

Magnolia is a pupil at Lees Brook Academy in Derby

Read Magnolia's report on the school visit to China in LT (53) Extra: [Click Here](#)



In this blog Magnolia responds to Languages Today Questions and shares some photographs

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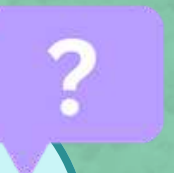
When did you first hear about the trip?

19 June 2025

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How long was the trip?

Saturday 11 – 18 April 2026



What did you think China would be like before you travelled?

I have never travelled outside Europe so to go to China was quite scary, I was worried about the language barrier and the cultural differences. I wanted to make sure that I wore the correct and modest outfit when visiting temples. I thought it would be big, from the tall buildings but also have traditional architecture. I also thought it would be busy everywhere.

My mum insisted I watched programmes on China before we went so I didn't get overwhelmed. These included Ben Fogle in China and Race across the world on BBC1.

I tried to make Tanghulu several times at home which is a classic Chinese dessert of bamboo skewered berries or fruit in a candy sugar coating, so when I saw this on a street stall I was so excited and buying it was one of the highlights of the trip.



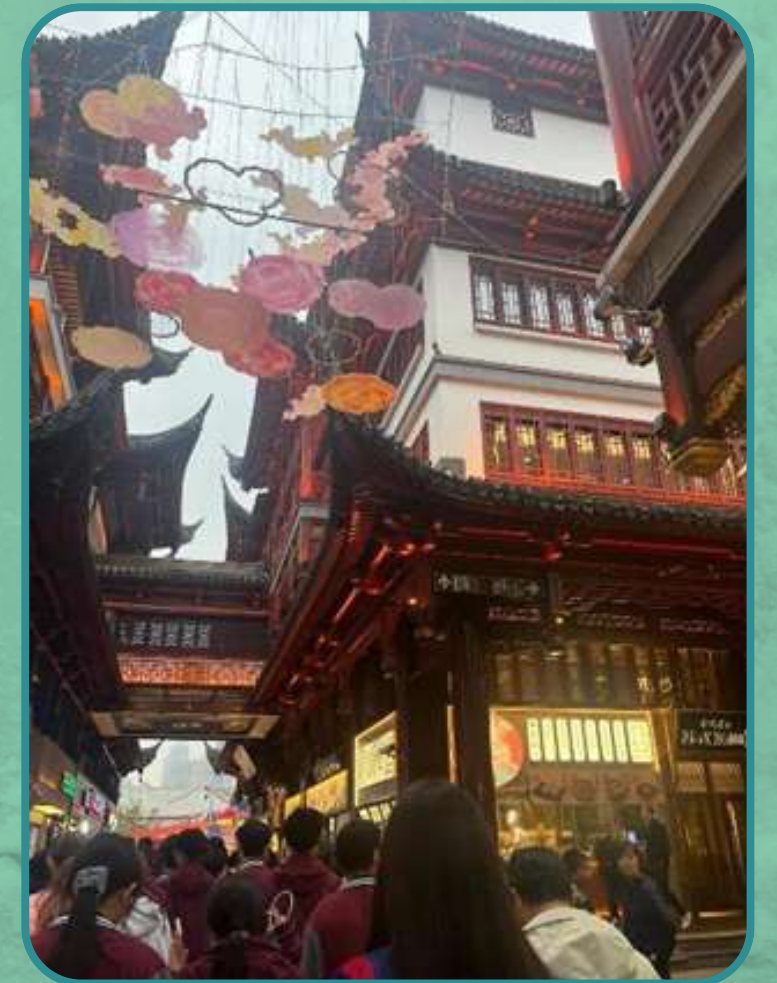


Did anything surprise you about what it was really like?

What surprised me the most was the how the students at our sister school reacted when meeting us. At one point we had nearly 200 students crowding round us and speak to us.

Also parents would ask us to hold their babies while we walked around the shopping areas. We were so welcomed and treated with such interest and kindness.

The smells were so different from at home and that took a lot of getting used to. Shanghai at night was unlike anything I had seen before, the lights were truly magical.





Was there any of the food you really liked?

The best meal that I had was duck pancakes, I struggled with some of the meals as there was once an actual chicken's head in the bowl.
The food was not always to my liking



How do you make China tea properly?

They call tea making in China Gongfu Cha. You have to use a Gaiwan (lidded bowl), loose tea leaves and hot water, seep the tea leaves in hot water for a few seconds, then pour away but don't drink this bit. Then pour in hot water again for 10 seconds, then serve into a fairness cup before putting into a tea cup, you do this quite a few times as the cups are all so tiny. Not like the mugs we use in England for our cups of tea. The Chinese process seems more like a delicate ritual.



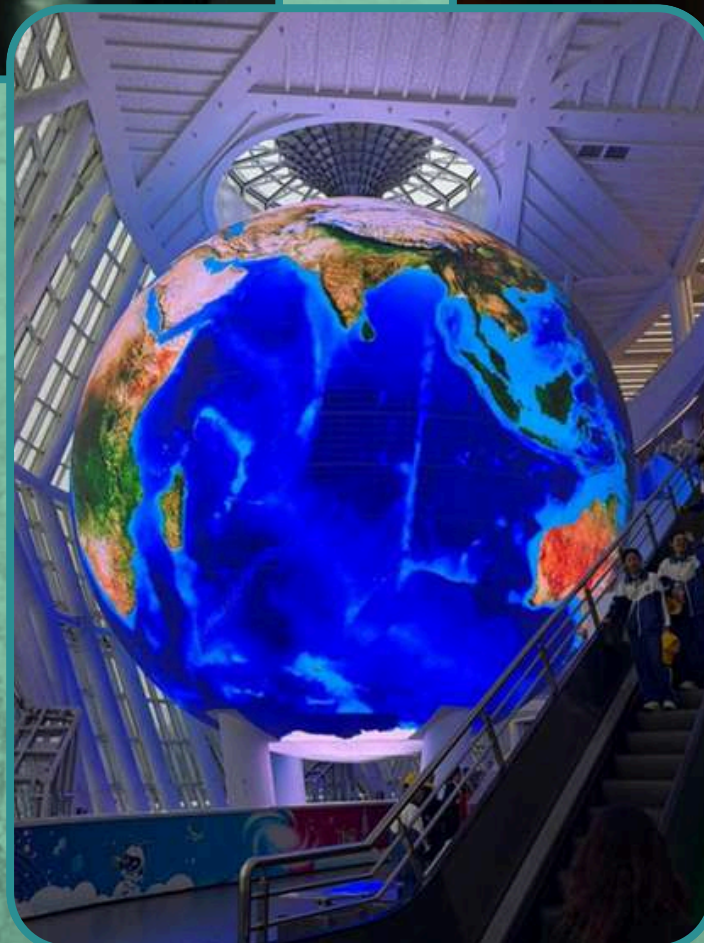
Were you in touch with your buddy before you went?

No we weren't. However, the students from Hefei school may now visit our school on an exchange visit and it would be nice to see my buddy again. We have hosted Chinese Students before but I was in year 7 then and too young.



How many pupils and teachers were on the trip?

24 pupils and 3 teachers



Anhui Youth Science and Technology Centre





**With Many Thanks to Magnolia and Teachers
from Lees Brook Academy**