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## An Overview of the Milestones and Achievements in Chinese Language Education of the 20-Year-Old Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School

### Abstract

The Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024. The aim of this study is to provide an overview of the changes that the institution has undergone over this period and the major milestones it has reached. The study briefly summarises the organisational structure of Chinese language education at the institution and presents quantifiable results achieved in this field. This includes the year-end assessments of students' performance in Chinese language classes, data from target language tests conducted by the Hungarian Educational Authority in Grades 6 and 8, and the results of the students' leaving examinations. Finally, the study presents the further education paths of the school's graduates, summarised by their chosen higher educational institutions.

**Keywords:** Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School, Chinese language education

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### 匈中双语学校20周年汉语教育里程碑与成就概览

### 摘要

匈中双语学校在2024年庆祝其成立20周年。本研究的目的是提供一个概述，介绍该机构在此期间所经历的变化和达到的主要里程碑。该研

究简要总结了该机构的汉语教学组织方式，并展示在这一领域取得的可量化成果。这包括学生在汉语课堂上的年终评估、匈牙利教育局在6年级和8年级进行的目标语言测试数据，以及毕业考试的结果。最后，该研究总结了毕业生升学后的专业方向，并按其报考院校进行了数据的分组归纳。

**关键词：**匈中双语学校，汉语教学

### **A Brief Overview of Chinese Language Education in Hungary**

Before introducing the milestones and achievements of Chinese language education at the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School, it is necessary to briefly review the state of Chinese language education in Hungary and the position of the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School within it.

The history of Chinese language education in Hungary can be traced back to over 100 years ago, to the year 1923, when the East Asian Institute was established at the predecessor institution of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), the University of Pázmány Péter.<sup>1</sup> The first Chinese Department established at ELTE trained numerous sinologists with advanced Chinese language skills, thus enabling the possibility of Chinese language education spreading to other higher educational institutions. Currently, in Hungary ELTE, Pázmány Péter Catholic University, and Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church have Chinese departments, and Budapest Business University, Dharma Gate Buddhist College, Corvinus University of Budapest, the National University of Public Service, and several other higher education institutions offer Chinese language courses.<sup>2</sup> It was until the 2000s that higher education served as the primary domain for Chinese language education in Hungary, with its main target audience primarily being the adult population, and this was also the case at language schools that had emerged at that time.

In addition to Chinese language courses offered to university students, the emergence of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in Hungary

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<sup>1</sup> Editors, T [Szerkesztőség, A] 2024: 209.

<sup>2</sup> Ye 2020: 136.

has made it possible for a wider audience to become acquainted with Chinese language and culture. Currently, there are five Confucius Institutes in Hungary. Among them, the ELTE Confucius Institute was the first to open its doors in 2006, followed by the establishment of the University of Szeged Confucius Institute in 2012, the University of Miskolc Confucius Institute in 2013, the Confucius Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine at the University of Pécs in 2015, and the Debrecen University Confucius Institute in 2018.<sup>3</sup> The opening of Confucius Institutes has provided the opportunity to offer Chinese language courses to adult learners outside of higher education, while also enabling children to become acquainted with Chinese language and culture through their programmes.

Children under 18 years of age primarily have two main options to learn Chinese language: (1) through the Confucius Classroom at their own school or (2) through a Chinese language extracurricular activity offered at their own school without a Confucius Classroom. In both cases, the children are taught by native language teachers delegated by Confucius Institutes from China. This creates an opportunity for interested pupils to become acquainted with the Chinese language and culture. Currently, there are four public educational institutions in Hungary with Confucius Classrooms: Bolyai János Gymnasium in Kecskemét (opened in 2009), the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary School (under its former name; opened in 2011), the Eötvös József High School in Szeged (opened in 2019),<sup>4</sup> and the Bánki Donát Street Primary School of Pécs (opened in 2022)<sup>5</sup>. The opportunity for learning Chinese language is already available in several public educational institutions, through extracurricular activities, and/or as part of the Chinese as a second/foreign language subject.

A significant turning point in Chinese language education in Hungary was marked by the establishment of the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School, founded in 2004 and expanded with a high school in 2016. It was the first institution in Hungary where Chinese language became part of the mandatory curriculum, and it set the teaching of Chinese language as a first foreign language from Grade 1 of primary school as an

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<sup>3</sup> Simay, Fan 2020: 10–11.

<sup>4</sup> Simay, Fan 2020: 11.

<sup>5</sup> [https://pte.hu/sites/pte.hu/files/share/Sajtokozlomenyek/2023/Sajt%C3%B3anyag\\_%20ETK\\_Konfuciusz\\_230619.doc](https://pte.hu/sites/pte.hu/files/share/Sajtokozlomenyek/2023/Sajt%C3%B3anyag_%20ETK_Konfuciusz_230619.doc) (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

aim.<sup>6</sup> Chinese language education is slowly but steadily gaining more ground in Hungarian public education, with Chinese language learning opportunities appearing in an increasing number of institutions.

The Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024. As there is currently no comprehensive English language study available yet on the overview of the school’s 20 years of development, its organisational structure, and results in Chinese language education, this article attempts to fill this gap. Over the past 20 years, the institution has undergone significant changes, and it may serve as inspiration for other educational institutions in the future. In Hungary, it can be considered a pioneer in this regard, as it may provide guidance to other public educational institutions to develop similarly well-established Chinese language education systems thereby further expanding Chinese language education in Hungary’s public education institutions.

### **The Foundation of the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary School**

The Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School plays a unique role in Chinese language education in the Central and Eastern European region. This institution is the only publicly funded full-time educational institution in the region where Chinese language education has been part of the local curriculum for 12 years and where instruction is conducted in both Chinese and the local language—in this case, Hungarian. The establishment of the school was significant, firstly because it integrated Chinese language education into the primary education system in Hungary<sup>7</sup> and secondly because educating Hungarian youth who understand and speak Chinese, and are familiar with Chinese culture and the Chinese mindset, contributes to the continuous nurturing of talent and ensures the ongoing development of economic, cultural, and social relations between Hungary and the People’s Republic of China. With the establishment of the school, in Hungary this school became the first to make it possible for elementary school children

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<sup>6</sup> Ye 2020: 136.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

to receive Chinese language education within the school framework through the study of Chinese as a first foreign language from Grade 1 onwards.

The idea of establishing the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary School arose in 2003. During an official visit to China between 27 and 29 August, 2003, former Prime Minister of Hungary Péter Medgyessy mentioned the establishment of a Hungarian–Chinese school to the Chinese party. The goal was to establish the school in cooperation with the Chinese party, considering the mutual interests of Hungary and China. Both the Hungarian and Chinese parties were interested in the establishment of a Hungarian–Chinese school. The large Chinese community living in Hungary expressed the need for establishing a school not only where Chinese children can participate in high-quality education, but also where they have the opportunity to learn the Chinese language and script, preserve their mother tongue and culture, and maintain their identity. The original goal of the school was to facilitate the integration of Chinese children into Hungarian society. However, a significant portion of Hungarian educational institutions were not prepared to teach Hungarian as a foreign language to foreign students, so Chinese children often naturally acquired the Hungarian language with varying degrees of success.<sup>8</sup> Based on multicultural educational principles, they considered a school type where Chinese, Hungarian, and students from other countries could learn together according to their specific needs to be the most suitable. The Hungarian party was also interested in establishing a Hungarian–Chinese educational institution, because China’s rapid economic growth makes it increasingly necessary for more Hungarian people to understand and speak the Chinese language and to be familiar with Chinese culture and the Chinese mindset. Therefore, as a publicly funded educational institution, the school offers tuition-free education, allowing Hungarian students to learn the Chinese language and cultural knowledge within the school framework.<sup>9</sup>

The institution was initially located at 2–4 Kavicsos köz in the 15<sup>th</sup> District of Budapest in the building of the Printing Industry Vocational School, which is owned by the Municipality of Budapest. The city provided the building to the school’s operator for 50 years free of charge based on an agreement. The school commenced its operation in September 2004 as a tuition-free pri-

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<sup>8</sup> [https://www.magyar-kinai.hu/iskolai\\_dokumentumok/intezmenyvezetoi\\_palyazat\\_2017.pdf](https://www.magyar-kinai.hu/iskolai_dokumentumok/intezmenyvezetoi_palyazat_2017.pdf) (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.nefmi.gov.hu/nemzetkozi-kapcsolatok/2004/osszefoglalo-magyar> (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

mary school, initially accommodating Grades 1–8, under the Institution Maintenance Service of the Ministry of Education (OMSZI) Nonprofit Ltd.<sup>10</sup> The school operated in this building until the end of the 2015/2016 school year.

### Major Milestones in the Development of the Institution

Since its establishment in 2004, the institution has been under the leadership of four directors: Péter Vigh,<sup>11</sup> János Farkas, Gusztávné Lindner,<sup>12</sup> and Zsuzsanna Erdélyi. The institution's current leader, Zsuzsanna Erdélyi had been serving as the deputy director of the institution since 2006, and from the school year 2009/2010, she continued her work as the director appointed by the then operator of the institution, OMSZI Nonprofit Ltd. Subsequently, she received multiple consecutive appointments for five-year terms as the leader of the institution by the operator (even after the change in operator).<sup>13</sup> Her current appointment lasts until 2027.

A milestone can be marked by the 2008 Beijing Olympics, after which the number of Hungarian students applying to the institution significantly increased. Until then, most of the students had been Chinese. Today, approximately three-quarters of the institution's students are Hungarian, with only about one-quarter being Chinese. Due to the reversal in the ratio of Hungarian and Chinese students, the institution underwent a shift in focus, with Hungarian students also receiving an increased concentration on Chinese language and culture education,<sup>14</sup> which involves both native Chinese language teachers and Hungarian native-speaking Chinese teachers. Despite the presence of many Hungarian students, it remains a goal to provide Chinese students with the opportunity to prepare for the Hungarian leaving examinations. Furthermore, alongside obtaining their leaving exam certificate, Chinese students in the institution continue to have the opportunity to nurture their

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.nefmi.gov.hu/nemzetkozi-kapcsolatok/2004/osszefoglalo-magyar> (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

<sup>11</sup> Vámos 2006: 79.

<sup>12</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Zsuzsanna Erdélyi, the current head of the institution, for providing the names of the institute's former leaders.

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.magyar-kinai.hu/iskolai\\_dokumentumok/intezmenyvezetoi\\_palyazat\\_2017.pdf](https://www.magyar-kinai.hu/iskolai_dokumentumok/intezmenyvezetoi_palyazat_2017.pdf) (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

<sup>14</sup> Kecsmár 2018: 11.

native language and acquire cultural knowledge about their homeland through native Chinese language classes.

On 16 June 2011, in collaboration of the ELTE Confucius Institute, a Confucius Classroom was established at the school. In 2014, the school received a Chinese–Hungarian Friendship Award from the Great Wall Hungarian–Chinese Friendship Association.<sup>15</sup> This also demonstrates that through education, the school significantly contributes to the development of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Since 2015, the opportunity has arisen to organise student exchange programmes between the two countries, and starting from 2016, children have had the opportunity to participate in camps in China,<sup>16</sup> including a kung fu camp that takes place in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China, which is organised by the International Chan Wu Federation. Participating in the camp allows the children to experience traditional Chinese kung fu and to visit cultural landmarks in Guangdong Province, China.<sup>17</sup>

The year 2016 marked several significant milestones in the school's history. Firstly, the school started phasing in high school year groups, leading to the change of the school's name to the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School. Additionally, in 2016 the school came under the supervision of the Klebelsberg Institution Maintenance Centre's 15<sup>th</sup> District Office, which has operated under the name North Pest District Educational Centre from 1 January 2017. In the same year, the school moved to a new building located at 57 Neptun Street in the 15<sup>th</sup> District, which provided sufficient space for the new secondary school.

The Chinese Ambassador Scholarship, also established in 2016, was first awarded to outstanding students in 2017. Initially eight students each year received the scholarship, but now generally 10–15 students are recipients. Each school year, usually during the Chinese New Year celebration, the Ambassador (Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary) of the People's Republic of China in Hungary visits the school and awards students with certificates and scholarships.

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<sup>15</sup> [https://www.magyar-kinai.hu/iskolai\\_dokumentumok/intezmenyvezetoi\\_palyazat\\_2017.pdf](https://www.magyar-kinai.hu/iskolai_dokumentumok/intezmenyvezetoi_palyazat_2017.pdf) (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.chinaqw.com/hwjy/2016/06-21/92552.shtml> (last accessed: 27.07.2024)

In 2017, the independent Confucius Classroom of the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School was inaugurated.<sup>18</sup>

In spring 2020, the first graduating secondary school class took their school leaving examinations. Since then, students from the school, including both Hungarian and Chinese students, have taken the Chinese language school leaving examination every fall and spring. There are students every year who take their Chinese language school leaving exam at the intermediate level, and there are students who take the exam at the advanced level.

### **Changes in the Number of Students Attending the School**

In the 2004/2005 school year, the school opened its doors with 87 pupils. According to data from January 2005, 73% of the school's pupils were native Chinese speakers, 24% were native Hungarian speakers, and 2% were native Arabic speakers. Most of the Chinese students were citizens of China who had been born in Hungary.<sup>19</sup> The school started the 2023/2024 school year with a total of 526 students across its 12 grades. It can be said that over the past 20 years, the number of students in the school has roughly increased sixfold, indicating an increasing demand for learning Chinese among younger generations in Hungary. Generally, at the lower primary level (Grades 1–4), there are approximately 25–30 students per class, while at the upper primary level (Grades 5–8), there are around 24–28 students per class. The ratio of Hungarian native-speaking students is higher in the lower grades, accounting for more than 70%.<sup>20</sup>

The diagram below (Diagram 1) shows the change in the number of students at the school over the past 20 years. From the school year 2012/2013 onwards, the enrolment data has been summarised based on the annual reports of the principal of the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School, broken down into numbers at the beginning and end of the

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<sup>18</sup> Since the submission of the manuscript, the school reached another milestone on 3 July 2024: the Confucius Institute of the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School was inaugurated.

<sup>19</sup> Vámos 2006: 79; 85–86.

<sup>20</sup> Kecsmár 2018: 10.



school year. The data indicates that the number of students fluctuates even within one school year, showing relatively high turnover, which exhibits migratory characteristics.<sup>21</sup>

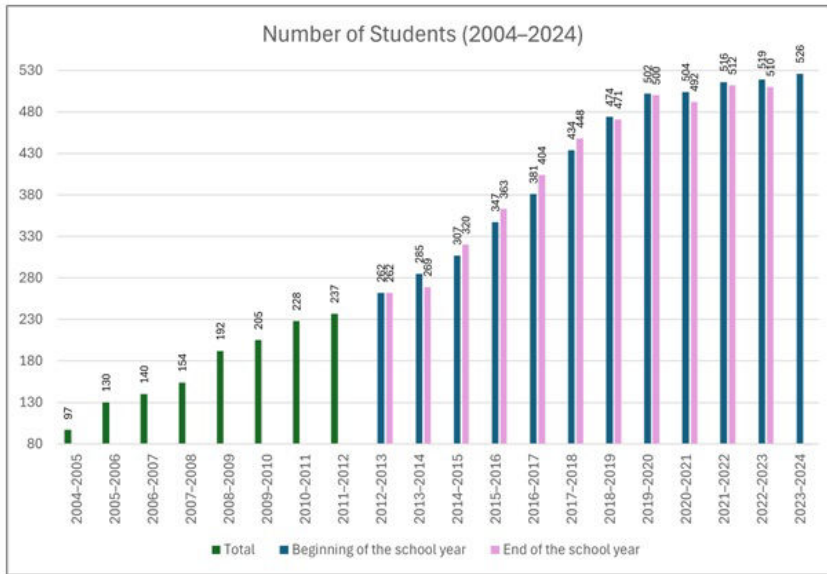


Diagram 1: Change in the Number of Students at the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School<sup>22</sup>

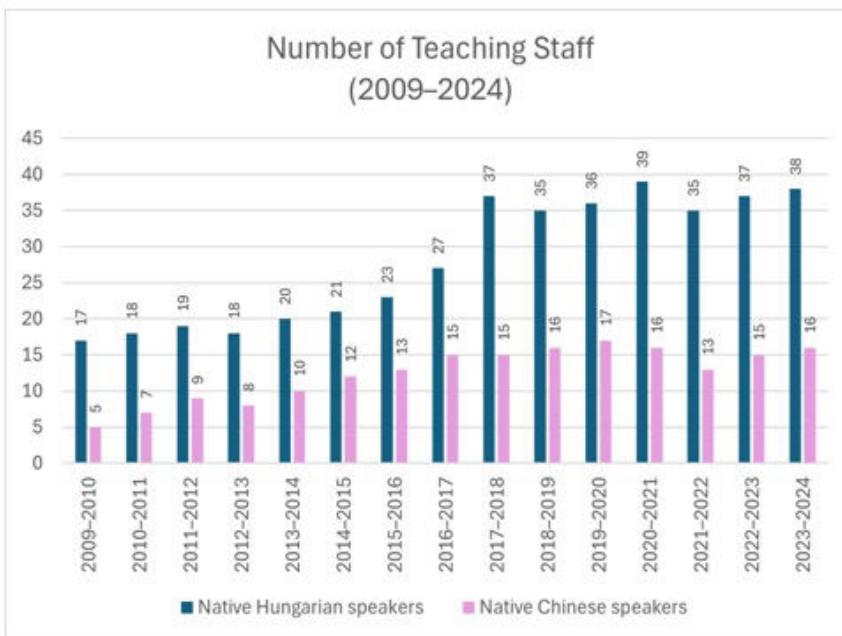
### Change in the Number of Teaching Staff at the School

There has been a high level of interest in the school over the past eight years, ensuring the opening of two classes (Class A and Class B) at each primary school level, and since the 2016/2017 school year, the introduction of new high school classes has also increased the number of students in the institution. With the opening of more classes, the increased number of students, and the larger number of study hours, a larger teaching staff became necessary. Since its establishment, both Hungarian- and Chinese-speaking teachers have been working at the school. Among the Chinese teachers working at the

<sup>21</sup> Vámos 2006: 87.

<sup>22</sup> Special thanks to Zsuzsanna Erdélyi, the principal, for providing the enrolment data between the school years 2004/2005 and 2011/2012.

institution, there are few Chinese teachers who permanently reside in Hungary. Rather, most of them are native Chinese language teachers delegated to Hungary from the People's Republic of China. In September of the 2004/2005 school year, the teaching staff consisted of 20 people (12 Hungarian and eight Chinese speakers). Over the past 20 years, the number of teaching staff has significantly increased. The diagram below (Diagram 2) shows the change in the number of teaching staff broken down by school year from the 2009/2010 school year onwards. These data are also based on the annual reports of the principal of the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School, summarised from the annual work plan for the 2023/2024 school year.



*Diagram 2: Change in the Number of Teaching Staff  
(Including All the Teachers Teaching Every Subject)  
at the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School<sup>23</sup>*

<sup>23</sup> Special thanks to Zsuzsanna Erdélyi, the principal, for providing the data.

## **The Development and Current State of the Chinese Language Education in the School**

The Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School provides the education of Chinese as a foreign language to non-native Chinese-speaking students starting from Grade 1 and Chinese language and literature classes for native Chinese-speaking students as taught in China. At the school, Chinese is the first foreign language, and from Grade 4, students start learning English as their second foreign language.

Chinese language education at the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School is detailed in the school’s educational programme. Currently, a total of 526 students are enrolled in 20 classes across 12 grades. In the primary school, there are two classes per grade (Class A and Class B), and in the high school, there is one class per grade (Class A).

Chinese language education is conducted in multiple groups at each level. At the lower primary level (Grades 1–4), children learn Chinese in four groups per grade. Non-native Chinese-speaking students are divided into three groups per grade: one group consists only of Class A students, another of Class B students, and a third group combines students from both Class A and Class B. Additionally, there is a group for native Chinese-speaking students, which is also a mixed group from both classes per grade. At the upper primary level (Grades 5–8), students learn Chinese in three different proficiency levels (I, II, and native). In high school, due to students coming from other primary schools without prior Chinese language education, Chinese is taught in three groups (beginner, advanced, and native).

Before 2019, the timetable included five mandatory Chinese lessons per week for all classes, with an additional optional Chinese lesson as part of an afternoon study group, which operated with high enrolment for years before the 2019/2020 school year. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, fewer native Chinese language teachers worked at the school in the following school year, making it necessary to hire more Hungarian native Chinese language teachers. Thus, from the 2020/2021 school year to the 2021/2022 school year, the schedule for Chinese language education changed: the compulsory five weekly Chinese lessons were maintained, but a Chinese native-speaking teacher and a Hungarian native-speaking Chinese teacher together taught the children in the compulsory Chinese lessons, forming teaching pairs. In the lower primary grades, this meant five lessons per week, with three

lessons taught by the native Chinese teacher and two by the Hungarian teacher. In the upper primary grades, the division was four lessons taught by the native Chinese teacher and one by the Hungarian teacher. This effectively integrated the previously optional study group into the compulsory Chinese lessons from 2020 onward. From the 2022/2023 school year, due to a decrease in the number of Hungarian native Chinese teachers and their teaching hours, the four-to-one ratio was discontinued in the upper primary grades, and students now meet the native Chinese teacher five times a week, while in the lower primary grades, the four-to-one ratio continues.

In addition to the weekly five Chinese language lessons, as a bilingual school, the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School also offers other subjects taught in Chinese for primary school students at all grades. In high school, this is not possible, as it is not a bilingual programme, but rather an increased number of Chinese language lessons are offered. The subjects taught in Chinese at the primary school, along with the weekly lesson numbers, are shown in the following table by grade level (Table 1).

Grade	Subjects Taught in Chinese (Hours per Week)
Grade 1	Music (1), Visual Culture (1)
Grade 2	Music (1), Visual Culture (1)
Grade 3	Music (1), Visual Culture (1)
Grade 4	Music (1), Visual Culture (1)
Grade 5	Visual Culture (1), Digital Culture (1), Target Language Civilisation (1)
Grade 6	Visual Culture (1), Digital Culture (1), Target Language Civilisation (1)
Grade 7	Visual Culture (1), Digital Culture (1), Target Language Civilisation (1)
Grade 8	Visual Culture (1), Digital Culture (1), Target Language Civilisation (1)

*Table 1: Subjects Taught in Chinese (Hours per Week) in Primary School*

## The School Curriculum

In the Chinese language classes, the following textbooks are used: in Year 1, students learn from the *Chinese Paradise* (Hanyu leyuan 汉语乐园) textbook and workbook. From Year 2 onwards, up to the advanced high school groups, students use the *Easy Steps to Chinese* (Qingsong xue zhongwen 轻松学中文) textbook series, although the English edition is used. Students who started

learning Chinese in Year 1 of primary school and continue their studies through high school use volumes 1–7 of the *Easy Steps to Chinese* series from Year 2 to Year 12. By the end of Year 8, students typically reach volume 4 of the *Easy Steps to Chinese* series, while faster groups can reach volume 5. Newly enrolled students in Year 9 join the high school beginners' Chinese group and start with the *New Practical Chinese Reader* (Xin shiyong hanyu keben 新实用汉语课本) series. Students in native Chinese-speaking groups study from the *Yuwen* (Yuwen 语文) series, which is also used in China. Since most students at the school learn from the *Easy Steps to Chinese* series, most of the vocabulary and grammatical structures that must be mastered in Chinese as a foreign language classes are encompassed by this series, making the usage of this schoolbook family the focal point of the school's Chinese language education.

Among the subjects taught in Chinese, the curriculum (which includes teacher-made materials) for the Chinese Target Language Civilisation subject is currently awaiting publication and is being revised and finalised by the Hungarian native Chinese language teacher who teaches the subject in Grade 5 to Grade 8 and who is the author of this study. In Visual Culture classes, occasionally, though not on a weekly basis, art-related publications in Chinese, donated from China and designed for native speakers, are used. Currently, there are no Chinese-language textbooks available for the Digital Culture subject.

### **School Averages in Chinese Language Studies**

Students' proficiency in Chinese can be measured in numerous ways. Interesting data on their Chinese language levels can be obtained from their results on the YCT and HSK exams. Every year, many students participate in the YCT and HSK exams; however, the school does not currently require the children to take these exams or pass them. Therefore, it is not possible to summarise these exam results within the scope of this study.

In this study, students' Chinese language proficiency is assessed through school grades, target language assessments organised by the Educational Authority in Grade 6 and Grade 8, and the results of the leaving examination at the end of Grade 12.

School grades also reflect the effectiveness of students' Chinese language learning. In the Hungarian education system, grades range from 1 to 5: the lowest grade is 1 (insufficient), followed by 2 (sufficient), 3 (average), 4 (good), and 5 (excellent), which is the highest grade. Grades are determined based on percentage categories. The educational programme of the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School defines the grades for comprehensive tests in primary school according to the following percentage categories (Table 2).<sup>24</sup>

Percentage ranges	Grade
90–100%	5 (excellent)
80–89%	4 (good)
65–79%	3 (average)
50–64%	2 (sufficient)
0–49%	1 (insufficient)

*Table 2: Percentage Ranges for Chinese Language Comprehensive Tests in Primary School Defined by the Educational Programme of the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School<sup>25</sup>*

The educational programme defines the grades for comprehensive tests in high school according to the following percentage ranges (Table 3).

Percentage ranges	Grade
85–100%	5 (excellent)
70–84%	4 (good)
60–69%	3 (average)
45–59%	2 (sufficient)
0–44%	1 (insufficient)

*Table 3: Percentage Ranges for Chinese Language Comprehensive Tests in High School Defined by the Educational Programme of the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School<sup>26</sup>*

<sup>24</sup> Since the submission of the manuscript, the school's educational program has been revised, and new percentage categories have been established.

<sup>25</sup> [https://magyar-kinai.hu/iskolai\\_dokumentumok/MA\\_KI\\_pp\\_2020.pdf](https://magyar-kinai.hu/iskolai_dokumentumok/MA_KI_pp_2020.pdf) (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

At the school, the testing and assessment of students' knowledge take various forms. Grades can be given for quizzes, comprehensive tests, oral examinations, homework, etc. For subjects with more than three hours of class time per week, student work must be evaluated with at least two grades per month.<sup>27</sup> According to the educational programme, at mid-year and at the end of the school year, the semester and year-end grades are determined based on the following principles<sup>28</sup> when calculating the average of these grades: a student receives a grade of 2 (sufficient) if their average is above 1.8 and a grade of 1 (insufficient) if their average is below 1.6, and grades are decided by the teacher for averages between 1.6 and 1.8. For the other grades, students' grades are rounded down if their average ends in 0 to .4 and rounded up if it ends in .7 or higher; in between, the teacher decides based on the student's performance.<sup>29</sup> This grading system applies equally to groups learning Chinese as a native language and to those learning it as a foreign language.

The table below (Table 4) summarises the year-end school averages in Chinese language and a subject taught in Chinese (i.e., Target Language Civilisation), considering the grading categories mentioned above. According to the table's data, it is noteworthy that the annual school average has shown an increase in recent years. Comparing the school average in Chinese language with that in Target Language Civilisation, a significant difference in the school average has been observed since the 2020/2021 school year. One reason for this could be that by this school year, the students of all four grades of high school had been enrolled not primarily at the initiative of their parents but out of their own interest and greater motivation. Currently, the Target Language Civilisation subject is only taught in Grades 5–8 of primary school, not in high school, which may also contribute to the difference in averages. The table shows (Table 4) the averages based on data available from the institution head's year-end reports starting from the 2010/2011 school year:

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<sup>26</sup> [https://magyar-kinai.hu/iskolai\\_dokumentumok/MA\\_KI\\_pp\\_2020.pdf](https://magyar-kinai.hu/iskolai_dokumentumok/MA_KI_pp_2020.pdf) (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

<sup>27</sup> Since the submission of the manuscript, the school's educational program has been revised, and the frequency of the evaluation of the students' work has been changed.

<sup>28</sup> Since the submission of the manuscript, the school's educational program has been revised, and the method for calculating the average of these grades has been modified.

<sup>29</sup> [https://magyar-kinai.hu/iskolai\\_dokumentumok/MA\\_KI\\_pp\\_2020.pdf](https://magyar-kinai.hu/iskolai_dokumentumok/MA_KI_pp_2020.pdf) (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

School year	School average grade in Chinese Language, end of school year	School average grade in Chinese as a Foreign Language, end of school year	School average grade in Target Language Civilisation, end of school year
2010/2011	4.26		-
2011/2012	3.83	4.16	-
2012/2013	4.04	4.08	-
2013/2014	4.22	4.37	4.04
2014/2015	4.40	4.36	4.11
2015/2016	4.48	4.46	4.51
2016/2017	4.19		4.18
2017/2018	4.36		4.20
2018/2019	4.41		4.43
2019/2020	4.47		4.35
2020/2021	4.43		4.12
2021/2022	4.45		4.14
2022/2023	4.51		4.09

*Table 4: School Average Grade in Chinese Language, Chinese as a Foreign Language, and Target Language Civilisation, Respectively, End of School Year, Between 2010 and 2023<sup>30</sup>*

The year-end school results show that over the past 10 years, students have consistently achieved an average grade above 4 (good) in their studies.

### **Measurement of Students' Language Proficiency: Target Language Assessment**

Beyond school grades, starting from the 2013/2014 school year, the Educational Authority has implemented a national-level target language assessment in bilingual primary schools. This assessment is conducted in Grades 6 and 8 towards the end of the second semester of each school year. The goal for Grade 6 students is to reach the A2 level and for Grade 8 students the B1 level. At the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School, the target language assessment is conducted in Chinese, while in other educational institutions, it is conducted in English or German. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the target language assessment was cancelled in the 2019/2020 school year, so no data is available for that year. Results of the target language as-

<sup>30</sup> Special thanks to Zsuzsanna Erdélyi, the principal, for providing the data.



assessments from the 2013/2014 to 2020/2021 academic years are publicly available on the Educational Authority's portal. From the 2021/2022 academic year onwards, the results of the target language assessments are no longer published by the Educational Authority and thus are not included in the table below (Table 5). However, the available data show that between 2014 and 2021, most of the students passed the national target language assessment. The table below (Table 5) summarises the percentage of students who achieved a passing grade, as compiled by the Educational Authority. Since there is only one Chinese bilingual primary school in Hungary, these data represent the results of the students at the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School.

Language	Grade	Year	Average score <sup>31</sup>	Percentage of the students reaching the passing grade (%)
Chinese	Grade 6	2014		100
		2015		100
		2016		92.0
		2017	52.7	97.6
		2018	48.5	94.1
		2019		89.5
		2021	45.1	78.9
	Grade 8	2014		92.3
		2015		100
		2016		86.4
		2017	51.6	96.7
		2018	51.4	92.3
		2019		89.2
		2021	44.9	60.0

*Table 5: The Average Scores Achieved by Students and the Percentage of Students Who Received a Passing Grade, by Language and Grade, from 2014 to 2021<sup>32</sup>*

<sup>31</sup> In 2017, 2018, and 2021, the maximum score was 60 points (instead of 100).

<sup>32</sup> [https://www.oktatas.hu/pub\\_bin/dload/kozoktatas/meresek/orszmer2021/Celnyelvi2021\\_Eredmenyekosszesitese.pdf](https://www.oktatas.hu/pub_bin/dload/kozoktatas/meresek/orszmer2021/Celnyelvi2021_Eredmenyekosszesitese.pdf) (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

## The School Leaving Examination

At the school, the greatest challenge for students in the Chinese language subject is participating in the school leaving exam. In Hungary, it has been possible to take the intermediate-level school leaving exam in Chinese as a foreign language since 2011, and since 2015, it has also been possible to take the advanced-level exam. The intermediate-level exam corresponds to the B1 level, while the advanced-level exam corresponds to the B2 level.<sup>33</sup>

The Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School’s first graduating class participated in the Chinese school leaving exam in 2020. Participation in the Chinese school leaving exam is not mandatory; students can choose it as a foreign language exam subject. The following table shows the number of graduating students and their results. It is important to note that in Hungary, both Hungarian- and Chinese-speaking students can take the Chinese as a foreign language leaving examination. Therefore, among the examinees listed in the table below (Table 6), there are varying proportions of Hungarian- and Chinese-speaking students.

The available school leaving exam results also show that at both the intermediate and advanced levels, in most cases, it is possible to achieve an average score of over 90%. The school average in every school leaving exam tends towards a grade of 5 (excellent), indicating that graduating students manage to reach an intermediate level (B1, B2) of Chinese proficiency during their high school years.

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<sup>33</sup> [https://www.oktatas.hu/pub\\_bin/dload/kozoktatas/erettségi/vizsgakovetelmenyek2024/elo\\_id\\_nyelv\\_2024\\_e.pdf](https://www.oktatas.hu/pub_bin/dload/kozoktatas/erettségi/vizsgakovetelmenyek2024/elo_id_nyelv_2024_e.pdf) (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

Year	Semester	Level	Number of Students	School average	
2020 <sup>34</sup>	Spring (usual)	Intermediate	10	94.60%	5.00
		Advanced	9	86.44%	5.00
	Autumn (extraordinary)	Intermediate	9	95.22%	5.00
2021 <sup>35</sup>	Spring (extraordinary)	Intermediate	3	91.33%	5.00
		Advanced	5	90.00%	5.00
	Spring (usual)	Intermediate	9	89.11%	4.78
		Advanced	4	90.00%	5.00
	Autumn (extraordinary)	Intermediate	10	94.60%	5.00
2022 <sup>36</sup>	Spring (extraordinary)	Intermediate	6	87.17%	4.83
		Advanced	7	93.71%	5.00
	Spring (usual)	Intermediate	15	85.04%	4.87
		Advanced	7	82.43%	5.00
	Autumn (extraordinary)	Intermediate	11	96.45%	5.00
		Advanced	5	90.00%	5.00
2023 <sup>37</sup>	Spring (extraordinary)	Intermediate	3	N/A	
		Advanced	8	95.50%	5.00
	Spring (usual)	Intermediate	3	N/A <sup>38</sup>	
	Autumn (extraordinary) <sup>39</sup>	Intermediate	13	98.31%	5.00
		Advanced	2	81.50%	5.00

*Table 6: The Results of the Chinese Language Leaving Examinations, from 2020 to 2023*

## Further Education

Among the graduating classes, there is a high proportion of students continuing their studies in higher education. The following table (Table 7) summarises the higher education institutions where students have been admitted starting from the academic year 2019/2020, (i.e., from the first graduating class onwards).

<sup>34</sup> [https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/2020\\_eredmenyek.pdf](https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/2020_eredmenyek.pdf) (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

<sup>35</sup> [https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/2021\\_eredmenyek.pdf](https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/2021_eredmenyek.pdf) (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

<sup>36</sup> [https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/2022\\_eredmenyek.pdf](https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/2022_eredmenyek.pdf) (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

<sup>37</sup> [https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/2023\\_eredmenyek\\_tavasz.pdf](https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/2023_eredmenyek_tavasz.pdf) (last accessed: 31.05.2024)

<sup>38</sup> The small number of participating students' results in the data is due to privacy protection.

<sup>39</sup> Special thanks to Andrea Szénási, the vice-principal, for providing the data.

University	Degree	Number of Students	Academic Year
IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems, Austria	Business Administration	1	2022/2023
Budapest Business University (BGE), Hungary	Business Informatics	1	2022/2023
	Trade and Marketing (in English)	4	2019/2020
	International Business Management	2	2022/2023
	International Business Management (in English)	1	2019/2020
		1	2020/2021
		3	2021/2022
Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME), Hungary	Tourism and Hospitality Management	2	2019/2020
		1	2020/2021
	Architectural Engineering	1	2020/2021
Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME), Hungary	Business and Management	1	2019/2020
		2	2020/2021
Capital Normal University, Beijing, China	Automotive Engineering	1	2022/2023
Capital Normal University, Beijing, China	Chinese Language	1	2022/2023
Capital Normal University, Beijing, China	International Chinese Language Teacher	3	2022/2023
Corvinus University of Budapest (BCE), Hungary	Business Informatics	2	2019/2020
	Communication and Media Studies	2	2021/2022
		1	2022/2023
	International Business Management (in English)	2	2021/2022
University College Nordjylland, Denmark	International Studies (in English)	1	2020/2021
	Hospitality, Tourism and Management	1	2020/2021
Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands	Engineering Informatics	1	2022/2023
University of Debrecen (DE), Hungary	Horticultural Engineering	1	2022/2023
Eszterházy Károly Catholic University (EKE), Eger, Hungary	Computer Science	1	2020/2021
Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Budapest, Hungary	Faculty of Law and Political Sciences	1	2022/2023
	English Studies	1	2021/2022
	English Language and Culture, Mathematics Teacher	1	2022/2023
	Human Resources	2	2022/2023
	Law	1	2020/2021
	East Asian Languages and Culture	2	2022/2023
	East Asian Languages and Cultures (Japanese)	1	2020/2021
	Eastern Languages and Cultures, Chinese Specialisation	1	2020/2021
	Eastern Languages and Culture, Mathematics Teacher	1	2022/2023
	International Business	2	2021/2022

University	Degree	Number of Students	Academic Year
Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Budapest, Hungary	Management (in English)		
	International Studies	2	2021/2022
		2	2022/2023
	Undivided Teaching – Biology and Chinese Language and Culture Teacher	1	2021/2022
	Finance and Accounting	1	2019/2020
	Primary Education	1	2020/2021
N/A, China			
Jinan University, Guangzhou, China	Economics	2	2020/2021
Peking University, Beijing, China	International Studies, Scholarship Programme	1	2019/2020
Tsinghua University, Beijing, China/BME	Electrical Engineering	1	2020/2021
Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary (KRE), Budapest, Hungary	Faculty of Law and Political Sciences	1	2022/2023
	International Studies	1	2020/2021
	Kindergarten Teacher	1	2020/2021
	Psychology	1	2021/2022
	Sociology	2	2022/2023
Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (MATE), Hungary	Agricultural Engineering	1	2021/2022
	Equine Husbandry and Equestrian Sport Management	1	2021/2022
Ludovika University of Public Service (NKE), Budapest, Hungary	International Security and Defense Policy	1	2020/2021
		1	2021/2022
	International Administration	1	2022/2023
Pázmány Péter Catholic University (PPKE), Budapest, Hungary	Faculty of Law and Political Sciences	1	2022/2023
	Law	1	2021/2022
	Eastern Languages and Cultures	1	2019/2020
	Eastern Languages and Cultures, Chinese Specialization	1	2019/2020
		1	2019/2020
	International Studies	1	2020/2021
		1	2021/2022
	Hungarian Language, Literature, Drama, Theatre Studies Teacher	1	2021/2022
	Molecular Bionics Engineering	1	2021/2022
	2	2019/2020	
	Sociology		
Semmelweis University (SE), Budapest, Hungary	Nursing and Patient Care (Midwife)	1	2020/2021
	Nursing	1	2021/2022
Széchenyi University of Győr (SZIE), Hungary	Engineering Informatics	1	2022/2023
University of Szeged (SZTE), Hungary	Liberal Arts	1	2021/2022

Table 7: The Results of Graduated High School Students' Higher Education Admissions<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> [https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/felsooktatasi\\_felveteli\\_eredmenyek\\_2019\\_20.pdf](https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/felsooktatasi_felveteli_eredmenyek_2019_20.pdf)  
(last accessed: 31.05.2024)  
[https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/felsooktatasi\\_felveteli\\_eredmenyek\\_2020\\_21.pdf](https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/felsooktatasi_felveteli_eredmenyek_2020_21.pdf)  
(last accessed: 31.05.2024)  
[https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/felsooktatasi\\_felveteli\\_eredmenyek\\_2021\\_22.pdf](https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/felsooktatasi_felveteli_eredmenyek_2021_22.pdf)  
(last accessed: 31.05.2024)  
[https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/felsooktatasi\\_felveteli\\_eredmenyek\\_2022\\_23.pdf](https://magyar-kinai.hu/images/felsooktatasi_felveteli_eredmenyek_2022_23.pdf)  
(last accessed: 31.05.2024)

Based on the post-secondary education data, it can be seen that in the previous years, the majority of students continued their studies at ELTE and PPKE. It is worth mentioning that several students chose programmes related to Chinese language or Chinese language teaching both in Hungary and China. This is significant because upon completing these programmes, these students can later find employment as teachers of Chinese language in Hungarian educational institutions, which could potentially expand Chinese language education to more schools and enhance the overall quality of Chinese language education in public primary and secondary schools. These students already possessed a high level of proficiency in Chinese language when they applied to these higher educational institutions. Several students also chose programmes such as international studies, law, engineering, and computer science, which, when combined with their knowledge of Chinese language, will enable them to pursue careers that can further strengthen the relations and cooperation between Hungary and China.

### Summary

The Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School stands as a unique entity among institutions teaching the Chinese language, being capable of providing its students Chinese language education on a daily basis for all 12 grades. Over its 20 years of existence, not only has the number of students multiplied, but the quality of Chinese language education has also been elevated to a high standard. This is evidenced by the results detailed in the study, which can be substantiated with numbers. Not only the strong grades (as reflected in their GPAs above 4.0) but also the students' successful performance in the proficiency assessments organised by the Educational Authority demonstrate that Chinese language education is effective for most of the students in primary school, with students potentially reaching the A2 and B1 levels by the end of primary school. The excellent graduation results in Chinese language prove that after graduating from high school, students can acquire strong B1- and B2-level Chinese language skills, enabling them to potentially apply to Chinese higher educational institutions for further studies. Thus, the Hungarian–Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School can provide a unique opportunity for its students in Hungary.

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