from the outside, there is not much difference between Thomas Yu Ying School, a private school in the American-Indian enclave, and the rest of the city. Children with names like Tracy Quek, Simon Toro Racis and Armin Lee wear the same school uniform, listen to the same songs, and素养 their hands in the same recess line.

But all that stops the moment they walk through the school's front door – the speaking in Englishリアルシェイク becomes the language of choice.

“Bye, bye, American Idol-maker Simon Cowell,” says Ms Tracy Quek, 9, as her class personifies the “international kids” of America in their own unique way.

“Simon Cowell, he is from the UK,” Ms Quek says. “I don’t know much about him.”

The class, which is made up of mostly Chinese South-East Asian students, is one of the many schools in the city that are starting their Chinese language immersion programmes.

While many schools are starting small, others are already expanding.

In Beijing, for example, more than 50 Chinese schools offer immersion programmes for children.

According to a recent study by the Asia Society, which works to promote the study of Chinese, the number of students enrolled in Chinese programmes has increased from about 80 per cent of students who studied Chinese in kindergarten to junior high school in the US in 2006 to about 90 per cent in 2016.

In the US, the Chinese language is taught in more than 6,000 schools, including public and private institutions.

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