

Shenzhen Foreign Language School

Shenzhen, China



Guangdong's first post-reform public foreign-language school, teaching six languages across a four-college house system in Shenzhen.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	63/100
Academic outcomes	68/100
University placement	65/100
Prestige & heritage	70/100
Alumni network	50/100
Facilities	62/100
Transparency	45/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Shenzhen Foreign Language School occupies a rare position in southern China: a public secondary school founded in **1990** with a long, explicit foreign-language mission and the scale to act on it. This is not a generic municipal high school with a token international wing. Foreign languages sit at the centre of the institution’s identity, and the school’s own history records the expansion to a sixth language, Russian, in 2008. The current structure also matters. The group spans multiple campuses across Shenzhen, with the secondary school footprint identified in Futian, Yantian and Longhua, and the high school section organised through four colleges — Innovation, Foreign Languages, International, and Liberal Arts and Sciences. That combination of public status, city backing and language specialism gives the school a

market position few rivals can match: **serious linguistic ambition** inside a mainstream Chinese public-school framework.

What puts it on a shortlist is not polish but record. The school states that university entrance progression has stayed at ***100%*** since its first graduating cohort, and it has a long archive of national prizes in languages, mathematics, robotics and research competitions. It has hosted major events, from national Model United Nations to informatics competitions and Yale Model United Nations China, which tells parents something concrete about intellectual culture and institutional reach. The offer extends beyond classes: six annual festivals cover foreign languages, sport, food, science, debate and the arts. That points to a school that values **competitive energy**, **public performance** and **visible achievement**, not quiet pastoralism. Parents looking for small-scale hand-holding or a soft academic environment should look elsewhere.

The right student for Shenzhen Foreign Language School is disciplined, quick, and comfortable in a selective, high-output public system. This suits children who want strong academics without giving up languages, debate, science competitions, choral work or student-led performance. It also suits ambitious bilingual or multilingual students who enjoy structured challenge and do not need constant reassurance. The school's own language — mission, crisis awareness, innovation, excellence — is blunt, and the culture follows suit. For the right child, that produces **high standards**, **intellectual stretch** and a **clear sense of momentum**. For the wrong child, it produces pressure. That is the trade.

STRENGTHS

- Founded in 1990 under the Shenzhen Municipal Education Bureau, it is one of the first 13 foreign language schools in China authorized to recommend 20% of its graduates directly to key universities without the standard gaokao route.
- Teaches six foreign languages -- English, Japanese, French, German, Spanish and Russian -- an unusually broad language offering for a Chinese national-curriculum school.
- In the 2025 gaokao cohort, 18 students were admitted to Peking or Tsinghua University, and the school reported a 985-university admission rate of about 43%.
- Since December 2020 it has operated as a group with nine departments (junior high, senior high, a Longhua senior high, primary school, international department, Bay Area school, Longhua school, Bao'an school and a high-school park), serving well over 10,000 students.
- Its international division has secured IB PYP, MYP and DP authorisation and passed CIS and WASC accreditation, in addition to running separate AP and A-level tracks.

TRADE-OFFS

- Mainstream admission is generally restricted to elementary or junior-high graduates holding Shenzhen household registration (hukou) or meeting district-specific eligibility, which limits access for many expatriate families.
- Entry is exam-based and competitive: junior-high recruitment covers only around 630 places a year, decided after online registration and a short (about 20-minute) language-ability assessment ranked against fixed quotas.
- As a large public day school built around the Chinese national curriculum and gaokao pathway, it is not a substitute for a full Western/IB school for families who are not planning for the Chinese exam system.
- With over 800 faculty and roughly 6,200 students at the core campuses alone, class sizes and pastoral attention in the mainstream track are shaped by the school's considerable scale.

ADMISSIONS

Junior-high entry is centred on an annual intake of roughly 630 places (about 530 in the English stream, with smaller quotas of around 20 each for Japanese, French, German, Spanish and Russian), open mainly to primary-school graduates with Shenzhen household registration or qualifying district status. Applications are submitted online in early June, followed by a short language-ability assessment; places are allocated by rank against quota. Senior-high entry runs through zhongkao-linked autonomous recruitment categories for Shenzhen junior-high graduates with exam eligibility or demonstrated talent, with shortlisting several times the quota. The separate international/AP-A-level and IB departments follow distinct, less publicly detailed admissions and fee processes.

WTS RATING 

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