu, a fourth grader, was in the hospital having intravenous therapy to treat her bronchitis. With an injection needle in her left hand, she was doing homework in the right. At the same time, another first grader at the hospital had to recite Chinese texts and do school work while receiving a similar treatment for pneumonia.



## 2.1a Reading 1: "School in China"

While kids have work to do, they still have spare time. They like to play, just like kids in America. Video games and Hollywood are not new concepts in China. Harry Potter is a favorite in both countries.

When he has time, Hao, a student at Qiushi, plays video games.

"I like to play Game Boy and computer games with my friends," he says. "I have a Nintendo Wii, too."

Some of these kids have had the opportunity to visit America. Each year, 30 students from Qiushi are selected to go on a summer camp exchange program to visit an elementary school in Palo Alto, California. Yinan participated in the summer program. After seeing America, he has plans for a job on Wall Street when he grows up.

Many Chinese parents want to send their children to America to go to school there. In preparation for that, most kids take English as an extracurricular class. This is in addition to the English classes they take in school three times a week starting from third grade.

Guomin says that the only way to succeed in the future is to watch the kids and the education system with a critical eye. She knows how she would like her students to improve.

"We need to teach students teamwork and discipline," she points out. "I have been teaching for 20 years now, and no doubt kids are smarter and much more confident today. But there is always room for improvement."