

# Certification Inspection Report

## BRITISH COLUMBIA PROGRAM

at

MAPLE LEAF FOREIGN NATIONALS SCHOOL - YIWU

YIWU, ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

NOVEMBER 3–4, 2022

## INTRODUCTION

On November 3 and 4, 2022, a virtual certification inspection was completed on Maple Leaf Foreign Nationals' School—Yiwu (MLFNS-Yiwu) in Yiwu, Zhejiang province, People's Republic of China, referred to as the School in this report. The purpose of this inspection was to determine if the requirements for the British Columbia (BC) education program have been met, according to the *BC Offshore School Program Certification Agreement* (the Agreement). The inspection team (the Team), appointed by the Executive Director of the Independent Schools and International Education Branch, British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care (the Ministry) in accordance with the Agreement, consisted of Greg Corry and Terence Sullivan, who served as Chair for this virtual inspection.

The School's BC program has an enrolment of 129 students, in grades 1 to 12. The School shares a campus with Maple Leaf International School-Zhejiang, which enrolls 900 students. The School shares the cafeteria, field, basketball courts, gym and the teaching facility. The main teaching building is further broken into A wing (all MLIS-Zhejiang) and B wing (Floors one and two belong to the FNS of a four-story building). The School also shares the auditoriums that are on the fourth floor, two computer labs on the third floor and a common library on the second floor. The School has its own separate library.

During the visit to the School, the Team reviewed all standards required in the Agreement and *Operating Manual* and met with the Assistant Superintendent of China Maple Leaf Educational Systems, the Offshore School Representative (OSR), the BC Principal, BC teachers and six students from grades six, seven and eight.

The Owner/Operator, China Maple Leaf Educational Systems (CMLES) is responsible for the BC program. Maple Leaf Educational Systems (MLES) has opened a number of schools globally and has more than 46,000 students and over 7,000 Chinese and foreign staff, forming a multi-level, high-quality international education system integrating foreign nationals schools, preschools,

elementary schools, middle schools and high schools. CMLES has moved its head office from Dalian to Shenzhen.

The BC program's philosophy, objectives and special features include an educational philosophy that assumes that every child has a strong desire to learn and to develop an understanding of the world, to share their knowledge, and to communicate their understanding, thoughts and feelings through wide ranging personal expression. MLES provides an international education that emphasizes academic excellence within a supportive community that respects and promotes cultural norms and traditions for both Chinese and international students.

The Team would like to thank MLFNS-Yiwu for its cooperation and preparedness for the virtual inspection visit.

<b>The School has satisfactorily addressed requirements contained in the previous inspection report.</b>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Requirement Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Not Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
<p>Comment:</p> <p>There was a requirement in the previous report that the School must ensure that all instruction being provided remotely to students of MLFNS-Yiwu aligns with the Ministry's Continuity of Learning Policy and is consistent with section 18 of the Agreement and section 2.28 of the Inspection Catalogue.</p> <p>The School presently is not offering any online courses to students but intends to do so during the next semester. When that occurs those courses will be provided by the Ministry approved online learning service provider, School District 73 Business Company Global Education.</p>			
<p>Commendation:</p> <p>The School is to be commended for fully meeting the requirement from the previous inspection.</p>			

## **BUSINESS PLAN 1.0**

<b>The Owner/Operator has submitted a business plan to the BC Ministry of Education, confirming the sustainability of the program.</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Requirement Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Not Met
<p>Comment:</p> <p>The School has submitted a comprehensive business plan to the Ministry of Education and Child Care. One of the major objectives of the business plan is to increase enrolment. As a</p>		

foreign nationals school, the School depends on its enrolment from the children of foreign nationals working in various local international businesses. The School, and especially the Principal, have worked very hard in the community in making contact with local businesses in an attempt to increase enrolment. As a result of those efforts the enrolment in the School has increased from 79 students last year to 129 this year.

However, the restrictions in place in China, due to COVID-19, continue to impact the enrolment of the School and the business plan. The very strict enforcement of government rules in China regarding COVID-19 have caused hesitancy among foreign nationals to return to China. Mandatory testing is in place for all city residents every 48 hours which also applies to staff and students at the School. The zero case requirement to avoid lockdown is a constant concern at the School. Despite these challenges, one of the main objectives of the plan to increase enrolment is still being pursued and realized.

**Commendation:**

The Principal and the School are to be commended for their efforts to increase the enrolment of the School in a very challenging environment in China as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.

## INSPECTION CATALOGUE 2.0

### 2.02 The Owner/Operator meets all requirements as set forth in the Agreement.

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Owner/Operator, China Maple Leaf Educational Systems was the first to open a BC offshore school in China. The Owner/Operator meets the requirements of section 5.0 and other relevant sections of the Agreement and has provided supporting documentation in the Annual Report to show those requirements are being met. The Owner/Operator meets all the requirements set forth in the Agreement.

### 2.03 The Owner/Operator has written approval from the appropriate government entity to operate the School, as outlined in section 5.03 of the Agreement.

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The School has provided approval to establish a BC offshore school along with certificates and declarations dated July 2, 2019 which expire on July 2, 2023. The School has also provided proof of approval for the ongoing operation of the School with a private school operating license issued by the People's Republic of China which was approved on March 1, 2019 and expires on December 31, 2026.

The School has the necessary approvals from the appropriate government authorities to operate the School.

**2.04-2.05 The School meets building inspection/safety, food preparation/cafeteria and fire safety codes and regulations. The facilities are deemed to be suitable to support the BC program.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The School has provided a building occupancy permit dated September 10, 2015 with no expiry date. The School has also provided a building safety inspection dated September 9, 2015 with no expiry date. The School has been issued a fire safety certificate issued on August 30, 2015 with no expiry date and a cafeteria food service operation catering service permit issued December 25, 2017 which expires on December 24, 2022. The school meets the local inspection, safety and food preparation requirements.

In the event of unplanned school closures the School has an alternate plan for virtual learning, or students may be transported to MLIS for classes. For extended closures Maple Leaf Educational Systems Head Office would provide alternate accommodation at one of its schools. The School has provided detailed documentation regarding classroom safety/injuries, fire and earthquake plans, fire drill procedures, earthquake drill procedures electrical blackouts and unplanned emergency situations. The plans have been vetted by the Offshore School Representative (OSR) for accuracy and functionality.

The strict policy enforcement in China since the resurgence of COVID-19 has put additional pressure on schools. The zero case requirement and the risk of lock downs due to cases in the community or at the School along with the requirement that everyone must be tested at specific times every two days has added to overall stress levels. Staff and students are urged to wear masks in the School throughout the school day.

**Commendation:**

The Principal and staff are to be commended for continuing to provide a stable and positive learning environment for students during the challenges presented by COVID-19.

**2.06 Offshore School Representative (OSR) - The Owner/Operator must appoint an individual to act as an OSR. This individual must be confirmed by the Province and must meet all the requirements set out in section 14 of the Agreement.**

☒ Requirement Met                      ☐ Requirement Partially Met                      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The School has appointed Dr. Peter Froese as the Offshore School Representative (OSR). The OSR has served in a number of capacities in the public and independent school systems in British Columbia and most recently served for three years as the superintendent of the China Maple Leaf Educational Systems (CMLES), retiring in August of 2021. The OSR is familiar with the Maple Leaf System and its schools and meets all the requirements set out in the Agreement.

The OSR is aware of his obligation to report critical information relating to changes in the operation of the School or ownership structure that could significantly impact the School's operations.

**Commendation:**

The Team commends the availability of the OSR throughout the inspection.

**2.07 The Principal meets the requirements as outlined in section 2.07 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met                      ☐ Requirement Partially Met                      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Principal has extensive experience in offshore schools in Japan, Korea, and China. He served as a secondary teacher and secondary headteacher at Dalian prior to his becoming the Principal of Maple Leaf Foreign Nationals School in Yiwu. The Principal holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Alberta, a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of British Columbia and a Masters of Education from Lakehead University in Ontario.

The Principal fully meets the requirements outlined in the Annual Report.

**2.08 The School meets the administrative support requirements as outlined in section 2.08 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The School has two full-time administrative assistants. One administrative assistant is responsible for all teacher files and the second administrative assistant is responsible for all student files. The School also has an Education Coordinator to assist with the leadership of the senior secondary program. The School works closely with the Chinese Headmaster who supports the maintenance of the facility, resources that are required as well as assisting with financial matters. In addition, the School is supported by Maple Leaf Educational Systems Head Office in the areas of human resources, finance, education and curriculum.

The School meets the support requirements outlined in section 2.08 of the Annual Report.

**2.09 The School meets the Student Record requirements as outlined in section 2.09 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Team reviewed 24 student files selected at random representing all grades in the School. Because the School is a foreign nationals school, students come from a variety of countries with various levels of proficiency in English. All students entering the School are interviewed by the Principal and a written transcript of the interview is provided on each student file. The Principal then advises the teacher of the level of proficiency of each new student entering the School. All files reviewed had the required updated BC Ministry of Education and Child Care personal information consent form. All files examined contained the records required.

**Commendation:**

Administrative support staff are to be commended for the organization and thoroughness of the student files.

**2.10-2.18 The School meets the teacher certification requirements as outlined in sections 2.10-2.18 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Team examined all the files of the teachers employed by the School. One teacher has a Letter of Exemption (LOE) which is valid until March 11, 2023. The Offshore School Representative (OSR) and Maple Leaf Educational Systems Head Office are assisting the teacher to obtain certification by the required date. All other teachers have the required teaching certificates.

The School has two locally certified teachers who both teach Mandarin. Both teachers have university degrees and have had a criminal record check.

**Commendation:**

Administrative support staff are to be commended for the organization and thoroughness of the student files.

**2.19 The School meets the requirements for curriculum implementation outlined in section 2.19 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Team reviewed curriculum planning documents and interviewed teachers to confirm that BC's curriculum has been implemented from kindergarten to grade 12.

Maple Leaf curriculum teams created course overviews and unit plans that are used throughout the system. Teachers not familiar with BC's curriculum shared their appreciation for having these documents. Most teachers at the School use the Maple Leaf lesson planning template which identifies how Big Ideas, First Peoples Principles of Learning, and Core and Curricular Competencies are integrated into the lesson. It was noted that teachers personalize the planning documents to meet the specific learning needs of their students.

The School has a focus on Core Competencies using the Six Cedars Program for grades 1-7, which also has connections to Indigenous perspectives and knowledge. Middle year teachers have adapted the Six Cedars Program to better suit older students who do similar tasks but use more technology to research and journal their experiences.

MLFNS-Yiwu is a small school in which there is a strong sense of collaboration and support. Teachers often mentioned during interviews that one of the best forms of professional development at the School is teachers working together exploring instructional strategies

and teaching resources. Their professional discussions have included initiating student centered/student directed learning, student self-assessment and First Peoples perspectives. MLES central coordinators are also working with teachers across the curriculum to integrate numeracy and literacy strategies that will prepare students for the BC Literacy and Numeracy Graduation Assessments.

MLES provides professional development opportunities centrally, but it was pointed out by teachers that foreign national schools are unique because their student population is very multicultural. Staff also noted that having the opportunity to network and share best practices with other foreign national schools in the system in a “teacher as researcher” model would be welcomed.

A review of curriculum planning documents, formative and summative assessments and learning activities confirmed the fundamental principles undergirding BC’s curriculum are being integrated into student learning experiences.

**Commendation:**

The staff is commended for the support and professional learning community they have created to support each other.

The staff is commended for its efforts to create student centered, flexible learning classrooms.

**2.20 The School meets the requirements for English language assessment and acquisition as outlined in section 2.20 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Principal, who has a background working with English language learners (ELL), conducts a language assessment for students new to the School. The assessment has oral, listening, reading comprehension, and writing components that are age appropriate. The assessment report is shared with the classroom teacher(s).

The School is small and has a very diverse student population with many ELL students. The School previously had two ELL teachers to support ELL students with in-classroom and pull out support instruction. However, the School currently does not offer this type of ELL support. Classroom teachers commented that they are now required to provide ELL support within their class, which is challenging. All teachers indicated during interviews that having an ELL teacher to support them in their classroom needs to be a priority.



**2.21(a-e) The School meets the course credit requirements (equivalency, challenge, exemptions and BAA courses) as outlined in section 2.21 (a-e) of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

Comment:

The School does not offer course challenges, equivalencies or Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) courses. All students take Mandarin language from locally-certified teachers, grade K-9.

All Physical Health Education (PHE) courses are taught by BC-certified teachers.

**2.21(f-g) The School meets the course overview/course planning requirements as outlined in Schedule B Part I, 2. € of the Agreement; namely, that all BC program courses offered in the School meet or exceed Ministry learning outcomes/learning standards identified in the educational program guides for each course.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

Comment:

A review of the MLFNS-Yiwu curriculum planning documents confirmed the School is in compliance with the Ministry curricular planning requirements. CMLES has centrally developed course overviews that have been created by curriculum teams comprised of teachers from throughout the CMLES. These documents are designed to profile the Core, Curricular and content Competencies and First Peoples Principles of Learning at a glance, making prominent filters for unit and lesson planning.

The Team noted that assessments, projects, and teacher interviews clearly indicated the use of Core Competencies and First Peoples Principles of Learning are woven into every lesson. During the Team's meeting with students, they referenced the Core Competencies and various forms of self, formative and summative assessments as components of the BC program that they particularly appreciated.

The CMLES SharePoint also house lesson plans, training videos, and other resources to assist with implementing the new frameworks of BC's curriculum. During teacher interviews the Team noted that first year teachers and teachers new to BC's curriculum found these resources very helpful. These curriculum overviews and accompanying lesson plan templates are a valuable instructional planning support for teachers new to BC's curriculum.

Commendation:

The Team commends the staff for its efforts in promoting the First Peoples Principles of Learning in all curricular areas and its use of the Six Cedars Program.

The Team commends the staff for its extensive use of digital platforms to differentiate their instruction and support student learning (A-Z Reading, IXL, Class Dojo, ProQuest, and Tumblebook).

**2.22 The School meets the instructional time allotment requirements as outlined in section 2.22 of the Annual Report for offshore schools, including the requirements set out in sections 1.1 to 6, with the exception of s. 4(5)(b), 4 (6), 5 (8)(a) and (d) and s. 5.3 of Ministerial Order 41/91, the Educational Standards Order, enacted under the Independent School Act.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Team confirms that the School meets the requirements for the instructional time allotments. The School operates five and a half hours per instructional day, for a total of 1,000 instructional hours per year. This exceeds the minimum number of hours required for grades K-9 instruction.

**2.23 The School meets the assessment methods requirements as outlined in section 2.23 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met      ☐ Requirement Partially Met      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

MLFNS-Yiwu curriculum planning documents clearly identify formative, summative and student self-assessment activities. Interviews with teachers confirmed that summative assessments are common, and formative and student self-assessments play a major role in developing student learning profiles. It was also noted that teachers use a variety of marking rubrics and the BC performance standards when planning their lessons and assessing student learning. Teachers noted that because of the consistent school-wide use of these tools they were seeing an improvement in students' ability to self-assess and think critically. Their observations were confirmed by students during the interviews with students.

BC provincial assessments are invigilated and secure according to Ministry requirements.

**Commendation:**

The staff is commended for the use of rubrics and performance standards to assess student learning, as well as their focus on student self-assessment of the Core Competencies.

**2.24 The School meets the learning resources requirements as outlined in section 2.24 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met                      ☐ Requirement Partially Met                      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

MLFNS-Yiwu has a small library that gives students access to a leveled book collection. In addition, the School has access to the MLIS library which is much larger and houses a more extensive collection of print and non-print resources. Teachers use Fountas and Pinnell as a language assessment tool and “Epic” digital library (an e-reader of books and videos) to assign books to individual students or class groups. Epic integrates well with Fountas and Pinnell and is a student friendly platform. Teachers also use Newsela, an instructional content platform which has topics in every subject area of interest to students and aligns with the core curriculum standards. The School also has subscriptions to Reading A-Z and IXL, a digital learning platform for kindergarten to grade 12 math support.

The MLIS library also has ProQuest and Sora by Overdrive as part of its digital collection. ProQuest is a Canadian Curriculum Edition E-library with an online database that includes full-text magazines, newspapers and reference books. It also has an extensive collection of maps, photos, and TV and radio transcripts. Sora by Overdrive is an online database of eBooks that is best suited for middle and high school aged students where they can assign books, save notes and highlights, and track the number of books read and total reading time.

**Commendation:**

The staff is commended for its extensive use of digital platforms to differentiate their instruction and support student learning.

**2.25 The School meets the student progress report requirements as outlined in section 2.25 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met                      ☐ Requirement Partially Met                      ☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

Grades 1-5 students receive three formal report cards (December, April and July) and three informal reports (October, March and May) each year. Grades 6-12 students receive four formal report cards (November, January, April, July) and two interim reports (September, March) each year. Parent-teacher interviews are scheduled in the middle of each term and a student-led interview is scheduled mid-year. Parents can communicate with teachers at any time using email or Microsoft Teams, and when required, school secretaries are available as translators.

The School uses PowerSchool to collect marks for grades 5-12 and to generate reports. Other forms of communication include a bi-monthly newsletter to profile school activities and monthly assemblies. Parents have an open invitation to attend school-wide assemblies at which students present their projects and share their talents and abilities.

**2.26 The School meets the parent/student handbook requirements as outlined in section 2.26 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met

☐ Requirement Partially Met

☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The parent student handbook has been updated for the 2022/23 school year. The handbook contains a policy for appeals and procedures for dispute resolution as required by section 9.14 (c) in the Agreement. All information in the handbook is relayed to parents as a booklet given to students at the beginning of the year. The Principal is in constant communication with parents through a third party app, WeChat. The WeChat group contains all parents and the Principal and serves to relay newsletters, reminders of policy in the handbook, and provide calendar updates. WeChat also has a translation feature.

The School meets the parent/student handbook requirements as outlined in section 2.26 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.

**2.27 The School meets the teacher handbook requirements as outlined in section 2.27 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

☒ Requirement Met

☐ Requirement Partially Met

☐ Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The handbook contains a comprehensive policy on teacher evaluation with all teachers being evaluated during their first year and every fourth year thereafter. The handbook also contains a comprehensive evaluation policy for school-based administrators with each administrator being evaluated during their first year of employment and every third year thereafter. The handbook also contains an acknowledgment that the Province of British Columbia is not a party to the contract of employment between the Owner/Operator and the teacher and the Province is not liable in any event instance or circumstance.

The School meets the teacher handbook requirements as outlined in section 2.27 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.

**2.28 The School meets the Online Learning requirements (formerly Distributed Learning) as outlined in section 18 of the Agreement and section 2.28 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Not Met	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
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Comment:

The School is not presently offering any courses through Online Learning. It intends to offer some senior secondary courses during the second semester through the Ministry approved online service provider School District 73 Business Company Global Education.

**2.29 The School meets the requirements for offering Remote Instruction under the BC Offshore School Remote Instruction Policy and as outlined in section 2.29 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Not Met	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
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Comment:

The School is not offering any courses through Remote Instruction under the BC Offshore School Remote Instruction Policy.

## CONCLUSION

### Commendations

**The Inspection Team wishes to recognize the Owner/Operator, Principal, staff and Offshore School Representative (OSR) of Maple Leaf Foreign Nationals School – Yiwu for:**

- fully meeting the requirement from the previous inspection.
- the response to COVID-19 with its accompanying restrictions placed on the School staff and the school community. The Principal and the School are to be commended for their efforts to increase the enrolment of the School in a very challenging environment in China presented as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.
- continuing to provide a stable and positive learning environment for students during the challenges presented by COVID-19.
- the availability of the OSR and the Assistant Superintendent of China Maple Leaf Educational Systems throughout the inspection.
- the organization and thoroughness of the student and teacher files by the administrative support staff.
- the support and professional learning community they have created to support each other.

- their efforts to create student centered, flexible learning classrooms.
- their efforts in promoting the First Peoples Principles of Learning in all curricular areas and its use of the Six Cedars Program.
- their extensive use of digital platforms to differentiate their instruction and support student learning (A-Z Reading, IXL, Class Dojo, ProQuest, and Tumblebook).
- the use of rubrics and performance standards to assess student learning, as well as their focus on student self-assessment of the Core Competencies.
- their extensive use of digital platforms to differentiate their instruction and support student learning.

### **SUMMATIVE RECOMMENDATION**

**The Offshore Inspection Team recommends to the Executive Director of the Independent Schools and International Education Branch that, the British Columbia education program offered at Maple Leaf Foreign Nationals School – Yiwu *continues* to be recognized as a British Columbia-certified school.**