

## International School Dulwich College Beijing, China



## Having everything in one place reduces workload for teachers and leaders

**Professional development, performance management, observations and information for accreditation all hosted on one platform makes life easier**

### About the school

Dulwich College Beijing in China was the second to join the Dulwich College International family of schools in 2005. It has over 1570 students from age 3 to 18, with over 45 different nationalities represented. It draws upon 400 years of excellence and tradition from Dulwich College in the UK. Dulwich College Beijing is fully accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS), the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the National Centre for School Curriculum and Textbook Development (NCCT). It is inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). Dulwich College Beijing is affiliated with the International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE), The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC), the Association of China and Mongolia International Schools (ACMIS) and the Federation of British International Schools in Asia (FOBISIA). It is one of the nine Dulwich College International schools, all of which use BlueSky.

### How is BlueSky supporting Dulwich College Beijing?

BlueSky has been an integral part of staff development in Dulwich College Beijing for over 10 years. Mahesh Selvaraj took on the role of Director of Professional Development / Learning in August 2018. He was very impressed with BlueSky, particularly the way it reduced workload, and has developed its use even further since. Dulwich College Beijing currently uses BlueSky to support its processes for professional development, performance management, observations and evaluation monitoring.

“It's a very nice tool for professional learning and performance management. It also provides the information in one place for our CIS evaluation and other accreditation processes. It makes life so much easier!”

Mahesh Selvaraj, Director of Professional Development/  
Learning at Dulwich College Beijing in China.

“Everything is in one place, so it makes things easier for everyone. Professional development, performance management and appraisal, as well as observations. In so many schools it can be a tick box exercise, but with BlueSky it is a developmental process.”

Mahesh Selvaraj, Director of Professional Development/Learning at Dulwich College Beijing in China.



“Initially, staff set their goals in the first few weeks of the academic year once the students have settled in, and discuss with their line manager. Whenever staff request training, or their line manager observes a lesson, or they have a development conversation it is recorded in BlueSky. We have a mid-year review which is also recorded. Throughout the year, staff can add notes and upload evidence to support their objectives ready for the end of year review in June.

“BlueSky also supports our accreditation process and our Council of International Schools (CIS) evaluation. One of the CIS domains is about staff professional development, and as a CIS Evaluator myself, I know exactly what is required and I can present that with BlueSky for our school. They are expecting to see that your school is giving teachers professional development based on their professional objectives and the school improvement plan. You need to have a record of CPD, and show how it links to professional objectives and the school’s aims. It’s not just helpful to support our CIS evaluation but also supports the International Baccalaureate (IB) and any other accreditations we provide information for,” says Mahesh.

“As part of our professional development programme, our teachers request their CPD through BlueSky, and when they do they select the professional objective it links to, and which of the school’s aims it relates to, so this is already in BlueSky, meaning no extra work is necessary to demonstrate this to the CIS Evaluator. It makes life so much easier! As the CIS Evaluation is once every five years, I can look back to previous years as necessary in BlueSky without having to spend time pulling out that information and relying on manual spreadsheets,” adds Mahesh.

### What is the impact?

“The teachers are comfortable with using BlueSky, and the processes we use it for. That makes a huge difference. They know their own objectives, they can request CPD and they know the school development plan. BlueSky links everything together, that’s a huge impact for everyone. The transparency of the system means that everyone feels good about their development and can see what they are working towards which has a very positive impact. If a teacher is moving to another school they like that they can take their BlueSky account with them,” says Mahesh.

### What’s next?

“Along with Dulwich College London, we are currently undertaking an evidenced based research project to enhance our teaching and learning process. Currently, the three sections of our school, early years, junior and secondary work with teacher competencies under the umbrella of four learning principles across the school. Once the project is done, we will incorporate everything into BlueSky for the purpose of creating new observation templates, performance management templates, etc,” says Mahesh.

“I am also going to look at Projects in BlueSky. This is a nice way to encourage staff collaboration and will enhance their professional development,” adds Mahesh

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Mahesh Selvaraj, Director of Professional Development/Learning  
at Dulwich College Beijing in China.

“BlueSky is a management system to help and support staff to reflect on their practice, document their progress and cater for individual needs whilst at the same time providing managers with information to help with school and departmental evaluation,” says Emmanuel.

“It has helped to standardise everything from teacher observation, lesson plans, feedback, appraisal etc. One of my major challenges was aligning standards, I didn’t want departments having different standards. If you are saying to me that a teacher is underperforming then the criteria for that is the same across the school. We have our own six bespoke school standards which are contextually appropriate, blended and taken from the UK eight standards, various international standards as well as Cambridge International Examinations (CAIE) standards.

### What’s next?

“At the moment we are designing KPIs and OKRs for our supporting staff, and once created we will introduce BlueSky to the supporting staff so that it becomes school-wide, making it even easier having all staff records in one place,” says Emmanuel.

“In regards to Professional Development, we have invested in BlueSky Learning, the online CPD content library. During the COVID pandemic in 2020, many of our staff attended BlueSky’s Festival of Learning, a programme of CPD webinars to support teachers professional learning during difficult times. We knew that BlueSky CPD content is done well and the content is very good. We decided to subscribe to BlueSky Learning because it’s really good value compared to other PD opportunities out there, and there is a lot out there!”

“We are using it to tailor professional development for staff, for example, if I know that a teacher needs to develop further in behaviour management and there is a module in BlueSky Learning I can direct them to it. Staff can also engage with any modules they wish to. There will be targeted modules but then there will be ones where staff have the freedom to do whatsoever they choose if they want to upskill in a certain area they are free to go ahead. It is all recorded in BlueSky and managers can see what modules they have engaged with. We like that you can come back to the modules whenever you want, you don’t have to do it all in one sitting - it’s a very flexible platform. Support staff also have access to BlueSky Learning which has been really beneficial for them too,” explains Emmanuel.

“BlueSky Learning is now embedded and represents solid professional development. We like how easy it is to link these professional development activities straight into the evidence folder,” adds Emmanuel.

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Mahesh Selvaraj, Director of Professional Development/Learning  
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