



Firs

Primary School Awarded Gold Global School Award

We are delighted to announce that Firs Primary School in Derby has now been awarded as a Gold Global School, as recognition for their commitment to transforming their students into global citizens.

Firs have displayed excellent commitment to visiting their Sister School in China, Hefei Daoxiangcun Primary School.

Connecting Across Countries – Developing a Sister School Partnership

Their Sister School partnership begins back in 2024, where staff member Paula Martin joined a Leadership Delegation to China, to visit their partner school, establish links with the staff there.

During the delegation, planning for a future school immersion trip began planning, ready for four staff members and 12 students to travel to meet their partner school in March 2025. On return from the delegation, Paula completed a staff meeting on her insights, sharing best practice and her incredible experience with the entire staff.

Welcoming the world into their school

In July 2025, Firs demonstrated their global vision and values and hosting international students from their partner school in China. This reciprocal experience allowed for the students to meet, share and exchange cultures in their own environments. Providing the opportunity for students to be exposed to new perspectives and cultures and developing on their global citizenship journey.

During this hosting visit, the students shared multiple days out in the local area, along with a visit from the Mayor, deepening their cultural understanding of Derby and the UK.

Another member of staff has also been to the University of Derby to talk to the students and staff there about the opportunities that we provide our children, coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Firs Primary School continue to showcase their aspirations for their school and students with future immersive trips planned to China, this time with a larger group.

Celebrating cultural exchange

Courtney Hodges, a teacher at Firs Primary School shares her reflections from the partnerships and trips this has encouraged:

‘The trips for both children and staff have been incredible. The children have enjoyed seeing how the culture is very different to the UK and the staff have found it interesting how different the curriculum is in China.

The trips are a once in a lifetime chance for both children and staff and we are so proud to say that we offer our children this opportunity.’

Firs Primary were excited to feature in the Derbyshire Telegraph in a two-page spread highlighting their “unforgettable experience”. They have also been able to showcase their hard work to their Academy through the monthly magazine, and through their parent communications, further strengthening their reputation and dedication to global citizenship.



Another member of the Firs Primary staff has also given talks at the University of Derby to discuss the opportunities they provide for their children, particularly for those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Student impact

Upon arriving back from the visit of their sister school in Hefei, China back in 2025, one pupil from Firs Primary had this to say:

“I absolutely loved this trip. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I will never forget it. I made lots of nice friends and giving my gifts to them felt so satisfying. The moment we got on the plane, I knew it would be the start of an adventure. My tour guides made it even better and they were so nice. I miss them. This will be a trip that I will cherish forever.”

The parents were also full of praise:

“My son came back more independent, open-minded, and confident, with stronger social skills and more knowledge.”

“It has been a life transforming experience for the kids to understand the culture and enjoy the sight and sounds of China.”

“The trip was an incredible experience for my son. He returned home so happy and noticeably more independent, with a broader perspective and so much enthusiasm for what he saw and learned in China.”

“Something we will cherish forever, she ended up living every minute and she hasn’t stopped speaking about all of her different adventures!”

“My daughter really enjoyed the China trip and it’s clear how much she has gained from this opportunity – not only in terms of cultural understanding but also in confidence, independence, and personal growth.”

Congratulations to Firs Primary School – Gold Global School Award Winners

We are delighted to continue supporting Firs Primary School with their Sister School Partnership, and offer congratulations for their hard-work and dedication in attaining the Gold Global School award.

If you’d like your school to become a Global School Award winner, take the assessment to see where you are in the journey, and our team can support you with your progression. [*insert link to awards*](#)